

The Freethinker

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THERE is, at present, one significant exception to the general Protestant practice of pulling one's theological punches where the Church of Rome is concerned. This is constituted not by any of the more respectable Churches, all of whom are tending to become more and more respectful towards their holy (shall we say?) "godfathers" at Rome, but by that bizarre American-derived sect who officially style themselves the International Bible Students, but who are more commonly known by their pseudonym of Jehovah's Witnesses. For rather paradoxically just at a time when in secular affairs the Vatican (the richest capitalist in the world) is the blue-eyed boy of Wall Street, and at a time when America is becoming spiritually Rome's most promising field for expansion, the Witnesses are one Protestant sect to "protest" in season and out of season against the totalitarian claims of the Vatican.

In fact, if the present drift towards Rome by Protestants continues much longer on its present course, we shall probably end with the startling situation that the only militant bodies which are still prepared to wage all out total war against Rome will be the National Secular Society and the Witnesses to Jehovah.

The ironies of universal history are indeed, endless, and the history of religion is no exception. But certainly the prospect is decidedly intriguing of the respective followers of Charles Bradlaugh and of the Lord Jehovah combining in a united front to combat the present intensive drive to world power being planned at the Vatican Council by the anti-Christ of Rome! For if the National Secular Society is anti-Roman because it is anti-Christian, the reverse is the case with the Witnesses. They are anti-Catholic precisely because they *are* Christians—pure-blooded authentic millenarian revivalist Christians, just as were the earliest Christians who followed the Master, as was Jesus himself (assuming that is, that Professor Solomon Zeitlin is correct in his learned contention recently published in these columns that there was an historical figure at the root of the Gospel mythology).

Jesus the Revivalist

Without exception, all the leading figures depicted in the New Testament—Jesus himself, John the Baptist and John the Apostle, not to mention Peter and Paul—are all depicted in the texts as revivalists eagerly awaiting the end of this world and the terrestrial Armageddon due to precede it, a cosmic "Waterloo" depicted in terrifying imagery in the Apocalypse (Revelation) almost certainly the oldest extant Christian scripture. For the Apocalypse vividly displays the millenarian beliefs of the first Christian generations. Today, 19 centuries later these, too, are the authentic beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses and apparently of them alone.

We repeat, the Church of Rome has nowadays to fight on two fronts: against post-Christian scepticism embodied pre-eminently in the contemporary atheism of the National Secular Society and kindred bodies, and against

primitive (very primitive) Christianity embodied in the Witnesses. For we concede that the Witnesses are *bona fide* primitive (i.e. pre-Catholic) Christians. We will even go so far as to concede as at least probable, that were Jesus and his twelve apostles to visit this 20th century, they would join, not the Vatican "racket" (as the Witnesses themselves describe it) or even the Church of England. They would, we think, make (if we may use this slightly irreverent phrase) a bee-line to the next International Convention of the International Bible Students' Conference which is scheduled to be held in June. For whilst the Witnesses speak English (American version) and not Aramaic, as the early Christians presumably did, the mental outlook of the two groups is virtually identical.

Witnesses' Convention in Eire

Rather surprisingly, this Pentecostal event, complete we assume with the mass baptisms by total immersion that represent its normal accompaniment (precisely as in the days of John the Baptist and of Jesus), is to be held in Ireland next June (where, we trust, the mass total immersions will not take place in the waters of the Liffey which are rumoured to be none of the cleanest).

But as might be expected, this decision to hold the convention in that traditional stronghold of Holy Church, the "isle of saints and scholars" itself did not pass unopposed. The Witnesses, no doubt employing the wisdom of the serpent so highly recommended by the gospels themselves, approached Drumcandra Football Club for the lease of its Tolka Park, and the directors, being presumably more familiar with the intricacies of football than with the niceties of theology, accepted unquestioningly. For, no doubt due to their American origin, the Witnesses appear to be much better provided with money (the apostolic "root of all evil") than were their early Christian prototypes, and apparently paid on the nail.

However, this religious business transaction did not transpire without opposition, for we read in the (Irish) *Sunday Press* (December 20th, 1964), that: "At a meeting during the week of the League of Ireland management committee, Mr. Andy Kettle of Bohemians, protested against the letting of the Park to the group whose beliefs he said are opposed to the [Irish] Constitution". This last statement presumably refers to the initial clause in the present Constitution of the Irish Republic (1938), which begins by a solemn affirmation of the Catholic dogma of the Holy (most Holy) Trinity; a belief rejected by the Witnesses as unscriptural (as indeed it is) and therefore un-Christian. This, incidentally, is not the first time that this "heresy" has been noted in the Irish Republic. However, Mr. Kettle's footballing colleagues—evidently at the receiving end of a fat cheque from the organisers of the forthcoming convention—dismissed the protest.

The *Sunday Press* reported that Mr. Sam Prole (chairman of Drumcandra Football Club and President of the

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Jehovah versus St. Patrick

By F. A. RIDLEY

League of Ireland Management Committee) had stated that "Most of them will be coming here from the USA and from other countries and that they will keep very much to themselves. Their representatives have not attempted to preach anything to us—all we have talked about is money. I cannot see anything wrong with letting them have the park". (My italics—F. A. R.)

So it seems those implacable enemies of Rome, Jehovah's Witnesses, are due to hold their next Inter-

national Convention in June in the Irish Republic, officially consecrated to the (most) Holy Trinity. It is almost enough to bring St. Patrick back in person!

More soberly, two relevant deductions may be drawn from this tangled business. Firstly, that even in Catholic lands nowadays, money speaks all languages; and secondly, that even primitive Christians have moved with the times and have learned the indispensable art of combining the service of both God and mammon.

Humanist School

By DAVID TRIBE

IT WAS a very happy occasion for all members of the old Humanist Council to welcome Patrick van Rensburg and Mr. and Mrs. Don Baker to London from Swaneng Hill School, Bechuanaland. Mrs. van Rensburg was unfortunately absent through illness from the gathering at 13 Prince of Wales Terrace on January 15th, the occasion of the school's second anniversary.

The progress made in those two years is truly astonishing. In an advanced technological country with its planning and administrative arrangements, such a balance sheet would be cause for congratulation. When we consider the shortage of money, materials, equipment and skilled manpower in Bechuanaland, the achievement is seen to be magnificent. It is a source of enormous satisfaction to the Ethical Union, the National Secular Society, the Rationalist Press Association and Humanist Group Action to recall that Elizabeth van Rensburg was a founding member of HGA and that the project was first put on its feet with money raised by the Humanist Council (EU, NSS, RPA).

Other help has followed: — work by a party of student volunteers from South Africa, an anonymous grant of £12,000 from a foundation, special encouragement by Seretse Khama, who has himself worked there with students and has promised financial support if he is elected to power after independence. But the most encouraging aspect has been the community self-help of the Swaneng students themselves.

This is indeed the keynote of the project. Besides theological indoctrination, too many mission schools are indictable for paternalism in their social theory, and have done little or nothing to encourage adulthood and personal responsibility among the native peoples they are trying to help. The symbol is Lambarene, not local autonomy. Patrick van Rensburg and his team of volunteer teachers have a very different objective. They are not simply imparting factual information, or pinning ideological labels to themselves or their students, but helping them to achieve self-realisation and self-fulfilment. Not in any rarefied speculative sense. The problems of Africa are too real and pressing for such a luxury. But in living, working relationships.

In a territory with a population of over 300,000 and but seven small secondary schools, basic education is an urgent need. Last year Swaneng had 75 students, their average age approaching twenty. This year the number will double (a third of them girls) and the average age fall. Also important in this hate-torn subcontinent is the principle of interracialism, though as yet no white students have enrolled. But Mr. van Rensburg sees that the most important contribution he can make to the protectorate at the moment is the vision and the substance of community help.

He has therefore guided the establishment by the people of the neighbouring town of Serowe (population 36,000), in the teeth of opposition by the local traders, of the first

co-operative store in the entire protectorate. In an area where 90 per cent of the population is economically dependent on the cattle industry, and which is often short of food and water, he has aided the formation of a co-operative cattle marketing society, the repair and building of dams stone by stone, and the stocking of swamps with fish. If he can raise sufficient funds he hopes to appoint a vice-principal to direct the academic studies to leave him free to concentrate on social work and fund-raising (the inevitable concomitant of all projects).

The students are learning manual skills in the actual construction of their own school during weekends and vacations. It is not just a place of education but a part of their lives. In addition they learn English, the local language, history, geography, mathematics, pure and applied science, agriculture and animal husbandry and dietetics. There is no religion. At present most of the boys plan to become teachers and the girls nurses.

Mr. and Mrs. Baker are returning to England for at least the period of their son's primary education. As he entered again the world of Kidbrooke and Rivinghill Don Baker spoke warmly of the thirst for knowledge in all his Swaneng students and the complete absence of discipline problems. Let us hope that when Bechuanaland becomes an "affluent society" a scrubland jungle will not become a blackboard jungle.

The capital costs of the existing buildings have already been found; not reserves for steady expansion. For running costs on the existing basis of voluntary teachers £3,000 per annum is required. A further £3,000 would be needed to support a staff on full professional rates, and £1,000 for the appointment of a vice-principal. The school already has a film projector and tape-recorder with which, when there is more leisure, promotional material on which successful public meetings and governmental and trust support so much depend, can be prepared. In the meantime British Humanists can assist with gifts of money, books (especially fiction), and clothing for jumble sales. Money can be given through the Humanist Council Trust Fund (earmarked Swaneng), c/o 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London, W.8. Other gifts should be sent direct to Swaneng Hill School, P.O. Box 101, Serowe, Bechuanaland Protectorate. There can be few worthier causes.

PRAYER MATS IN SCHOOL

So many children of coloured immigrants attend Dewsbury schools that the local Education Committee has decided that if any more go religious services may be introduced for Moslems.

Pupils at Victoria Boys' Secondary Modern School already attend services in the school every Friday. This, Mr. Eric Sleight, headmaster, says, is because the Moslems, mostly Pakistanis, have been to services at Savile Town at lunchtime on Fridays and sometimes returned to school late.

To avoid this, he offered them the use of the school hall and the boys take their own prayer mats.—*The Yorkshire Post* (29/1/65).

The Rationalist Annual 1965

By D. C. CHAPMAN

"I HAVE reached the age of seventy-one, and been operated for a cancer near the hind end of my intestine". Being a biometrician J. B. S. Haldane then goes on to assess his chances for a long life provided his cancer has not colonised elsewhere. The end came sooner than Haldane expected so that the leading essay in this year's *Rationalist Annual* reads much like a farewell from someone who lived life vigorously and bravely. Often as not he was his own best guinea pig in his brilliant work in physiology and genetics. Haldane seemed to thrive on trouble and stories about this man abound, as will happen with any colourful character, but the one I like best took place in India, the land of yoga and fakirs who pass the day trying to conceive of a stick with only one end. What a shock to the Indians then to find this hulking child of the West outdoing their holymen—stretched out stark naked in a lily pond observing the habits of tadpoles!

His contribution to this volume is mainly folksy reminiscences as he skims over different items that interested him in life and gave him pleasure. He catalogues the various narcotics he tried, savours the memory of "the embraces of two notoriously beautiful women", quotes from the Upanisads, philosophises on art and science and, of course, makes a few digs at religion. Mystics and religionists are notorious for the lack of thought they have expended towards substantiating their claims and it is interesting seeing Haldane's scientific mind divising tests for their positions. If ghosts exist then why weren't the battlefields of World War I better represented in this regard? If reincarnation is possible then why have no undeciphered languages been solved by such believers?

The "Problem of Pain" is the title of the next essay by R. C. Churchill. This brings to mind the late well known Christian apologist, C. S. Lewis, who wrote a book by the same title. As would be expected, some clever mental contortions were necessary to reconcile an all-loving god with the observation of widespread misery. And Lewis's own ruminations along these lines betrayed a certain attraction to "Diabolism", according to Hector Hawton, who happens to be the editor of this volume. As Churchill points out, the problem of pain perplexes the Christian no end in his theology but fits in quite understandably with a rationalistic view of the world; however, there is still the problem for the rationalist whether pain can ennoble one as some have claimed or whether it is always degrading. This problem is too complicated to be discussed in a few pages, but nevertheless the pros and cons are touched upon and the repulsive views of some cynical modern authors are mentioned. Some may question Churchill's idea that bodily or mental pain develops the faculties one already possesses or that the medical alleviation of neuroses will mean the end of certain kinds of literature and art, but whatever the case, the reader is given some new ideas and examples to chew on for himself.

Benjamin Farrington likes his Humanism plain and sails especially at those who would modify "Humanism" with "Evolutionary". We soon learn that it is really Darwin's artistic sensibilities that have aroused this author's ire and in his essay he has some naughty things indeed to say about Charles. The argument is the all-that-Caruso-could-do-was-sing one where we are informed that the early Darwin's theology was as jejune as the later one's atheism, or that compared with the aesthete,

Samuel Butler, Darwin was but a bore. Darwin's ecstasy over the beauty of the Brazilian forest is not enough to admit him to the club, and this I think is a form of snobbery which only accepts as valid those aesthetic pursuits like music and poetry which lend themselves to notation and communication—as well as much fatuous commentary.

Although a Marxist, Farrington shows himself to be an idealist and one who hankers after the mystical. Only an idealist who has disregarded the world around him would say that the choice of one's studies and the order of priorities are determined by man's vision of the future. He likes the idea of tuning in on other aspects of a fuller reality with an undisclosed sensory faculty denied the more pedestrian among us.

"If we eliminate mind from biological evolution," asks Farrington, "can we give any satisfactory account of its presence at the psychosocial stage?" This problem is complicated by his belief that mind is not entirely brain-dependent, and one gets the sneaking suspicion that he would like the independent part to be "out there" directing evolution instead of being left to more physical factors. Unless mosquitoes and the like do have dreams (as was asked of Ripley) and hence minds then I think evolution can proceed quite well without "mind" as shown by events in the Paleozoic. Mind did, of course, come into being and has itself evolved, but as to the mystery of this event and transition back to neurological functions resembling mind, these are problems for workers like Darwin and not the mystic.

For those who like reading about existentialism, Maurice Cranston has saved you the trouble of trying to digest Sartre's unreadable 755-page *Critique de la raison dialectique*. Sartre emerges from this essay more than just a little sullied after Cranston shows that Sartre lifted his ideas on the structure of society from Hobbes and Hume. In his attempt to refurbish Marxism with an existential outlook, Sartre clearly fails to synthesise the opposites in the two systems he must work with. This curious amalgam of jargon and theorising results in an intellectually dishonest schizophrenia that allowed Sartre to defend Stalin's terror while Stalin was alive but attack him after his death.

There are two articles on the psyche, T. S. Szasz's "Psychiatry as Ideology" and E. H. Hutten's "Can Psychology be a Science?" Szasz points out how quickly an outgrowth of Freud's ideas caught on in the USA to replace the explanations of sin and the machinations of the devil as the causes of certain forms of anti-social behaviour with an explanation based on mental illness. A psychiatric ideology therefore filled the ethical void that resulted from this melting-pot society that could form no other type of social criterion for behaviour. Actually Freud believed, as does Szasz, that many forms of mental illness are just deviations from conventional ideas on how one should act and as such are not worthwhile problems for scientific inquiry. Szasz is alarmed that judges should believe it is possible for psychiatrists to define mental illness and to license them to exert social control by their pronouncements. There are cases of involuntary psychiatric confinement for the treatment of behaviour which is not considered conventional by the authorities who reflect a middle-class view. Ideologies are not self-critical as is necessary in science if progress is to continue, so that this

(Continued on page 55)

This Believing World

One remarkable fact stands out in the fine tributes to the work of Sir Winston Churchill which we heard after his death, and that is, not one speaker—as far as we know—ever said that he had put his trust in God and Jesus. Our dead leader probably would have called himself a Christian, but in the extracts of his stirring speeches we heard, God, Jesus, the Virgin Birth, or even the Bible, were never mentioned. Churchill obviously preferred to rely on the sensible secularist creed of "Do It Yourself".

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Even the Archbishop of Canterbury, in his eulogy on Churchill on TV, never mentioned Churchill's religion. Instead, he concentrated on the great gift which God gave us in Churchill, prayed to the Almighty to reward the dead leader with a place in Paradise for eternity, and implored all his hearers to pray to and adore God always and for ever. In fact, the speech mentioned God far more than Churchill. It was a masterpiece of fatuity.

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To get a freethought letter in such a religious newspaper as the *Daily Telegraph* is indeed something to be proud of. And in its issue of January 23rd there was one headed, "Gospel Stories of Virgin Birth" (referred to in Notes and News last week), in which Mr. J. P. Davidson was allowed to call the gospels "anonymous documents" and the stories in them of the Virgin Birth, "a cycle of legends". Unfortunately, he gives 85-90AD as the date for the composition of Luke, which is just nonsense. Luke was quite unknown by name before 180 AD.

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Strange to say, spirit photographers, after flourishing here in England during the nineteenth century and the beginning of this, appear to have vanished completely—though some may be found still in Nicaragua, Lapland, and Alabama. Instead, we have artists who "see" the spirits of the departed and sketch them almost as vividly, or perhaps we ought to say, far more vividly, than any camera. The "genuine" spirit photographs we have seen, always appeared to have some fluff around them like a mass of cottonwool, and the spirit "likeness" generally seemed a badly blurred copy of a photograph already in existence.

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Spirit artists disdain the cottonwool effect of course, and boldly draw in pencil, crayon, or charcoal. One of these drawings appeared recently in *Psychic News*, of a young man who had "passed on". And alongside was his photograph, to show how true was the artist's likeness. It certainly was—though to one who has no "spirit" eye, it looked as if an art student had copied the photo direct. Now we have artists drawing or painting guides direct from Summerland. As an example, there is one of "Red Cloud" well known to readers of Spiritualistic journals. And if one was wanted of "Blithe Spirit" it would be almost certainly produced. Perhaps one day we shall get Summerland in all its glory televised . . . !

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In a New Year message published in the *Methodist Recorder* and reported in *Time & Tide* (January 20th), Dr. Donald Soper suggested a ban on Bible reading for a year and a rule that all sermons should have a political text instead of a biblical one. These are the things Dr. Soper would command if he had a royal prerogative to have his wishes granted. "The present situation with regard to the Scriptures is intolerable," he said. "They represent an intellectual incubus that cannot be removed until an almost completely new start is made with this controversial docu-

ment." The need, we suggest to Dr. Soper, is not to make a new start with the Bible, but to finish with it.

Reflections on Religious Schools

I DISAGREE with Mrs. Knight that religious schools should be self-supporting. She can have no idea of the terrible condition those schools were in before they were taken over by the Government in about 1905.

They were usually toppling-down old buildings with outside smelly lavatories. Often up to 120 were crowded into one room. There could be no freedom for them or their teachers. What ruled the school was discipline, which resulted in unbridled caning of little children who spent the best part of the day sobbing and falling off the crowded galleries.

Moreover the head teacher and priest could sack a teacher at a moment's notice. I knew a teacher whom the priest sacked because she had a boy friend; on the plea that now her interest would be in him and not on her work. The priest sometimes neglected to pay the teachers' salaries. Once on crossing over to Ireland I met an Irish teacher who said to me "How lucky you are to be teaching in England; your salary is paid directly to you. I get mine through the priest; for that I have to cycle six miles to his house and how often I've gone there to be told by his housekeeper 'His Reverence is out, will you call in a few days time'. All the time I could see the priest reading in the parlour."

I began teaching in 1908, and so came under some of these type of head teachers who wielded the cane. The school was situated in Bow and the headmaster boasted, "I can cane the children as much as I like. Two of the boys' fathers took me to court and the magistrate said he always gave the judgment in these cases for the teachers." The priest came in every Monday morning and gave six cuts of the cane on each hand to any boy who had missed mass on Sunday.

I went home to Tipperary when the summer holidays came. I asked four teachers I met where they were off to. "We are going to a special mass against a law that the English Government is going to pass by which our salaries are to be paid directly to us and not through the priest as is done now," they said. "But we will not accept those conditions because it would take away the power of the priest." I argued with them but it was of no avail.

I wince now when I think of the canings of those poor miserable, hungry children, stunted by the want of love in their lives; all huddled up in old ragged clothes, their trousers tied up with a sugan of straw, no socks, no shirts, their toes out through their boots—many indeed barefooted even in winter.

The priests didn't spend much time indoctrinating the children. They left that to the teacher. The last school I was in there were five teachers and only the headmistress was a believer. The priest's answer when he was accused of neglecting the school was, "Why should I be interested in the school, I make no money out of it".

The Government has certainly curtailed the power of the priest; he can only dismiss a teacher if she refuses to teach the religion. Children can feel things. They knew we didn't believe. A child once said to me, "Miss Flanagan, you don't believe one word of the catechism and yet you teach it to us".

"Well, Elsie", I answered, "I stay here because I love you children and want you to see that there are other opinions besides those of the priests. Also I must earn my living. All this is our secret."

NAN FLANAGAN

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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

Glasgow Secular Society (Central Halls, 25 Bath Street), Sunday, February 14th, 3 p.m.: Messrs. CRONAN, HYSLOP, McRAE and MURRAY, "Brains Trust".

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, February 14th, 6.30 p.m.: Professor HYMAN LEVY, "The Role of Imagination in Science".

Manchester Branch NSS (Wheatshaf Hotel, High Street), Sunday, February 14th, 7.30 p.m.: F. J. CORINA, "God in the Modern World".

Marble Arch Branch NSS (Carpenter's Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1), Sunday, February 14th, 7.30 p.m.: F. A. RIDLEY, "The Vatican Council—The Summing-Up".

Richmond and Twickenham Humanist Group (Room 5, Community Centre, Sheen Road), Thursday, February 18th, 8 p.m.: STANLEY MAYNE, "Civil Liberty".

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square London, W.C.1), Sunday, February 14th, 11 a.m.: JOHN BURROWS, "Democratic Trends and Social Change".

Tuesday, February 16th, 7.30 p.m.: RAYMOND ROWLEY, "Cruel Sports".

Notes and News

OUR two women contributors this week, Nan Flanagan and Gillian Hawtin are both ex-Roman Catholic teachers. They are, however, from very different backgrounds—Miss Flanagan having been brought up a Catholic in Ireland, whereas Miss Hawtin was a convert—and their experiences were separated by half a century.

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THE Pope has again showed his affinity to Pius XII, rather than John XXIII, by calling on the Comitati Cibici, the financially powerful and—as the *Guardian* (1/2/65) put it—"somewhat mysterious secular branch of the Italian hierarchy" to return to the job of "illuminating" and "persuading Italian voters and politicians to follow the dictates of Catholic morality". The Comitati Cibici had not been received in the Vatican since the death of Pius XII, who used them as an "instrument of psychological pressure" against the Christian Democrats during the time of Alcide de Gasperi. Their leader, Dr. Luigi Geeda was involved

in the unsuccessful attempt in 1952 to bring the Neo-Fascist and Catholic parties into coalition. Relations between the Vatican and the Christian Democrats are again strained, and Dr. Geeda has, we learn, been received in audience by Pope Paul six times in the past few months. On January 30th, two days before the meeting of the Christian Democrat National Council, Dr. Geeda and 2,000 Comitati Cibici leaders were at the Vatican.

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DETAILS have come to light, the *Observer* reported (31/1/65), of "bitter dispute" over the appointment of a successor to Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft as General Secretary of the World Council of Churches. The dispute took up much of the time and energy of the recent meeting of the Central Committee of the WCC at Enugn, Nigeria. The Committee had been expected to ratify the choice of the Scottish Episcopalian, the Rev. Patrick Rodger, who had been nominated by the Executive. The East Germans however, suggested that Dr. Visser 't Hooft should stay on until August next year, and this motion was passed. But what puzzled many of the delegates was, the *Observer* said, the change that came over Dr. Visser 't Hooft himself. "No one had asked him to resign: it had been his own idea that he was getting too old. Suddenly, he seemed to be fighting tooth and nail to stay on, not just until 1966, but until after the next World Assembly in 1968, by which time he will be 68." And, the *Observer* continued, "he is believed to have drafted the last German motion" because he disapproved of Mr. Rodger's nomination.

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THE Italian left-wing press has rightly criticised an article by Mgr. Lambruschini in the Vatican weekly newspaper, *l'Osservatore Romano della Domenica*, which declared that taxpayers were not morally bound to abide strictly by the truth in completing their income tax forms. Roman Catholics may be entitled to lie about their incomes in legitimate defence against the inflated demands of the state, said the *Rome Paese Sera*, "but where does the poor non-Catholic stand?" Mgr. Lambruschini's advice is open to objection on more than one ground, but the principal complaint—the *Times* informed us (30/1/65)—was that "it favours employers at the cost of employees". The income of employees is declared by their employers, who are free to lie about their own profits but are sure to be accurate when declaring the wages of their dependants.

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THE Archbishop of York, writing on Sunday observance in the February issue of the *York Diocesan Leaflet*, acknowledged that some features of the present legislation are outdated and should be removed from the Statute Book. To retain them only brought Sunday observance into ridicule. But we must, said Dr. Coggan, seek to enunciate principles which will guide those who legislate for a nation, a large part of which owes no active allegiance to the Christian faith. "We must insist on the principle of one day of rest in seven as being of divine institution," he said. "The right of every man to worship on Sunday must be guarded," and "organised games which make work for large numbers of transport workers, police and so on should be restricted on Sundays. These are elementary principles but they will need watching." And, Dr. Coggan quoted: "The price of liberty is eternal vigilance".

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RELICS of St. Edmund, patron saint of England until superceded by St. George, have now been proved authentic—at least to the satisfaction of the British Roman Catholic hierarchy.

Catholic Evangelism

By GILLIAN HAWTIN

THE conventual institution, the Catholics themselves say, may pass away when its work is done. Since it flourishes, we may therefore argue that its work is *not* done. What then, is that work? It is evangelisation.

The convent schools are colonising, they are planting outliars, spawning everywhere. I turn to *The Convents of Great Britain and Ireland*, by Francesca M. Steele (Sands, 1924) and choosing three orders at random. I note they have houses to the number of four, four and fourteen respectively. I turn next to the latest edition of the *Directory of Religious Orders, Congregations and Societies*, and discover that the same orders now have six, seven, and twenty-three houses respectively. In addition, two have their own training colleges. These are active teaching orders. It is even more surprising to find that whereas in 1924 the Carmelites, possibly the most severe of contemplative orders, had twenty houses in England, three in Jersey, and one in Glasgow, they have now increased to twenty-seven in this country, and seven in Scotland. Their sole activities, apart from praying and religious exercises, are listed as making altar breads, vestments and altar linen, printing, painting, the whole being done "according to requirements".

"Do you think," I once heard a Catholic priest say, "a certain political party worries if it wins seats at the General Election? They work in other ways. If England were taken over by them, the *coup d'état* would come another way". Belloc, in *How the Reformation Happened*, devoted several chapters to showing how gradually the old faith was lost sight of by the people, because a revolution had occurred at the top. Could not that same process be reversed? The organisation of the episcopal established Church remains much as it came from Catholic lands in the 16th century. In its present position, honest neither to God nor to man, with diminished congregations, flirting with ecumenism, and lightly adopting the vestments of the mass in the mistaken belief they have no significance, the Church of England does *not* stand as a bulwark of Protestantism; it is a void which may one day be filled by the Roman hierarchy. The British Council of Churches has set 1980 as the date for reunion. Take care it is not reunion with Rome. When a Catholic prays, though with brotherly love in his heart, "*Ut unum sint*," he prays that the other fellow should become a Catholic. Reunion means absorption. The Catholic Church will not disdain the odd convert; his soul is of infinite worth. But they will strike for the centre, to capture the whole system and machine.

Do not think that the Catholic Church will ever rest while England remains lost to her. She prays for its conversion continuously; she works for it ceaselessly. From the moment of the Reformation in the 16th century, she sent her missionary priests here. The Elizabethan government was under no illusion; the penalty for operation was death. Three or four centuries is nothing for the Church of Rome; she takes a long view. And remember, it is not only our philosophy and our law that we owe to the freedom of inquiry which the Reformation won for us. Has not an overwhelming percentage of the science and technology which has transformed the wide world come from Protestant countries? But the situation is not immutable. It is not at all fantastic to suppose that these liberties can be lost. It is good to remind ourselves from time to time of the Utraquist heresy, or the fury of Rome against the Albigenses, but it may be more prudent to

look to the future. It matters not if 90 per cent of this land be Protestant or Agnostic, if minorities, determined, well organised, work revolutions.

Writing over twenty-five years ago about the death of Arianism, Belloc (in *The Great Heresies*, Sheed and Ward, 1938), said:

This is the fashion in which the first of the great heresies which threatened at one moment to undermine and destroy the whole of Catholic society, disappeared. The process had taken almost three hundred years, and it is interesting to note that as far as doctrines are concerned, about that space of time, or a little more, sufficed to take the substance out of the various main heresies of the Protestant reformers.

He concluded his book with the words:—

Even the most misguided, or the most ignorant of men, talking vaguely of "churches" are now using a language that rings hollow. The last generation could talk, in Protestant countries at least, of "the churches". The present generation cannot. There are not many churches; there is one. It is the Catholic Church on the one side, and its mortal enemy on the other. The lists are set.

If you dislike the voice of a Catholic historian—though he does nothing else, here, than uphold Bradlaugh when the latter spoke of the ultimate conflict being between Rome and Reason—you may remind yourself of the words of J. M. Robertson, in the final chapter of *A Short History of Christianity*:—

The ultimate problem is to forecast the future. A confident faith in continual progress is one of the commonest states of mind of the present . . . though of late the assumption has been increasingly challenged. In view of the unmistakable decadence of the creeds as such, it is natural for rationalists to expect an early reduction of Christianity to the status now held by "folk-lore". . . . But while this may be called probable, there can be no scientific certainty in the matter. For one thing, the process must for economic reasons be much slower than used to be thought likely, for instance, in the time of Voltaire . . . Voltaire was so far right that a century has seen the old Christianity abandoned, after a reaction, by a large part of the best intelligence of our age, as it was by that of his. But there may be more reactions . . . The average of mind is still poor beside the best . . . It is indeed dimly conceivable that . . . the mere warfare of capital and labour may end in the degradation of the people, and the consequent reduction of upper-class life to the plane of mere sensuous gratification and "practical science". In either event, a religion now seen by instructed men to be incredible may be preserved by a community neither instructed nor religious. But that is a speculation, not a scientific forecast.

Unfortunately, it is rather less a speculation, and closer to becoming a forecast than might have been dreamed to be possible a few decades ago.

It is sometimes hoped, in this country, that a wedge can be driven between the clergy and the laity. The facts do not support the hope. The Catholic body has grown in strength, numbers, organisation, and demands since the act of toleration in 1829. A. C. F. Beales (who has never had any inhibitions about the protagonism of his beliefs notwithstanding his academic position) reminds us that until 1847 the Catholics struggled to get a share in government grants for school building. From then until 1902 they fought for a share of local education rates. By the Act of 1902, the schools, once built, were to be given 90 per cent running costs by the local education authorities. Since 1902 the Catholic claim, growing by what it fed upon, has had full support. Wrote Beales, in 1950:—

The Catholics of this country have a public reputation for knowing their faith, knowing their own mind, and standing solidly together when a public issue arises which affects their position. The sudden appearance of Catholic Parents and Electors Associations all over the country in 1945, to meet the coming education bill, is only the latest manifestation of

a solidarity which had raised nearly half a million pounds for the Ensis Fund in 1870, and had a profound influence in securing the success which Cardinal Vaughan achieved in the Balfour Act of 1902.

In 1895 there appeared a maxim in *The Tablet*, later made famous by Sir John Gilbert:—"Catholic education for all Catholic children, in Catholic schools". Does the reader realise to what extent independent convent schools are dependent on non-Catholic fees? Here are figures for 1955, from a Catholic source:—

Age	Children at Catholic Independent Schools			Children at Catholic Independent Schools		
	Total	RC	Non-Catholic	Total	RC	Non-Catholic
5-15	100	83	17	100	51	49
5-11	100	78	22	100	50	50
11-15	100	90	10	100	52	48

Catholics, so far from being abashed at asking for their own schools when state schools are already provided, tell us how they have lightened the burden of the state schools by providing education at their own expense for their own children.

It must be remembered [writes Beales] that the State receives, and has received, over many years, the benefit of schools which Catholics have provided entirely out of private money, and that the people (often very poor) who subscribed this money, were in addition paying their full share of the rates and taxes which go to support the schools provided by the State . . . They have had to pay twice over, and both payments are today much heavier than they were in the past.

One more burden imposed by Catholicism upon the Catholic layman. No birth control—and double charges for the results!

But the layman believes he is fighting for his eternal salvation, and for that of his children, when he fights for his own schools. You may see this in all countries and centuries. There has been a second collection for this express purpose, since 1944, every mass, every Sunday, in every Catholic church. The situation will not change because of the parents' financial sacrifices. It is like this now, it was so twenty years ago, it was so two hundred years ago. In penal days, Catholics of any rank and fortune sent their children to the Continent, Douai especially. Until after 1829, fluent French was the mark of the educated Catholic, though to go abroad for one's education was to incur the penalty of losing the right to any real property.

We cannot always rely on support at ministerial level. Mr. George Tomlinson, opening a Catholic school at York in October, 1948, said: "Catholics can rest assured that the government will respect their rights. Schools like this are the only antidote to the many problems facing us in the world today."

"Schools like this" stand for the Syllabus of Errors which tells us it is heresy that "every man is free to embrace and profess the religion he shall believe true, guided by the light of reason". "Schools like this" stand for censorship. In Eire this does not merely mean banning Macchiavelli or James Joyce; it means excluding every trumpety novel which has a reference to a divorce or an act of adultery.

We may obtain more help from the sturdy anti-Catholicism of the local education authorities. Here there has been frequent resistance to Catholic demands, often overridden by ministerial intervention. R.A. Butler had his doubts, on April 4th, 1944, whether the Catholic body could find the ten million required of them at that date. However, find it they did. Open the *Catholic Herald* for September 25th, 1964, and read that sixteen new churches were opened in the diocese of Southwark within the last year, that eleven more are under construction, that the Salesian College at Battersea is to be rebuilt at a cost of £250,000.

Is the Catholic Church really so hard up? Is all this fuss really deflecting our attention from the fact they are

doing very nicely thank you? Are they extracting as much as they can out of the state in order to divert other funds to other purposes? If grace is all it's made out to be, why cannot it keep the child "safe" in a state school? We answer the Catholic demands with the question why should we support indoctrination?

THE RATIONALIST ANNUAL 1965

(Continued from page 51)

trend as well as the collusion of certain psychiatrists who play along are to be deplored.

Szasz does not say that society is not justified in setting some values even if other values would be workable in some other conceivable society, but I wish he would have raised this point and elaborated on it. He also leaves himself open to criticism when he mentions only borderline instances and not the many court cases involving extreme forms of pathological behaviour that could hardly be tolerated in any society. According to Szasz these people can be happy with their neuroses and should only receive psycho-analytic treatment on their own request because to do otherwise would not keep the ego intact. What would Szasz have us do: keep the ego intact and protect society by imprisonment or protect society and free the "criminal" after psycho-analytic treatment? I don't think such tamperings with the "ego" are as serious as Szasz vaguely implies and certainly would not result in some kind of mental collapse.

Hutten's essay is concerned with the validity of subjective evidence in psychology and whether the use of such data is scientific. He concludes that it is without sounding too much like Bishop Berkeley, but it is odd in his discussion of the act of observation he makes no mention of the philosophy of A. N. Whitehead; but perhaps Hutten is like myself and can't understand it.

Getting back to earth we have "Probation and the Crime Problem" by Howard Jones who simply outlines the present increasing incidence of crime in modern Great Britain and the successful application of group interviews by probation officers with their charges. The efficacy of this method with the working class seems to be related to their being more influenced by the opinions of their fellows.

"Why the Cross?" is H. J. McCloskey's blast at the Christian ideas concerning the cross. There is more than one set of beliefs on this topic and the author criticises them in turn, often pitting one modern theologian against another, but it is when McCloskey pits these doctrines against his own common sense that the fun begins; however, when these doctrines are examined from the angle of God's nature and the mentality of those who would worship such a being the whole matter becomes most unfunny, and one can see how these sentiments are a drag on any improvement in compassion and intelligence that is so surely needed in the world. McCloskey could have asked why, if the cross-business was so wonderful, didn't God have it done earlier? To the already-converted a criticism of these doctrines may sound like child's play but such matters need some repetition and to do it well is all the more commendable.

Different models and analogies have had their day in the history of science and the same is true for theology. The argument from design for the existence of God was once in vogue and used as its favourite example the watch which necessitated a mechanic because of the complexity and purposefulness of the parts. By analogy the complexity of the world necessitated a divine mechanic. M. H. Carré bothered to expend his energies in writing a learned history of the mechanism analogy as it developed in

England. I suppose the history of any idea is of interest though and Carré shows the interactions between pious scientists and professional theologians with the discoveries of the day until even this phase of theology also had to be stashed away in the already commodious trash-can for defunct religious endeavours. The end, of course, came with Darwinism which provided a better explanation for organic design. During the heyday of these ideas everyone seemed to shut his eyes to the amount of disorder present in nature and if they wanted to be consistent (as pointed out by Bertie) they should have also postulated a destroying deity.

Readers of this year's *Rationalist Annual* won't find any world-shaking ideas to inflame them, but most I'm sure will be entertained and informed upon dipping between the covers of this volume some cold winter's night. Just one last querulous query: why in this otherwise well-rounded selection of essays was there none on sex?

CORRESPONDENCE

CHRISTIANITY: THE DEBIT ACCOUNT

Mrs. Margaret Knight's article, "Christianity: the Debit Account" must surely be reckoned as one of the best things she has done.

It is saddening to realise how many well educated people there are whose knowledge of this subject is either perverted or lacking.

I think that such people, after making a careful study of the foul and bloody history—I use the politest possible language—of the Christian Church, must ask themselves whether they can honestly have anything to do with the damned thing.

A shocking question for a Christian, but a perfectly fair one. May one hope that Mrs. Knight will elaborate this article and publish it in booklet form?

A. W. COLEMAN

[We understand that Mrs. Knight has given permission for the *National Secular Society* to issue her article as a leaflet.—Ed.]

MARXISM AND THE INDIVIDUAL

F. A. Ridley advises me to read Plekhanov's book *The Role of the Individual in History*, and thinks by my doing so I may be able in future to criticise Kautsky and perhaps himself more intelligently. I like the perhaps himself bit.

Thanks for the advice Mr. Ridley, but I am sorry to tell you that I have read Plekhanov's book, and was not impressed by it at all. To say that exceptional men influence history insofar as they reflect the ideas of their epochs becomes a piece of rubbish when at the same time you claim that the historical process would evolve essentially the same way independent of their existence or influence. In what sense do exceptional individuals influence history, if as you have claimed in one of your letters, the whole historical process would evolve the same way independent of them?

You have claimed yourself that without Calvin the Reformation would have been defeated. How do you reconcile this striking claim with your Marxian view of an exceptional individual being merely one who exploits the ideas of his time, and also the view that the historical process would evolve the same way independent of his influence?

You say Marxism does not deny in toto the influence of the individual, yet you have claimed the counter-reformation would have succeeded but for Calvin. Yet you have the nerve to tell me to read Plekhanov in order to produce intelligent criticism of Marxism. I therefore seriously advise you to get your philosophical ideas in order first before starting to try to advise anyone. Then we may get some intelligent answers from you.

R. SMITH

CHURCHILL

Despite the many eulogies which are appearing in the nationalist press, of Sir Winston Churchill, the fact remains that here we had a man who had no time for deep and consistent thought about human affairs. If any humanist or freethinker had asked him whether he accepted the fundamental principle that human problems should be faced in terms of human intellectual and moral resources without invoking supernatural authority, he would have rejected any such suggestion.

The fact that prayers were said for him in churches all over the country and that the Queen and Prince Philip are mentioned as taking part in these prayers is a timely reminder that whether Sir Winston Churchill was a regular churchgoer or not—and it is suggested that he was not—he nevertheless did nothing to

remove the yoke of superstition with its repressive effects on education and scientific work which still hampers us in our efforts for greater public enlightenment and advance to world civilisation.

Sir Winston Churchill had no aptitude for the difficult task of achieving a consistent rational view of human affairs. Indeed he is well-known for his assertion that "Consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds". And of course this is the kind of assertion which humanists and secularists have very little patience with since it is obvious that the whole aim of scientists and philosophers is to achieve consistency in all branches of human knowledge and thought.

As for his interest in the whole of humanity around him we can see that he was a parochialist par excellence as shown by such statements as the following, "We must recollect what it is we have to contend for. It is for our liberty, it is for our independence, nay, for our existence as a nation".

Consistent humanists will agree readily that this is the very stuff from which the terrible international anarchy, which menaces the very survival of mankind, is constructed.

If his blindness to the menace of national independence is obvious, his support for monarchy and imperialism is equally made plain by many statements such as the following, "I have not become the King's First Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire". But despite all the alleged strength of character and capacity for inspiring leadership which Churchill was alleged by other parochial patriots and imperialists to possess, the fact remains that the British Empire has been decimated and there are many new divisions and antagonisms at work which a little more care for real human sympathy and consistency of principle might well have avoided.

I am not being hardhearted in reminding freethinkers of these things. I just think that the future of the human race should be set above sentimentalism about a man whose past has failed to direct human social affairs into more intelligent and hopeful channels.

E. G. MACFARLANE

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