

The Freethinker

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EARLY last century, the English statesman, George Canning, went on record with the by now historic observation that he had "called the new world into being in order to redress the balance of the old". That is, in pursuance of England's then persistent, if at times tortuous foreign policy of the balance of power, he had backed the USA—far from the political colossus it is today—when in pursuance of the doctrine then recently (1823) enunciated by President Monroe, that country had announced its determination to resist, if necessary by armed force, the intention of Spain (backed by the reactionary Holy Alliance of Russia, Austria and Prussia) to reconquer Latin America which had just been emancipated by Simon Bolivar from Spanish colonial rule.

The "George Canning" of the Vatican

It is surely clear that this *bon mot* of the English Tory statesman (who incidentally was largely responsible for securing Catholic emancipation in England in the 1820s) is being carefully studied by Pope Paul and his advisers at the Vatican. The back room boys at Rome who planned Pope Paul's recent trip to India, clearly know their Canning. For the Vatican is today evolving a formidable world strategy, less publicised but perhaps even more significant than present much-talked-about plans for Christian unity which, it is no doubt hoped, will compensate for the heavy losses that the Vatican has sustained through the advent of Communism in the East and the growth of a scientifically-conditioned scepticism in the West.

It is said that Alexander once wept because he had no more worlds left to conquer. The Vatican is more fortunate in this respect, for the recently emerged nations of Asia and Africa offer tremendous opportunities for Roman penetration and spectacular aggrandisement in extra-European "realms that Caesar never knew".

Julius Caesar was struck down by his assassins when on the point of setting out to the east on a grandiose plan of world conquest (44BC). Pope Paul, more prosaically but more fortunately, travels peacefully east by air, and safely returns. But, whilst their technical means of locomotion differ, there can be no room for doubt that the modern Roman empire of the popes, like the ancient Roman empire of the Caesars, aims ultimately at one thing and one thing alone—world power. The fact that the Caesars aimed at secular domination, whereas the Papacy ostensibly aims at spiritual ascendancy, signifies merely a verbal difference: both in the last analysis mean the same thing: world power.

Ignatius Loyola and World Catholicism

The term "Catholic" signifies "universal", but it was only from the 16th century that the geographical expansion of European maritime activity reached world-wide proportions in the epoch of Columbus, Vasco da Gama, Magellan and Drake. It was accordingly only in the 16th century that the Church became really universal. The real founder of world Catholicism was St. Ignatius Loyola, the founder (and first general) of the Society of Jesus. Loyola's own

family played a leading part in the conquest of Peru and his nephew, Captain Garcia of Loyola, arrested the last Inca.

For throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, the Jesuits conducted an offensive throughout Asia and America, in the course of which they successively acquired positions of influence at the courts of China, Japan and India, established a secular state in South America (the modern Paraguay) and established a dominant position in Canada.

However, despite this spectacular start, the grandiose Jesuit attempts to conquer the East for Rome, despite some brilliant temporary successes, was ultimately unsuccessful. They

have an apparently well-earned reputation for not being able to work with anyone else, and in China in particular, where at one time the holy fathers were firmly established at the court of the early Manchu emperors in Peking (where their European science was much admired by the Chinese mandarins) the orders given by the "black" pope eventually clashed too obviously with those given by the Vatican and even with Catholic doctrine. For example, the Jesuits allowed their converts to practise ancestor worship, on the pretext that it was a civil rite; and they translated the works of Confucius, whose name they Latinised. Persecution wiped out their missions in Japan, and the Spanish secular power eventually (1767) annexed their "republic" in Paraguay. For a short period (1774-1814), the too-powerful order was actually suppressed by Rome, and they owed their restoration to the French Revolution. For, in order to combat its ravages, Rome had to send for its Jesuit praetorian guard again.

However, whilst the Jesuit world strategy proved to be eventually a failure, it did at least make the Vatican world conscious. For today, Pope Paul is evidently in process of launching a new drive for world power outside the confines of Europe. It was, no doubt, with this aim in view that the present occupant of the Vatican chose to adopt the name of the traditional apostle to the Gentiles.

Rome and Race

Actually it is in its changed attitude towards racial problems in recent years that the political shrewdness of the Vatican has been most of all in evidence. For after all, however much the Vatican may have collaborated with racist regimes at certain critical periods in its chequered evolution (its pro-Fascist activities for example) it does not really require any very profound knowledge of the origins and evolution of Catholicism to realise that it is essentially an organisation of a cosmopolitan character which draws its adherents from many and diverse races and cultures. The world-wide Church of Rome simply could not function as a purely national or racial cult.

In recent years this cosmopolitan principle has been strikingly illustrated in the creation of Asiatic and African cardinals, bishops, etc., whilst a still more recent manifestation is afforded by the Pope's visit to India, no doubt the first of many such experiments in papal globe-trotting by

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Rome Moves East

By F. A. RIDLEY

the former "prisoner of the Vatican". And it does not require any great stretch of imagination to foresee the possibility of non-European popes in the future. But all these above incidental details must not be taken in isolation. They form part of a new drive for world power; and it is this overall strategy that is the really important thing. For the present generation in world history is

witnessing the end of the era of European world domination.

The Vatican is keenly conscious of present trends in world history. Hence Pope Paul's visit to Bombay no doubt to be followed in due course by papal visits to other emerging centres of world power. Hence the present Roman invasion of Asia and Africa.

The Death Wish

By DENIS COBELL

UNTIL 1961 it was still a criminal offence to commit, or attempt to commit, suicide in Britain. No one but the inhumane could tolerate this situation. Schopenhauer, although he believed in the continuous existence of a metaphysical phenomenon, condemned the attitude of the legal and ecclesiastical authorities in England who perpetuated this system, and asked "what penalty can frighten a man who is not afraid of death itself?" Freethinkers have been in the forefront supporting this law reform, and they look forward to the implementation of another closely related to it: the right of the individual to end his own life in certain circumstances through voluntary euthanasia. In a book entitled *Suicide and Attempted Suicide* (Penguin Books, 3s. 6d.), published recently, Professor Erwin Stengel overhauls the position of the suicide, and finds it much improved since 1961. Thankfully, he does not speak of the ultimate effect a successful suicide suffers, nor on the side effects of an attempted suicide, from a moral standpoint. His book is an admirable review of the statistics, techniques and motivations related to suicide.

Professor Stengel states, "Man has only a limited control over his drives, and they include his self-preserving tendencies." This amplifies Schopenhauer's remarks, written over a century ago in *The World as Will and Idea*, that "the suicide wills life, and is only dissatisfied with the conditions under which it has presented itself to him." Professor Stengel points out that loneliness is probably the greatest single factor causing people to kill themselves. Frustrated love affairs do not play such a great part as many people like to think.

The isolation of loneliness can take on many forms: depression and feelings of worthlessness are common amongst the pre-suicidal states. Unfortunately most of those who do kill themselves have not previously received psychiatric treatment of any kind, although their condition, brought to light posthumously by relatives or friends, frequently indicates that they would have received such treatment if they had consulted a doctor. How many tragedies happen year by year simply because relatives and friends shut their eyes to the real danger!

Statistics reveal that suicide is less common during wartime. This is probably because people are wrapped together in a community which does not exist in peacetime, and provides a ready outlet for aggression.

One of the early surveys of suicide was made by Emil Durkheim at the end of the last century. In company with Freud, although his path of thought differed widely, he recognised a humane principle: the suicide's action is usually something entirely beyond his own control. Indeed, few suicides leave notes about their intentions or reasons. Durkheim regarded suicide as a symptom of social disease and recorded three motivations: 1. loneliness and loss of contact with fellow human beings, although resulting from a variety of causes. 2. suicide of the aged or sick who felt they had outlived their usefulness. And 3. malaise of modern society (then!) through relaxation of established

ethical and religious codes. In certain countries, dominated by the aura of Roman Catholicism or Islam, the statistics show a lower suicide rate than in Protestant countries. This is not, though, an altogether reliable guide, as the cause of death may be a verdict other than suicide if at all possible, owing to the disgrace a family may suffer if the truth is revealed. Roman Catholics do not ultimately believe in the complete loss of all suicides—they view their hopes of paradise as slight, however. Protestants have been more hopeless with their regard for the future salvation of suicides, as they reject the doctrine of purgatory.

Like many long awaited law reforms, the removal of suicide from the list of criminal offences was bedevilled by religious, and savage, prejudices lingering from the past. The English custom of driving a stake through the corpse of a suicide originally commenced as a sort of "peace offering" to the evil spirit whom it was presumed had brought about the disaster. On the other hand, there were supporters of primitive religions who lauded suicide. The natives of one Naga tribe thought suicide good because they believed the body would be preserved in its present form throughout eternity. The need to preserve the tribe, doubtless justified the condemnation of suicide. Christians in the Polynesian isle of Tikopia seek to protect their numbers by instilling fear; they believe that the soul of a suicide goes to Satan instead of Paradise.

From a purely philosophical standpoint the Humanist must accept the right of any individual to end his life whenever he wishes. Past mentors who have contributed to this *Weltanschauung* agree. Hume and Voltaire both respect this right. Strangely, Kant thought that suicide was an insult to humanity in general as exemplified and embodied in oneself; however, he could not justify this decision on the basis of principles outlined in his philosophy!

The Church has always adopted a harsher attitude to suicide than homicide. In this it has reflected the sentiments of man, throughout the ages, rather than those of a beneficent supernatural being. There is no specific prohibition of suicide in the Old or New Testament; but certain authorities have found ample support in the Sixth Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill". St. Augustine agreed with this argument, and pronounced that suicide was always a sin because it put the individual beyond the possibility of repentance. The recorded suicide of Judas Iscariot is offered admonitorily; is this what the Christian religion expects from those who deny it? Precocious little children who have been taught a few of scripture's fairy tales often ask their parents why they do not kill themselves, if heaven is such a marvellous place.

Most other religions also condemn suicide, except when performed as isolated acts of martyrdom. Hinduism and Buddhism reject suicide on the grounds that it is man's duty to live life according to the allotted span. Buddhists believe the sufferings and miseries of this life are the result

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The Crucifixion, a Libellous Accusation Against the Jews

By SOLOMON ZEITLIN

FOR over eighteen centuries the Jews have been accused of the crucifixion of Jesus. To this day they are still called occasionally Christ killers, deicides. This accusation was propagated from the beginning of the second century and has continued to our own day. The first one to blame the Jews for the crucifixion of Jesus was the Church Father Justin Martyr¹. The Gospels as well as the Apostolic Fathers did not place the onus of the crucifixion upon the Jews. This accusation was brought forward to show that the Jews, who originally were the chosen people of God, after they crucified Jesus were no longer the chosen people—God had forsaken them. The Christians then became the chosen people, the true Israelites². The destruction of Jerusalem and the burning of the Temple were regarded as a punishment for their guilt of the death of Jesus. This accusation was brought forward first—to show the truth of Christianity, second—to show that Judaism is no longer the true religion. Some of the early Christians in their writings charged the Jews with this onus. Chrysostom particularly brought violent charges against the Jews. He considered the synagogues dens of idolatry and the abode of devils even though there were no images in them.³ He further wrote that they did not worship God but worshipped devils⁴. These homilies and writings in due time poisoned the minds of Christians who came to look upon the Jews not as the children of God but children of the devils, responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus, for which there could be no repentance unless they accepted Jesus.

Historically the Jews were not responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus. Jesus was crucified as king of the Judaeans, as a rebel against Rome. The Judaeans at that time were a vanquished people. They were under the yoke of Rome. The high priest was the ecclesiastical leader in the Temple. He was an appointee of the Romans charged with the civil management of the people⁵. He was responsible to the Roman authorities for the tranquility of Judaea. However in religious matters Judaea had complete autonomy⁶. The *Bet Din* had authority to punish any religious offender⁷ but in civil and political matters the Judaeans had no right to inflict punishment. The procurator had the sole right to inflict punishment in civil and political matters. When Judaea became a province of Rome a procurator was appointed over the country. Augustus Caesar invested him with the power to inflict capital punishment on any Judaeans who was guilty of subversive activities against Rome⁸. The high priest was also the civil supervisor over the people and had the responsibility of informing the Roman authorities about any person who was subversive against Rome. The high priest from time to time summoned a council, *synedrion*, to investigate a case and presented it to the procurator⁹. (The term *synedrion* must not be confused with *sanhedrin*. The former term has the connotation of a civil council. The latter term has the connotation of a religious court, which came into vogue after the destruction of the Temple. During the Second Commonwealth it was called *Bet Din*.)¹⁰ A high priest who did not serve the interests of Rome was summarily dismissed and regarded as disloyal. Some of the high priests, in order to retain their position, disregarded the interests of the Judaeans to show their obedience to Rome. We consider them to be quislings. John states that Caiaphas, who was high priest at the time of the crucifixion, said to the Judaeans, "that it was expedient that one man should die for the people"¹¹

Caiaphas was apprehensive that if it was not reported to Pilate about Jesus the entire people would be accused of being in accord with those who regarded Jesus as king of the Judaeans. When Pilate asked Jesus, "Art thou the king of the Judaeans?" Jesus answered, "Thou sayest it."¹² When Pilate asked the people whom to release he said, "Will ye that I release unto you the king of the Judaeans?" The chief priests protested, "We have no king but Caesar."¹³ The fact that the high priest had to assert again and again, "We have no king but Caesar" indicates that the trial of Jesus was a political issue and the high priests were fearful of being accused as accomplices in declaring Jesus a king of the Judaeans.

Some modern historians do recognise that a distinction must be made between the theology in connection with the crucifixion of Jesus and the historical facts. It was theologically important for the leaders of the early Church to place the onus of the crucifixion upon the Jews. It was a new religion and they had to struggle to support it and to win new recruits.

James Daane, Associate Editor of *Christianity Today*, in an article, "The Anatomy of Anti-Semitism", in the issue of March 13th, 1964, wrote, "There is an answer to anti-Semitism, and although it is neither simple nor easy, the Church owes it to herself even more than to the Jews to make the answer clear." What is the answer? The author continues, "While the Church cannot expect Jews to accept the theological interpretation given to the history of Christ's death in Scripture, it can expect the Jews to acknowledge the actual historical facts. A Jewish denial of history is, as any denial of history, in the long run futile. There is no justification for a denial of the recorded history of Christ's death, for the authenticity of the records is not doubted by responsible scholarship." To prove that the Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus he quotes Matthew 27. 1 and says, "No rewriting of history by script writers of modern movies, placing the responsibility upon the Romans, will effectively conceal these historical facts." According to Daane, the Jewish religious leaders—so he designates the Pharisees, scribes, priests—were responsible for the death of Jesus.

When a historian deals with old documents he ought to scrutinise them with great care. If there are many documents dealing with the same historical events he should compare them and should carefully examine every document. After he has brought all the documents together he should search for the underlying reason which brought about the facts.

There are four Gospels: Matthew, Mark and Luke are called the synoptic Gospels. They are more or less in agreement in their accounts of the ministry of Jesus. The Gospel according to John is called unsynoptic, since it differs from the other Gospels and there are discrepancies. Though Matthew, Mark and Luke are generally in agreement, nevertheless different versions are recorded regarding events in connection with the arrest and trial of Jesus. An impartial historian in presenting the facts of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus must take cognisance of the differences in the accounts given of these historical facts. It is also his duty to carefully examine all the available manuscripts of the Gospels.

Daane, who places the responsibility of the crucifixion of Jesus upon the Jews, as an actual historical fact and
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This Believing World

As a special treat to all viewers, ITV gave us on Christmas Eve last the Archbishop of Canterbury answering questions put by some Sussex University students on the birth of Jesus, and its relevance for the world today. It was a feeble show. The Archbishop had not the slightest doubt that every thing in the way of miracles and angels took place exactly as described in Matthew and Luke. He especially emphasised the incarnation which, he said, proved that God Almighty took on the form of a man "humbly" to save the world. Although other religions, the Archbishop conceded, had their good points, no other religion could show us an incarnation.

★
But while Dr. Ramsey was firmly standing all square on miracles and the incarnation, the Rev. J. Lowe, vicar of St. Erkenwald's, Southend, was telling his congregation that "Christ's miracles are myths" (*Sunday Express*, December 20th). They are, he said "only figurative examples to illustrate deeper truths". And—horror of horrors!—he added that Christ had no more power to perform miracles than he had himself. Mr. Lowe did not believe in the virgin birth, and even gave up the beautiful miracle of turning water into wine for people who were "well drunk" at a wedding feast. Even the resurrection was too much for Mr. Lowe to swallow.

★
What the vicar would like to see is a booklet explaining away all miracles. Well this has been done a hundred times by Freethinkers. What about Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason?*—though we admit it explains away all Christianity as well. It has never been really answered, and we often wonder why such a stout believer in everything in the Bible like Dr. Ramsey has never tackled it. Even Dr. Ramsey's good friend and much stouter believer, Dr. Heenan shirks replying to Paine's masterpiece.

★
Considering that the Bible is the world's best seller (even if very few people really read it) the account given by Julian Holland in the *Daily Mail* (December 21st) of his efforts to buy a Bible for his children is, for such a holy subject, highly amusing. It appears that there are many "different texts" though most shops take it for granted that you want the Authorised Version. But poor Mr. Holland found such a "bewildering plethora of sizes, bindings, paper, type faces, illustrations, and prices," that it took him a week to make his selection. We remember that in our young days there were many Christian societies only too pleased to give you a Bible free; but Mr. Holland found Bibles cost anything from 6s. 6d. to £65. Probably, secondhand ones could be bought for twopence.

★
A reader of the "Daily Mail" (December 24th) is puzzled why Christmas is not celebrated as much in Scotland as it is in England. The reason appears to have nothing to do with "our Lord", but with John Knox, who was against "all forms of worship" followed by the Roman Catholic Church. But, thank God, the Scots are more and more inclined to keep Christmas Day in spite of Knox and the Catholic Church. We wonder what some of them will say when cribs in full imitation of Catholic ones will appear in the holy kirks? Won't they take the bonnie wee Babe of Bethlehem to their hearts? Or will they, like the Rev. Mr. Lowe of Southend, insist that the "miracle never took place?"

★
"The Catholic Herald" issued a "Travel Number" on January 1st. Readers were given, free with every copy, a "specially drawn and printed" three-colour map of the

Catholic Shrines of Europe. In addition, special copies of the map printed in four colours on art paper and "designed for framing will be available for sale. These are, we were told, "particularly suitable for schools, convents, religious houses and the Catholic home."

★
No story for "Psychic News" in the announcement by the President of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund on December 5th. Speaking at Bury St. Edmunds, Sir Cecil Wakeley said: "We cure 30,000 people of cancer every year, and you never hear of it" (*The Birmingham Post*, December 7th, 1964). But one alleged cure by a faith healer and the "psychic" press is full of it.

★
Among the "Observer's" sayings of the year was this from Reginald Paget MP. "I know of no book which has been a source of brutality and sadistic conduct both public and private, that can compare with the Bible." Mr. Grigg please note.

THE DEATH WISH

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of misdeeds in a former life. Islam claims a similar view, as stated in the Koran: "It is not for my soul to die, save by God's permission written down for an appointed time".

"Although it is true that suicides are in general less common among the devout than among the non-religious, it would be unwise to rely on this rule in the assessment of the suicidal risk in depressive illness". So writes Professor Stengel. He therefore recognises that religion, in itself, has very little to do with depression. However the social activities of churches may prevent the creation of melancholia through loneliness. Humanists are just awakening to the importance of this, and the British Humanist Association has proposals for the setting up of a Humanist Club Centre, which could fill the breach for agnostics who need a community life with kindred beings. The problems of isolation and loneliness will remain, and increase, in an age of shorter working hours and accompanying prolonged leisure periods. Professor Stengel concludes with a straightforward plea for the need to build up our social-services if we are to overcome this dilemma.

The "Suicide Samaritans", whose advertisements stare down at us in the tube, have done excellent work. They commenced in a London city church, but the idea has since become widespread throughout the country. The opportunity to telephone a particular number at any hour of the day or night has undoubtedly been of great value to many who look upon the world surrounding them as too big a problem to handle alone. It is gratifying to note that, according to Professor Stengel, the "Samaritans" do not force the issue of religious belief too heavily. In Los Angeles there is a Suicide Prevention Centre, which has no religious backing, but is operated with the aid of a Federal Government grant. This seems a much safer plan.

The friendly assistance gained immediately by someone who recovers from a suicide attempt may lead others to suspect that it was sheer exhibitionism, and the person concerned did not intend it to succeed. The "appeal effect" of attempted suicide, though it is not always a conscious motive, may result in the attentiveness of relatives who have, anyway, been lacking in their familial duties. We must all know someone who has tried to kill him or herself, it is incumbent upon us not only to befriend such folk, but to realise their situation and advise accordingly.

We can be thankful that the suicide rate per 100,000 of population has not reached its pre-war proportions in Britain, despite the fact that many commentators consider life more menacing now than then!

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound).—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, McRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch. North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12—2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street.) Sunday Evenings

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead).—Meetings: Wednesdays. 1 p.m.: Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square). every Friday. 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch NSS (Midland Institute, Paradise Street), Sunday, January 10th, 6.45 p.m.: "Brains Trust."

Glasgow Secular Society (Central Halls, 25 Bath Street), Sunday, January 10th, 3 p.m.: OLIVER BROWN, "Religion and Morals."

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate). Sunday, January 10th, 6.30 p.m.: J. M. ALEXANDER, "From Magic to Science."

Marble Arch Branch NSS (Carpenter's Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1.), Sunday, January 10th, 7.30 p.m.: G. N. DEV, "Nehru".

Notes and News

ON December 18th, 1964, we printed "The Dates of the Birth and the Crucifixion of Jesus" by the Jewish scholar, Solomon Zeitlin, Horace Stern Professor of Rabbinic Law and Lore at the Dropsie College, Philadelphia. This week we are printing the first part of Professor Zeitlin's study of "The Crucifixion, a Libellous Accusation Against the Jews." Once again we should like to thank the *Jewish Quarterly Review* for permission to publish this article, and Rabbi Dr. Joseph Litvin, who obtained this permission for us.

★

TRUE or false, wrote John Grigg amazingly in the *Guardian* on Christmas Eve, "Christianity has been the most fruitful and beneficent influence in the story of mankind." Anti-Christians of the "rationalist or humanist school" might portray Christianity as a religion of prohibition and restriction and "there is much, alas" in the Christian record—Mr. Grigg admitted—"which lends colour to their [the Humanists'] accusation." But to judge Christianity by "the use which tyrants and bigots have made of it is as superficial as to judge natural science by the abuses which have been perpetrated in its name. The gospel of Christ is essentially a gospel of emancipation." It is, we repeat, amazing, to find Mr. Grigg writing like this. Is the threat of eternal torment—taught by Jesus—"a gospel of emancipation?" Has it had a "fruitful and beneficent influence" in the story of mankind? We invite Mr. Grigg to answer.

THOSE who say that Christianity has done more harm than good were, Mr. Grigg believed, "the unconscious victims of Gibbonian propaganda and sheer historical ignorance." In fact, Mr. Grigg carefully selected—and weighted—his own historical examples. It was a Christian, he said, who led the movement to abolish slavery "within the British Empire." That non-Christians like Thomas Paine had earlier condemned slavery, and that revolutionary France had earlier abolished it, are not mentioned. To state—as Mr. Grigg did—that "Gibbon's England gave countenance to the institution of slavery" is a deplorable effort to shift the responsibility for it off the shoulders of the Christian traders on to those of Christianity's critic. But Mr. Grigg's most lamentable historical example concerned the Renaissance which he claimed as "above all the Church's achievement." It "also released strong currents of anticlerical feeling", of course, but that merely illustrated that "Christianity is for ever providing the antidote and corrective to its own abuses." Mr. Grigg, it will be seen, intends to have it both ways.

★

CHASTITY is "certainly harder than contraception, but rather more worth while," according to Trevor Huddleston, Bishop of Masasi (*The Observer*, 27/12/64). A fair retort to such a remark is, we suggest, to ask if both have been tried. But in this case it might be considered improper. We cannot refrain, however, from indicating the misleading nature of some of the Bishop's language. "Christian chastity is not," he said, "a prohibition but an affirmation—the affirmation that soul and body are so closely inter-related . . ." Even granting the affirmation (which we don't), the moral prohibition remains.

★

UNLIKE our colleague, the writer of This Believing World, we didn't see the Archbishop of Canterbury on TV on Christmas Eve, but can well appreciate Maurice Richardson's comments in the *Observer* (27/12/64). Mr. Richardson had hoped for a spirited theological debate but Dr. Ramsey refused to be drawn. "He radiated his usual benignity . . . but took almost no notice of the younger generation's objections whether atheistic, agnostic or heretical. Bless 'em all was his message." And, Mr. Richardson added, "You could hardly blame him."

★

WE did see the US comedian Woody Allen on the Eamonn Andrews Show (ITV, 27/12/64), and we liked his remarks on the American telephone company's "Dial a prayer." If you're an atheist you don't hear anything, Mr. Allen said. And if you're an agnostic you're not sure whether you heard anything or not. On the same programme, Spike Milligan was a hilariously irreverent Catholic.

★

THE following "Prayer for a Teenage Daughter" by Marie Hayden Michaud, is taken from the Maltese Roman Catholic monthly, *The Faith* (December, 1964) and is, we think, instructive—though not perhaps in the way Mrs. Michaud intended.

"Blessed Mother, Seat of Wisdom, please grant me the grace to guide my daughter during these difficult years. You know her eagerness for life and love; her high spirits and her fear of being left out of social activities. Help me to guard her against loss of innocence; help me to suffer her resentment rather than expose her to occasions of sin. Give me the fortitude to inflict a little pain now rather than to risk her suffering a great deal in later years. Help me, please Mother, to deal with her with Christ-like patience."

asserts that the Jews should acknowledge "actual historical facts" did not deal with the subject as a responsible historian but as a medieval Christian theologian.

Daane states, "According to the New Testament records it was the Jews who desired, plotted and promoted the execution of Jesus" He quotes Matthew 27. 1. In Matthew we read, "When the morning was come, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death." In Mark 15. 1 we read, "And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council and bound Jesus and carried him away and delivered him to Pilate." The words, "to put him to death" are not given in Mark. Luke, after giving the account of the arrest of Jesus and when he was brought to the house of the high priest, states, "And the whole multitude of them arose and led him unto Pilate." (23. 1). John, after mentioning the arrest of Jesus, states, "Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgement: and it was early: and they themselves went not into the judgement hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover." (18. 28).

From the above quotations we note the differences in the accounts given of the surrender of Jesus to Pilate. All state that it occurred in the morning. The difference between the synoptic and the unsynoptic Gospels is that, according to the former the surrender of Jesus took place in the morning of the first day of Passover, while according to John it took place in the morning of the eve of Passover, the fourteenth day of Nisan. John does not state that the Pharisees and the elders plotted to kill Jesus. He said that when Jesus was arrested Caiaphas gave counsel to the Jews, "It was expedient that one man should die for the people." (18. 14).

Matthew referring about the arrest of Jesus, states, "Then assembled together the chief priests and the elders of the people into the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty and kill him." (26. 3-4). The words "to kill him" are not found in some manuscripts¹⁴.

Mark has, "The chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by subtilty and put him to death."¹⁵ The words "by subtilty" are not found in all the manuscripts¹⁶. We read in Mark 3. 6, "And the Pharisees went forth, straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him." The text has "to destroy", however in one manuscript we read "to deliver".

Luke records, "And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people."¹⁷

In the Gospel according to John there is no mention of the Pharisees and the scribes plotting to kill Jesus.

(To be continued)

1. *Dialogue with Trypho*, 108; Tertullian, *Apology*, 26: Origen, *Against Celsus*, 2. 8; 4. 22.
2. Cf. Justin Martyr, *Ibid.* 135; The Epistle of Barnabas, 13.
3. *C. Judaeos* 1, 4; 6.
4. *Ibid.* 1. 3.
5. S. Zeitlin, "The Crucifixion of Jesus Re-Examined" *JQR* 1941, pp. 344-346.
6. Josephus tells that Titus said to the Jews when he appealed to them surrender "And did we not permit you to put to death any who passed it (beyond the barrier to the sanctuary) even were he a Roman?", *Wars*, 6. 2. 4 (126). Thus it is apparent that the Jews had the right to inflict capital punishment on their offenders. It is quite clear from Titus's speech that even a Roman who transgressed the Judaeian law by entering the sanctuary was to be punished by the Judaeans.
7. Cf. S. Zeitlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 340-344. S. Hoenig, *The Great Sanhedrin*, 1953.
8. *Wars*, 2. 8. 1 (117).
9. S. Zeitlin, *Who Crucified Jesus?* Ch. 5.

10. *Idem*, "Synedriion in the Judeo-Hellenistic Literature and Sanhedrin in the Tannaitic Literature", *JQR*, 1946, pp. 307-315.
11. John 11. 50. Cf. also 11. 48, "If we let him thus alone all (men) will believe in him, and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and the nation (state)".
12. John 18. 37.
13. *Ibid.* 19. 15.
14. Cf. Von Soden, *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments*, II. *Text mit Apparat*.
15. 14.1.
16. Cf. Von Soden, *ad loc.*
17. 22. 2.

Ceylon Rationalist Challenges Astrologers

ABRAHAM T. KOVOOR, President of the Ceylon Rationalist Association, has issued a thousand rupee challenge to astrologers, in a letter to the *Times of Ceylon*, December 19th, 1964. Mr. Kovoor says he is prepared to pay this amount to each astrologer who can correctly forecast certain events connected with the lives of 10 persons. The challenge will be in force even after his death as he proposes to make a request in his last will to his son, Aries Kovoor of the Sorbonne, to keep it open during his own lifetime or as long as his finances permit.

The text of Mr. Kovoor's letter is as follows:—

"It is reported that the unprecedented delay of 14 days in dissolving Parliament after the Government [of Ceylon] was defeated on December 3rd was purely on the advice of astrologers. If this report is true, it has to be accepted that we in this country are still living in a deplorably primitive state of mental and cultural development where the affairs of the state are decided by consulting oracles.

"I am neither a politician, nor do I belong to any political party.

"I am prepared to pay Rs. 1,000 to each astrologer who can give correctly the sex and the dates of death (if dead) of 10 persons whose dates and times of birth correct to the minute together with the latitudes and longitudes of the places of their births will be supplied.

"A duplicate copy of the questionnaire with the correct answers will be placed in an envelope and sealed and kept in the safe custody of one or more mutually agreed judges who will be given all facilities to check up the accuracy of the data I supply.

"In order to prevent the general public from competing in this big gamble a nominal deposit of Rs. 50 will have to be paid by each astrologer who wishes to take up the challenge. This amount will be refunded to the winners together with Rs. 1,000 each.

"Palmists also are invited to take up this challenge under the same conditions. Instead of the dates of birth, they will be supplied with duplicate copies of palm-prints of 10 persons dead or alive.

"There is a set of people in this country who argue that the good name of this marvellous 'science'—astrology—is spoiled by numerous quacks in the field. They say that if genuine astrologers are given correct data, their predictions will never go wrong.

"To them I wish to say that it is the duty of such "genuine" astrologers to come forward to take up this challenge in public, and save the 'good' name of this so called science.

"In spite of the fact that copies of a previous challenge of mine of a similar nature were sent to the famous—or should I say notorious?—astrologers of India, not one of them had the courage or enough faith in their own profession to take up that challenge. Here in Ceylon one person from Kegalla threatened to accept it, but wanted two

months' time to prepare for the test. Even after eight months and numerous reminders, there was no response from him either.

"I state boldly that not a single astrologer or palmist will ever come forward to face this test in public, although he will still continue to practise his fraud on gullible fools.

"However, to convince the gullibles all over the world I am keeping this challenge open till my death. In my last will I propose requesting my son Aries Kovoor of the Sorbonne University, Paris, to keep up this challenge on my behalf till his death or as long as his finances permit. If he is kind enough to fulfil this last wish of his father, he will be doing a great service to millions of his fellow beings including the parliamentarians, Cabinet Ministers and Prime Ministers of this country by keeping them away from astrologers, palmists and other oracles."

Reflections

By KIT MOUAT

I AM not sure if my last article was as unrelated to its title as Miss Hawtin claims. Perhaps I shall be safe this time.

Sometimes I think that the only thing one is likely to get out of the Humanist movement (s) (and, for that matter to put in) is a split personality. I have been accused of "corrupting" the village in which I live. When a woman I had not met (and never even heard of) changed her mind about being confirmed, I was blamed; and I waited anxiously for someone's chickens to die! In the local press I am referred to as the "Unrepentant Atheist", and for a few days after every letter of mine contradicting the clergy or attacking ecclesiastical iniquities, the smiles are frozen on my neighbours' faces. After quoting some of *An Atheist's Values* by Richard Robinson (splendid book) at a local school, I was accused of turning even the pro-Humanists back to the Church! So much so, in fact, that my husband has asked me what other qualifications are needed for an award of "Hero of the Ethical Union". But others consider me too moderate; too tolerant.

Are we fighting the Churches, Christianity, religion in general, or are we attacking totalitarianism, bigotry, privilege, apathy and injustice wherever we find it, in Christians and Christianity, in Humanists and our own organisations? It is no good praising democracy if we do not practise it. And those who have no taste for martyrdom should, I think, be ready to fight any injustice they feel to be levelled at themselves. It is the Christians who have put forward the idea that self-defence is not respectable, thereby encouraging quite a number of minor dictators.

I have, I admit, a prejudice against words like "purity" (of this or that race, blood, philosophy or sex), and "purges" are painfully linked in my mind with "pogroms", but then I was growing up in the thirties. But am I really alone in fearing that those who use such words (when claiming to be rational) may be accused, without further evidence, of extremism and irresponsibility? Perhaps I am.

As for this fifth column skulking in our midst, I remain baffled. What is the suggestion, exactly: that Christians have joined the Humanist movement in order to attack the roots of secularism and sabotage our efforts, without the majority of genuine Humanists and Atheists noticing? If so, I just cannot understand why the accusers cannot name the accused. I still remain unconvinced that there is *libel* involved in accusing a professed Humanist of being a Christian (not a Hottentot or a Communist) even if he would consider it to be an insult. My sense of melodrama is, I confess, rather weak. I am afraid that this must all seem no end of a joke to any outsiders who pick up our literature.

May I for my own part say that although (like everyone else) I can think of Atheists, Secularists, Humanists, etc., who I consider do more harm than good to the movement, it has never occurred to me that the harm is intended.

May I now return Miss Hawtin's compliment. I enjoy her articles too. But dare I question a statistic? I know the CEC quotes an average of 14,000 converts to the Roman Catholic faith per year, but I believe there was a considerable drop in 1963. And this is only converts, of course; no mention of lapses or those Catholics who are on our own lists, as atheists. I am not trying to minimise the danger of the Vatican. I, too, deplore Roman Catholic brainwashing, spirit-rotting, life-denying and their educational mockery, but let's get our facts straight if and when possible.

As for the Humanist "activities" on my list. I would not say that they are exactly being "indulged" in. They demand a great deal of voluntary hard work on the part of those involved. They are positive projects aimed at increasing human happiness, and not even those who are doing as much in different directions with this aim, need scoff. I am sure Bradlaugh, Place and Paine would support them all. All right, superstition must be "extirpated", but if we want human beings to put aside their gods and saints, snake-skins and rosaries, we ourselves have surely to provide the comfort they are looking for. Our secularism takes different forms, according to our personalities, talents, responsibilities and situation; and a very good thing too.

[With this article we must close the discussion on the alleged fifth column inside the Humanist movement. Whether Mrs. Mouat is right in saying that it must all seem a joke to outsiders, we don't know. We believe, however, that it has had sufficient public airing in our columns—Ed.]

As Good Cooks Go

By OSWELL BLAKESTON

THE priest had been delighted to meet the friend whom he had not seen for many, many years. They had celebrated with a delicious dinner which had been skilfully orchestrated around a presentation of veal with white truffles. The guest could not refrain from complimenting the priest on the excellence of his cook. The priest sighed with content. "Oh yes," he said, "now that I am older and wiser I must admit I know how to choose a housekeeper. It may be painful to look at Maggie, but she gives me such excellent silent service; and the poor old thing is a real artist in the kitchen. When I was younger and more foolish I chose a housekeeper because the girl looked so bonny. There was no sin in that, even if it was indiscreet; but one is only old once, and one cannot expect a young man to have wisdom. Even so, it was not long before I realised I had made a mistake with Annie in spite of her good cooking. The girl was irresponsible and she would burst into my sitting room with the bare excuse of any trivial question. My afternoon nap became a farce. Yet I hesitated to dismiss the girl. I knew that my parishioners liked to imagine that a priest has infinite patience and gladly welcomes any trial as a penance. I was also afraid that such a high-spirited girl might have revenge and spread malicious lies if I turned her out for no stronger reason than that she was talkative by nature. You see she was an orphan, and would be without a roof over her head if I told her to go. Jobs in those days were hard to find, although it's hard to remember that a domestic servant, whatever her shortcomings, might find herself without employment. So I suggested a compromise; and she cried bitterly but finally accepted the proposition. I told her I would visit

a doctor who had been recommended to me as a professional hypnotist, and that I would ask the doctor to give me a post-hypnotic suggestion. Thanks to hypnotism, I would no longer see or hear my housekeeper. It would be impossible for her to get on my nerves, although she could still minister to my needs until she found a position which would suit her requirements. Yes, I accomplished an unusually meritorious act of charity; and really the business worked out very well. Annie felt bound to do her best for me, as I'd told her I would not give her a reference if she left in sulks. My meals appeared as if by magic, and the house was kept clean and tidy as if by a ghost. I slept well in the afternoons, and at night. Then one day Annie decided to accept the postman's proposal. He was very ugly, but it was the best that Annie could do for herself in our small village with limited opportunities. Unfortunately, the postman was not only ugly but illiterate, and he tried to make trouble when Annie—who always would talk too much—confessed to him one night that she had often shared my bed. I needed all my powers of rhetoric and persuasion to convince the husband that for years I had not been able to see or hear Annie, and that if the silly girl had exploited the situation as far as I was concerned I was guiltless. An invisible sin . . . well, that is surely no sin at all? In the end I was able to make the yokel understand that hypnotism is a scientific reality. However, he still whined that I had the best of two worlds. Naturally, I pointed out to him that he was being grossly unfair. The best? . . . Why, Annie was in no way so brilliantly inspired in the kitchen as my dear old Maggie."

CORRESPONDENCE

LUNATIC CHRIST?

Do any of your readers know of any writings which treat Christ from the point of view of his being a criminal lunatic? The psychoanalysts have strangely neglected him as a subject.

The contradictory nature of his utterances and their contents, as well as their pernicious nature (Christianity has been the cause of more misery than anything else), fully justify their being described as the ravings of a criminal lunatic.

The other two biggest rogues in history, Mahommed and Moses, were people of the same kidney, and then there have been the smaller fry, Joseph Smith, Piggott of the Abode of Love, Sister Amy McPherson and many others, the intellectual "coshers".

FREDERICK HILTON, PhD.

[*Albert Schweitzer published a Psychiatric Study of Jesus in 1913*—ED].

MARXISM AND THE INDIVIDUAL

F. A. Ridley's article "A Marxist view of Christian Origins", is too far-fetched for any thinking person to take seriously.

To say that Christianity and Buddhism would have evolved eventually and essentially in the same way, even if there had been no Christ or Buddha, is like saying the Nazi movement would have evolved the same way independent of Hitler. It is nonsense. Perhaps he will be telling us next that if Shakespeare (or Bacon or Oxford or whoever) had not written the plays someone else would have written them. Mr. Ridley's seems more like a mysterious conception of history rather than a materialist one. Kautsky may have been a great Marxist, but certainly not a great thinker.

Marxism fails to explain the role of the exceptional individuals in history; in fact, the individual as a person, as a moral being is actually annihilated in historical materialism. Yet paradoxical to all this, Mr. Ridley said in one of his articles, on "Calvin, Stalin, and the Idea of Progress" (October 9th) "That without Calvin and Calvinism there seems to be little room for doubt that the Reformation as such, would have failed, and that the Jesuit Counter-Reformation would have reconquered Europe."

Here we get a glimpse of the contradictory philosophy of Mr. Ridley. When it pleases him he raises the individual on high, and when otherwise, the role of the individual is sunk into insignificance. We can hardly call that clear thinking, can we?

R. SMITH

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