

# The Freethinker

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MAY DAY has been a recognised feast of labour for three-quarters of a century—ever since 1889 when the Second (Socialist) International first officially pronounced it to be such. Since that seemingly distant date, the importance of the working class has greatly increased politically and industrially, and the official recognition given to May Day has increased also. In several continental lands it is already a recognised public holiday devoted in particular to the recognition of the dignity of labour. For in this respect “we are all Socialists nowadays”, as a Victorian Liberal, Sir William Harcourt, once phrased it. Even German Fascism, officially dubbed National Socialism, had its feast of labour; and by what must surely be one of the most monstrous paradoxes in recorded history, the ghastly Auschwitz extermination centre bore on its tragic portals of death, the sublime motto, *Arbeit macht Frei*, “Labour makes Free”.

## Rome and May Day

In this year of grace, 1965, an even more ancient and ubiquitous totalitarian state than the Third Reich has, it appears, also decided to extend its august patronage to the traditional feast of labour. For we read in the Dublin *Sunday Press* (2/5/65) the interesting and significant news that: “The Pope received thousands of Catholic workers in general audience in St. Peter’s Basilica yesterday and said some groups made labour a source of social hatred and passion instead of brotherly love and the exaltation of noble sentiments”.

“The Pontiff said there were some who made labour an argument of permanent and programmatic social struggle instead of harmonious and positive co-operation in justice and liberty.

“The Pope urged them to pray that the justice and peace desired by the great humble artisan of Nazareth may re-flower again in a Christian way in the world of labour”.

Here surely, is a come-down for the Second Person in the Catholic Trinity. From God Almighty to a mere artisan.

## Rome and the Social Order

The past and present relationship between the Church of Rome and the working class—the proletariat in the Marxist sense of the word—is not only interesting in itself, but also is a pointer to the permanent social strategy of Rome *vis-a-vis* the contemporary secular social order. For, as is surely common knowledge by this time, I have never subscribed to the ideological myth so sedulously cultivated by the Church that (as befits an institution of divine origin) it represents today, and has always represented in the past, an unchanging, rigidly immobile institution—*semper eadem* (always the same). It would assuredly be the greatest recorded miracle to stand perfectly still and unaltered throughout 2,000 years of unceasing change elsewhere!

Far from such being the case, Rome has always moved as times changed though sometimes, it is true, rather belatedly. As, for example, at the Reformation, where it is

perhaps arguable that reform from within might have averted the revolution from without if the Papacy had listened to Erasmus *before* Luther appeared upon the scene. But still, the Church has always eventually moved. This recurring fact is as true in the realm of social, as of intellectual, phenomena.

In point of fact, the sociological evolution of the Papacy is in some ways more intriguing than its sometimes spectacular intellectual somersaults, as in the case of Galileo and the heliocentric astronomy first condemned and then finally accepted by Rome. For in the sociological sphere, Rome has successfully recognised in theory and co-operated with in fact, the social orders

commonly termed chattel-slavery, feudalism, capitalism and even communism. Only a few specialists are aware that in the 17th and 18th centuries in a republic of Paraguay in South America, the Jesuits practised for a century and a half a system of economic collectivism, without trade, private property or even money (love of which was the “root of all evil”). This was a social order far more communistic than are any of the present so-called Communist states east of the Iron Curtain, none of which so far at least appears to have transcended the limits of state socialism (cf R. Cunningham Graham, *A Vanished Arcadia*).

In the social as well as in the theological sphere, Rome has changed repeatedly, and one can relevantly add in this connection that all the signs point to another major sociological change in the near future.

## The Social Encyclicals

The current phase of papal social policy may be said to have begun on May 15th, 1891, with the famous Encyclical Letter on the Condition of the Working Classes, by Pope Leo XIII (1879-1903), known, as is customary from its opening words, *Rerum Novarum*.

In this pioneer encyclical, the Pope cautiously surveyed the new social conditions first adumbrated by the Industrial Revolution in England in the 18th century and domiciled upon the European Continent during the 19th century. Leo’s diagnosis was radical: “a few rich men have laid upon the labouring poor, a yoke little better than slavery itself”—an apt enough description of Victorian capitalism. But his conclusions were limited to pious exhortations, plus a vague wish for a more equitable distribution of property. Subsequent papal encyclicals have not really gone much beyond the conclusions of *Rerum Novarum*. Indeed, the best known one, *Quadragesimo Anno* (i.e. in the 40th year after *Rerum Novarum*—May 15th, 1931) was much more reactionary, and openly pro-fascist in tone.

## A New Relic

Rome never puts all her cards on the table at once. However, it seems clear by now that the outstanding political fact about our “century of the common man”, is the emergence of the working class in both the political and the economic fields. The Church of Rome which, whether infallible or merely experienced, is realistic in practical

## VIEWS AND OPINIONS

### *The Carpenter of Nazareth*

By F. A. RIDLEY



affairs—as its long and chequered evolution has proved—evidently recognises this fact, and her actions increasingly prove it. For already we have the feast of St. Joseph the Worker, and now we have this May Day message of Pope Paul on “the great, humble artisan of Nazareth”.

That cynical old humbug, Dean Inge, once shrewdly pointed out that the Church only discovered the workers *after* they got the vote! However, they have got it now and Rome evidently is cognisant of this fact. During the 19th century, the ever adaptable Vatican dropped feudalism like a hot brick and switched over to the support of capitalism, whose pioneers it had burned alive for usury during the Middle Ages. Will the 20th century witness another switch over to the rising power of labour? Be that as it may, we are evidently going to hear a lot more about the “humble, great carpenter of Nazareth”. Perhaps he will begin a new fashion in relics. In place of the “True Cross”, by now surely somewhat rusty, or the Holy Shroud of Turin, by now surely somewhat moth-eaten we may expect some genuine proletarian relics—Jesus’s saw or his working clothes. Best of all some pious archaeologist may eventually unearth a trade union card of the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, Nazareth Branch, paid up member, Jesus Christ.

Then Rome would indeed be with it!

## Philosophy of Science—Some Facets

### 10—SCIENTISTS AND SCEPTICS

By DOUGLAS BRAMWELL

In the previous article it was suggested that although scientific laws are descriptive the scientist, in discovering those laws, goes beyond the limits of pure description when he assumes the existence of certain unobserved things or the happenings of certain unobserved events. Sets of instrument readings are explained in terms of unseen particles and their interactions.

In an attempt to deny this conclusion and to show that science is purely descriptive, that it tells us “how” but never “why”, some philosophers of science argue that unobserved particles or events are not to be thought of as something existing but only as a convenient way of talking about instrument readings. What sounds like a theory about particles is really a theory about readings, the particles are helpful “symbols” or “shorthand” which happens to make the theory easier to write down.

This denial of the scientist’s right to believe in anything but directly observed happenings is sometimes expanded into a more general philosophy. This view states that the nature of the world must be described only in terms of what is observed. From this outlook it is but a short step to the inspiring doctrine that nothing exists but one’s own observations.

It has been one of the more useful functions of Marxist philosophy to stand in opposition to this subjectivist trend in the philosophy of science—a trend which lends support to the irrationalist existentialist philosophies which are now being used to bolster religious beliefs that are impossible to defend rationally.

Although our activities in relation to the outside world may not, as Marxists maintain, prove its existence—total scepticism is logically impregnable—they make its existence a reasonable working hypothesis. It is a hypothesis used by philosophers of science when they are hailing a taxi or eating their breakfast. They become sceptics only when they are lecturing.

## General Delgado

READERS of this bulletin will have been shocked to learn of the discovery of two bodies on the outskirts of Badajoz, near the Spanish-Portuguese border, almost certainly those of General Humberto Delgado and his secretary Senhora Campos.

The only people who could have murdered General Delgado—and this seems obviously a case of murder—were his worst enemies, the Portuguese and Spanish Fascists. This looks like a typical Fascist crime, done with typical Fascist methods.

The Portuguese secret police, PIDE, has repeatedly resorted in the past to the assassination of Salazar’s political enemies. Dr. Ferreira Soares, Alfredo Diniz, Francisco Marques, Jose Moreira, Militao Ribeiro, Joaquim Lemos de Oliveira, Manuel da Silva Junior and Jose Dias Coelho, are just a few of the people who have suffered this fate.

Dr. Ferreira Soares was shot down in his consulting room, Alfredo Diniz was shot down in a road ambush near Lisbon, Jose Dias Coelho was shot down in a Lisbon street. Names of the PIDE agents who committed some of these murders are well-known, but they were never prosecuted.

It is also a typical Portuguese Fascist manoeuvre to try to attribute these political murders to opponents of the regime. We were only surprised that some of the international press, including British papers, naively repeated this long-discredited type of slander, a proved weapon of Salazar to try and divide his opponents.

The Spanish authorities have always had close co-operation with the Salazar police in matters of repression.

During the Spanish civil war Spanish refugees in Portugal were handed back to Franco. Manuel Guedes, who is now a prisoner in Peniche, was arrested by the Franco police and sent to Portugal. The same thing happened more recently to another Portuguese prisoner, Germano Pedro.

Delgado’s murder is just one more of a long series by which the Portuguese and Spanish Fascists have maintained their sinister record of oppression and crime in Europe.

[Reprinted from the *Portuguese and Colonial Bulletin*, April-May].

## ARCHBISHOP FORECASTS SCHISM IN FRENCH CHURCH

IN January, the Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Felton, appealed for unity among French Catholics and a healing of the divisions caused by the Algerian war and its aftermath. His appeal seems to have had little effect. And now the Co-adjutor Archbishop of Rouen, Monsignor Pallier, has referred to a possible schism in the Roman Catholic Church in France at the end of 1965 when the Vatican Council is expected to ratify the schemas on religious liberty and the place of the Church in the modern world (*The Guardian*, 14/5/65). Monsignor Pallier told a regional congress of Independent Catholic Action Workers that the hierarchy was receiving almost daily a flow of letters expressing “a refusal of obedience and fidelity to the Church, and which by their tone could be the preparation for a schism”. This might only affect a small number of right-wing Catholics, but they would “harden in their state of malaise”.

The hierarchy, on the other hand, has recently condemned an independent Catholic weekly for publishing an article by a Marxist (even though it was answered in the same issue by a Dominican) and has forced most of the progressive officials of the Catholic university students’ organisation to resign.



## How I Became a Humanist

By PHYLLIS GRAHAM

(Continued from page 166)

But I must come to the end of my twenty years in the "Concentration Camp" of Holy Mother Church! Not unnaturally my health suffered a good deal, and at the end of the twelfth year I had actually been allowed six months' leave under vows. I lived quietly at home and was nursed by my mother, who implored me not to return to the convent. It was 1938—the year of Munich . . . If I had only known then what was about to happen! If I had only realised what actually was happening at that very time . . . and the dastardly and unforgivable part the Papacy was playing in the tragedy of Europe and the world . . . But how could I have had any inkling of what even now, at this present day, is hushed up and known only to a few? In any case, even if the truth had been presented to me, my mind would have totally rejected it. Like the rest of the great herd of obedient and conditioned children of the Church, I knew only what the Church chose that I should know, and nothing more. And was proud, with the characteristic Catholic arrogance, that it should be so.

And so I said goodbye to my long-suffering parents and returned to my servitude. Another eight years dragged on. We survived the war. I became absorbed in designing, lettering and illuminating and miniature painting, work which served to earn us a living, and this, I think, kept me going during that last stretch. But again my health was deteriorating—I was able to keep less and less of the rule—and finally it became clear to me that I was in the wrong place and could go on no longer. I was granted release from my vows, and emerged into the post-war world in November 1946.

I had now to reverse the process of twenty years ago and learn to live once more in a strange world. To me it seemed at first very like a mad world! But sheer necessity hurried on the process, and I soon learned to overcome my nausea caused by the horrible and all-pervading odour of petrol, and to breathe in the fumes as cheerfully and unconsciously as everybody else. It took me longer to conquer my terror of crossing a busy street . . . And it took quite a time to shake off the web of conventional ways and customs that still clung to me . . . for instance, I very often posted a letter without sealing it, or was just saved from doing so by a helpful friend. Because of course we never sealed our letters in the convent; they all had to go to the Superior to be censored.

It was a strange sensation to be free . . . to be under obedience to no one, to go out for long walks, to say and think what I liked, without having to confess it as a "culpe" in the Chapter of Faults before all the assembled community! Of course, I was still a child of the Church, and had no intention at that time of being anything else, so my freedom was really only relative. Although I can honestly say I have never had the faintest desire to return to the convent, I did feel—for some time—the old urgent desire to *belong*, to be protected, to be loved in a special way by God. This need, and the fact that I was soon surrounded by new and old Catholic friends anxious to help me readjust myself, probably kept me in the Church for the next seven years.

It was not until 1953 that I made the final break. I had been teaching in a convent school, and had come to the conclusion that I could no longer give religious instruction

or attend the services with sincerity . . . and incidentally that I simply couldn't stick the convent atmosphere any more! I remember well the queer feeling of deliberately missing a Mass of Obligation for the first time. The fear of Hell lingers, in spite of the reassurances of reason and intelligence!

Strange to say, the final blow to my faith in Roman Catholicism was dealt—all unconsciously, and how horrified he would be if he knew!—by the chaplain of the convent school. In the course of a conversation with him I mentioned cremation, and said that I thought the Pope would be forced to allow it in time, owing to the needs of modern life, etcetera; that I desired it for myself, and that I wished I could get a great number of Catholics to sign a petition to be sent to the Pope. The good priest, who was a convert and broad-minded, smiled at me tolerantly, and didn't attempt to rebuke me for my heretical ideas. "Well, a Round Robin to the Holy Father would be quite a notion," he said, "but I doubt if it would ever reach him. Such things have to go through the Curia, you know . . . the cardinals have the business of sorting out and censoring . . . and so . . ." He gave a shrug and left me to imagine the rest.

And at that moment I had a sort of swift intellectual vision . . . of the Roman Church as a political institution. I understood something of her true nature, and turned from it with astonishment and horror, and afterwards loathing. But I saw only dimly what I see so clearly today. Whether the priest was right about the Cardinals I don't know—I should imagine the Pope, "the last autocrat of civilisation", the only possessor of absolute power over the minds and souls of five hundred million beings, would know just what he wanted to know, and cardinals be hanged. Most certainly that was the case with Pius XII, still ingloriously reigning at the time of this conversation. Knowing what I now know, I am glad that I made my final exit from the Church of Rome in the last years of his disastrous pontificate.

No other form of Christianity appealed to me, in spite of various efforts on the part of Nonconformist friends to hail me as a brand plucked from the burning and hook me into their form of salvation. Sick with a hangover from the glut of religion I felt nothing but disgust with the hollow hypocrisy of it all, and the sight of these violently opposed groups of god-worshippers waving their little packets of "whiter-than-white" truth in my face—purely out of charity for my straying soul, of course—set the final seal on my repudiation of Christianity in any form. At that time an emotional rejection, it developed later into an intellectual realisation of the complete illogicality of the whole Christian set-up; but this of course was a gradual process. The word "evolution" had only the vaguest meaning . . . it was only years later that I was startled to see the whole substance of Christianity collapse before my eyes as the truth about man burst upon me. A "fallen creature"? Needing a "saviour" to redeem him? But surely he is the opposite—a risen creature! Risen from the ranks of the shrew, the monkey and the ape . . . risen by the power of natural selection and by his own painful, undaunted effort in the face of frightful obstacles! All hail, man! Look no more for salvation from any self-styled

(Concluded on page 172)



## This Believing World

OH DEAR, another divinely beautiful BBC programme has gone west: none other than *Lift up Your Hearts*—for which the late William Kent compiled an antidote, *Lift up Your Heads*, a splendid anthology for Freethinkers. But to return to *Lift up Your Hearts*: why has it been withdrawn? When first produced it assumed, said Kenneth Lamb, “that most of its listeners would be at least nominally Christians. In 1965, this cannot be assumed” (*Daily Mail*, 1/5/65). For Mr. Lamb, Head of BBC Religious Broadcasting, this is a confession of complete failure. Why did not the broadcasts—the most utterly boring of all broadcasts—lift up our hearts?

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EVEN though the painter Annigoni (whose portrait of the Queen earned him fame) was born in Italy and was thoroughly indoctrinated with Roman Catholicism, he has outgrown it. He still believes in God, but is not a church-goer and, he told the *Sunday Express* (9/5/65), “Honestly, I can live without priests”. He thinks too, that “today pop is a sort of religion in itself”—and some people might say you can’t sink lower than that!

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A correspondent to the *News of the World* (2/5/65) received two guineas for a letter on ghosts. It seems that in general they appear because they seek help, and “you may be the one appointed to help them”. In fact, we are told, “they are working out their salvation through good deeds”. But what we don’t understand is how salvation can be attained without the professed acknowledgment that Jesus (son of the Holy Ghost) is their saviour. However, the correspondent assures us that ghosts are “intensely interesting, and he should know for he has “seen and talked to many”. We think he is to be congratulated on so easily winning his prize money.

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Two vice-captains of opposing test sides—Australia and the West Indies—were “on the same team” on Sunday, March 28th, we learn from the *Trinidad Daily Mirror* (29/3/65). Brian Booth and Conrad Hunte were not playing cricket this time, but were preaching from the pulpit of Tranquility Methodist Church in Port-of-Spain. And Mr. Booth—who has often said that every time he goes in to bat God goes with him—told the congregation what kind of life they should lead, using two balloons to demonstrate what he meant.

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A BALLOON was not a balloon, Mr. Booth said, until it was filled with air. And he called on his listeners to lead a “full life like this inflated balloon”. Man, he added, “must be filled from the inside with the spirit of God, who is with me always at cricket, work and with my family. He comes first in my life”. Apparently, even before the family! However, it was no doubt a lively innings, and both Booth and Hunte autographed Bibles afterwards.

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### NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY ANNUAL CONFERENCE

New Victoria Hotel, Corporation Street, Birmingham  
Reception in the New Victoria Hotel on  
Saturday, June 5th at 7 p.m.

#### THE CONFERENCE (for Members only)

will be held on Sunday, June 6th in two sessions:  
10 a.m.—12.30 p.m. and 2 p.m.—4.30 p.m.

## HOW I BECAME A HUMANIST

(Concluded from page 171)

saviour . . . your unique greatness is assured, if only you will live and work by its power within you!

But the hydra-headed monster is still very much in possession of our torn and troubled world. My Catholic friends hammered at me, anxious to save me from the Hell that would inevitably be my punishment were I to die “outside the Church” (threat of menace and horror to the faithful soul!). The only way to deal with them was to cut myself off from them altogether and this I did. Thus enduring the third guillotine stroke of fate that has cut away great portions of my life as if they had never been. There have been two more since then.

In spite of this, I seem to have been haunted all along the line by other Catholics gate-crashing into my solitude and insisting on trying to save me. The sole result of which has been to sicken me more and more with the iniquity of a system that derives its power over human beings from fear. Fear of God’s wrath—of the Church’s condemnation—of the eternal flames of Hell. Is it possible that man, with all his progress, culture, civilisation, astounding abilities and ever-increasing knowledge and power—is it possible that he can still be motivated, cowed into submission, by such primitive witchcraft? The tragic answer is Yes, and this I think is a more devastating fact than even the greatest discoveries of science.

When I look honestly into myself, I cannot deny that a vestige of this horrible fear is still deep within me. My reason, my intelligence, my knowledge of the truth about man and the universe as revealed to me by the sciences all dismiss it as a relic of barbarism, a left-over from the garbage-heap of horrors in the vast unconscious of the human race. But my emotions, not concerned with truth, are still involved and perhaps they will be in some measure to the end.

This is far from being my main reason for actively “becoming a Humanist”. But it may have something to do with it. One needs to get out continually from that evil darkness in the mind, to meet and converse with intelligent beings whose thoughts are not blackened and distorted by that horrible shadow of eternal despair. And I don’t think one need be ashamed of seeking courage from the sense of solidarity with a group of thinkers who, like oneself, are prepared to reject anything that is less than truth.

My actual growth into Humanist ways of thought began just over two years ago, when I came to live at Worthing, after a particularly gruelling stretch of experience. I needed to rest, relax, forget. So I joined the library and read and read, wonderful books that taught me the truth about man and the universe. It was an astonishing revelation of my own ignorance, but the enlightenment brought with it a strange exultation, and a happiness quite different from anything religion ever gave. And far more satisfying!

And so I think my main reason for joining the Humanist movement is the expression of an ardent desire that all men should know freedom from fear and happiness based on truth.

This may seem at present an unattainable dream. One feels so helpless, so insignificant, against the vast mass of ignorance, apathy and superstition. But life itself is built up from the infinitesimal and the Humanist atoms are surely coming together, beginning to create life anew.



# THE FREETHINKER

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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, May 30th, 6.45 p.m.: R. J. KENNING, "The Crucifixion".

South Place Ethical Society, (Conway Hall, Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, May 30th, 11 a.m.: Professor HYMAN LEVY, "The Mythology of Sin".

## Notes and News

POPE Paul has given the Jesuits the unenviable task of resisting atheism. But the *Catholic Herald* (14/5/65) was a little worried about the Pope's use of military metaphors in making the assignment. It was "in a sense, natural, as the Jesuits are outstanding by the Church's army, the soldiers of Christ who are fighting the good fight for the triumph of Christ's Church". But there was a danger that the ordinary Catholic might misunderstand the use of military terminology. "He may be tempted to see in it an invitation to attack the atheist along with his atheism, and to countenance the use of political, social and even military weapons against him on that account". And, the *Herald* remarked, "it is never very difficult to start a holy war". Moreover, the lesson of the post-war period has been that "the defeat of atheism will not be brought about by oppression, discrimination or injustice". If conversion is the aim "persuasion through dialogue and by example must be the means".

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In fact, the *Herald* continued, the whole concept of "fighting" in the name of Christianity required re-examination. "Today we need the synthetical approach". And the Archbishop of Toronto was quoted approvingly: "The Christian today feels a deep solidarity with all of humanity. He engages himself in healing the wounds of men and building up the human community in this world. He seeks to resist the forces of division and hatred in himself and in society". Sweet-sounding words—but we should be foolish to accept them uncritically. This, in fact, is just one of the faces that the Church of Rome shows to the world. Far from resisting "the forces of division", it will still insist upon its own schools—state-supported if possible—and struggle for control in the trades unions, as well as cen-

soring books, plays and films, where it can. There, indeed, is the clue to the Church's *apparent* change of heart. It will fight, all right, where it can and when it pays to do so.

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MALCOLM Muggeridge was at his most perverse in an article, "Backward Christian Soldiers", in the *New Statesman* (14/5/65), in which he deplored modernistic trends in the Churches. Pessimism, he argued, "is Christianity's great strength, and the reason for its survival. The concept of this world as a wilderness, and of human life as short and brutish, fits the circumstances of most people most of the time". But it is surely the optimistic side of Christianity—that relating to the other side of the grave—that has been the stronger force in its survival. It is curious incidentally that the materialist Hobbes should be paraphrased here by Mr. Muggeridge. And the final words of the article were especially extravagant. If the Roman Catholic Church is crumbling, said Mr. Muggeridge, "A light will have gone out which has illumined all our lives, shone through the art and literature of a long civilisation, and served to hold at bay, if only fitfully and inadequately, the wild appetites to gorge and dominate which afflict all our hearts".

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THE Catholic editor of the *New Statesman*, Paul Johnson, agreed with Mr. Muggeridge that "the Roman Catholic Church is now firmly launched on the road to oblivion". Moreover, Mr. Johnson welcomed the prospect of the deterioration of his Church. "I have had many dealings with clergymen", he said, "and have formed a poor opinion of their judgment, particularly on important matters of religion. If there is another life, it is a fact of such radical importance that our attitudes to it ought to be shaped by our own individual consciences, without benefit of clergy". Which seems to indicate a serious deterioration of Mr. Johnson's own Catholicism.

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THE week June 21st-27th will be Anti-Apartheid Week, arranged by the Anti-Apartheid Movement (89 Charlotte Street, London, W.1), and on June 26th, South African Freedom Day, a party will be held at the New Ambassadors Hotel, London, to which Commonwealth Prime Ministers and High Commissioners will be invited. The week will be opened at the Central Hall by a dramatic presentation of the South African people's fight against apartheid. Many well-known actors and actresses will take part. The final event, on the afternoon of June 27th, will be an international rally in Trafalgar Square.

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In 1957, according to a Gallup Poll, seven out of ten Americans said that religious influence was increasing in the USA; in 1962, 45 per cent still believed it, while 31 per cent said it was on the decline. The latest poll shows a reversal of these figures: 33 per cent say it is increasing, and 45 per cent say it is decreasing. Of the remainder, 13 per cent say there is no difference, and 9 per cent have no opinion. Men tend to be more "pessimistic" than women, people with college educations more so than those without, and people in their twenties more so than older ones. Roman Catholics are, however, more optimistic than Protestants.

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C. Bradlaugh Bonner, President of the World Union of Freethinkers, tells us of a crippled Freethinker of 65, unable to go up or down stairs, who would like to live with another Freethinker in London. An Irish doctor and a widower with no pension, he finds his present home too dear, and he has to leave by the end of June. Will anyone who can help please write to Dr. E. Morrison, 95 Hendon Lane, London, N.3, or telephone Finchley 8861?



# The Age of Unreason

By GEORGE R. GOODMAN

IN a previous article, I shortly alluded to the various astrological ages through which the Earth has already passed and will in all probability, continue to be passing. An age lasts 2,160 years. It will, therefore, be apparent that we only know the last age (Pisces) very well; we know a little about the two preceding ages, Aries and Taurus, and practically nothing about all the others.

The Piscean age ended about 50-60 years ago and the new age, "just started", is that of Aquarius. As we are interested in comparative religion, it behoves us to examine the Piscean age, because it has, unfortunately, dominated the last 2,000 years with rather dire effects.

The ancients had a huge "calendar" which was not printed on paper, but hung "in the sky", because it was formed by the various star-clusters or constellations. This calendar was not only a universal time-reckoner; it embodied also a system of allegorical figures and signs which were used by all nations, who attached to these emblems more or less hidden meanings in accordance with their varied religious ideas. Strange as it may seem, these signs still permeate present-day religious ideologies, although the Churches would not admit that in so many words.

Our entire solar system, Sun and planets, describes a colossal circle around another Sun in space, viz. the star Sirius (Osiris), known to mariners as the Dog-star. The various ancient nations, who inhabited China, India, Babylonia, Asia Minor, Greece and Egypt, possessed already, several millennia prior to the year one, a comparatively high form of civilisation, and were far more advanced in the science of astronomy than the benighted Christians who still burned and tortured their astronomers as late as the 16th century of our era. For instance, Chinese astronomers calculated already in 2500 BC, the advent of eclipses; and Babylonian astronomers calculated the movements of Sun and Moon to an accuracy of ten seconds.

The just mentioned huge movement of our entire solar system takes 25,920 years for one single orbit around Sirius and of course, during that time, our Sun occupies different positions amongst the various star clusters. To the latter, the ancients gave highly descriptive names which are still used, because, when the stars are joined by imaginary lines, they resemble animals or men.

The best known is Ursa Major, the Great Bear, or the Plough with its seven bright stars, two of which are known as "the pointers", since a line joining them will, if produced, pass close to the celestial pole and the star Polaris, in Ursa Minor, known as the Pole Star, important to navigators of sea and air.

The three Magi of Christmas were *not* men, but the three stars in the belt of Orion (the hunter)—which fact deflates with one stroke the biblical account of the three wise men from the East seeking the "Christ-child" at Bethlehem and being guided by a star which stopped over the house. Actually, this story was already several thousand years old—prior to the alleged events in Judaea.

Nobody will deny the fact that Taurus the Bull dominated the early Egyptian and Assyrian epoch, approximately 4570 to 2410 BC. In Assyria it was the winged bull, but the Egyptians had also a sacred live bull, said to be the incarnation of Osiris and born of the "cow-goddess" Hathor in a stable, typing the Egyptian Messiah, Iesu.

This animal, known as Apis, the bull, had to be black all over, with a white triangular spot on the forehead, an eagle on the back and the image of a scarabaeus under its

tongue. The last three symbols were, of course, painted on.

In Mithraism—which ran a neck and neck race with Christianity—the candidates for initiation were baptised in the dripping blood of a slain bull, so that they were "washed in the blood of the bull"; this bull-bath was called Taurobolium.

The backslidings of the Children of Israel into idolising the "Golden Calf" of Baal the Babylonian god, are no more reprehensible than the later adoration of the "Lamb of God" by the Christians.

It merely meant that, in each case, the devotees reverted again to the emblem of the previous cycle, (eon or age); for there is no accounting for tastes when it comes to religious tit-bits, like the one so often quoted:—"the holy Lamb slain from the foundation of the World". One is often constrained to ask, what does such an irrational sentence mean to a pietist? After 2,000 years the Lamb is still venerated!

Into this category belong also such words as:—pastor shepherd of souls, the congregationalist flock, door of the sheepfold and the emblematical shepherd's crook of an archbishop, sported at coronations.

As already mentioned, it took the Roman Church 600-700 years of unceasing propaganda to introduce that revolting figure of a so-called "saviour on a cross", as the people were opposed to such a lugubrious sight.

So far, it had only been a lamb on a cross, in accordance with the age or eon of Aries, the Lamb, a constellation, through which the Sun passed for a period of 2,160 years. In this connotation the word "cross" merely meant the crossing of the zodiacal circle.

The earliest known crucifix with a human figure was the one that Pope Gregory the Great presented to Queen Theodolinde; it can be seen in the Church of St. John at Monza.

By the way, Pope Gregory I was the man who, when he saw some fair-haired British youths in the slave-market at Rome and being told that they were *Angles*, remarked that they should be "angels" and resolved from that day on the conversion of Britain or *Engel-land*.

For that purpose, he sent a body of monks under the apostle St. Austin (Augustine) for the conversion of England to Christianity, and thanks to that enterprising man who, in 579, founded the archbishopric of Canterbury, we are still blessed with an Archbishop of Canterbury!

In later centuries, the Lamb, (as a "hang-over" from the age of Aries), was hung above the figure of a man and this may still be seen in ancient church windows and other odd places. But the age of Pisces, the Fishes, with which we are particularly concerned, because it exerted such a retarding influence on the mental development of the human race for as long as two millenia, had started already approximately in 250 BC, and only ended round about 1910—a mere 55 years ago.

The sign of Pisces shows two fishes loosely held together by a line and swimming in opposite directions. Looking at this sign in an allegorical way, it is absolutely typical of the Christian Churches and their doctrines.

Constantly warring factions opposing each other on doctrinal lines—one going this way and the other that way. The more rapacious and predatory big fishes pushing the little ones aside or gobbling them up. The masses or ordinary people were as mute as the fishes and as dense as the element of water in which they lived. Hardly any



sound of opposition to all those hair-splitting, doctrinal arguments about their jesuitical dogmas and specious savour tales. Those who were critical or did not believe the phantasms ordained by their hierarchy, were relentlessly persecuted or brutally butchered.

For two hundred years the nefarious tribe of *agents provocateurs* or spies working on behalf of the Inquisition spread terror through southern and western Europe. They made a fat living denouncing those who were supposed to be heretics and if there were none, they manufactured them. They ran no risks, for the fiendishly applied tortures would make their victims confess, no matter how innocent they were!

The spies were paid by the Church which claimed that the Inquisition merely acted as "spiritual health officers" to prevent "contagious errors" from spreading amongst the masses. A dictatorial and intolerant Church allowed no opposition, but handed out lush favours and lucrative advancement to their most fawning sycophants and servile supporters. It was an epoch of ruthless intolerance and a complete blackout of loving kindness and Greek wisdom.

It was the Age of Unreason and blind relief!

(To be continued)

## Mr Goodman's Critics

It has been something of an education to read the articles contributed to your journal by G. R. Goodman. Unfortunately the lesson I have learned is one far from favourable to the Secularist movement in so far as its scholarship goes. The leading article in your issue for May 14th, discusses the future of secularism and the writer F. H. A. Micklewright, states that "it is essential that secularism should be in accord with the best contemporary scholarship related to the subjects with which it deals". I would suggest that Mr. Goodman ponders this point before rushing into print.

The fact of there being similar stories to that of the life of Jesus does not establish a connection, Mr. Goodman, though, writes as if they do. He offers absolutely no evidence to show at what point the linkage takes place. The canon of scripture we know as the New Testament was compiled some years after the events related and at various places. It would seem more likely that no gospel was compiled in the land the story is set in. This coupled with the very poor Greek of the earliest MSS raise a major objection to the theory that the compiler/s would have the ability to translate a cuniform document, even allowing that cuniform was still in use and not a dead script at the period in question.

One would have assumed that Mr. Goodman knew of the conflicting religious ideas of the Egyptians, his articles seem to suggest otherwise for he presents his material—and some of his ideas as to what was the translation of this or that might make some scholars smile in view of the disputes over translation (perhaps Mr. Goodman has never studied the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*)—as though the religions of the Egyptians were a unified set-up. It would indeed be a brave man who tried to demonstrate that the huge collection of deities, major and minor, playing a role in the life of Egypt presented a unified and clear cut theology. Indeed we have an example, Mr. Goodman cites Isis and Horus as mother and son in a resurrection drama, true enough except that the resurrected person was Osiris the father of Horus, consequently there is a difference of some importance between the story of Jesus—the Son, in Trinitarian language also the Father, and Horus the distinct, unresurrected son. This one example should suffice to indicate the shallowness of Mr. Goodman's thesis.

Mr. Goodman of course dislikes Christianity because it is associated with an acceptance of the miraculous. It is perhaps rather significant that another writer in THE FREETHINKER of May 14th, concedes that Josephus does refer to Jesus, a minor point agreed, yet one that explodes with the force of an historical nuclear bomb in as far as the myth theory goes. To be quite frank, Mr. Goodman advances a complicated theory to account for something which if stripped of its miracles is anything but fantastic. The Christian accepts the miraculous in Christianity because he is satisfied with the secular evidence. If one believes in God one attributes power to him and an ability to act when the need arises. In studying the material available which has a direct bearing on Christian origins the conclusion is inescapable, something took place. Mr. Goodman might well sneer and suggest that only those who think along his own philosophical lines are capable of reasoning, perhaps his egoism knows no bounds for he has all the truth and anyone

else differing from his self-opinionated outlook is consigned to outer darkness. Unfortunately for such a cut and dried approach there are people who using the same resources as himself come to conclusions other than his, perhaps we may not have his peerless intellect, but until he can establish a direct association between the gospel writers and the many distinct faiths he builds up his theory from and establishes that secular writers—and religious—of the period in which Christianity arose knew they were dealing with religious fiction, then it is of no use seeking to "explain" why or how the religion was made for he has not demonstrated a need to advance such a theory. It is a scientific maxim that until the simple explanation is shown to be completely invalid there are no grounds for a further theory.

CHRIS. STROTHER, FAES,  
Secretary, St. Osmund Society.

It seems to me that the views regarding Christ have been very strangely misunderstood by many readers of *The Golden Bough*. Sir James Frazer certainly did not deny the historical reality of Christ, and those who hold Christ as being a mythical character have no support at all from Frazer.

It is important for all Freethinkers to realise this, and not to be led astray by men like Mr. George R. Goodman. There have been legends about many important individuals in history, but it does not necessarily follow that these important individuals did not exist.

I quote from *The Golden Bough*: "The historical reality both of Buddha and Christ has sometimes been doubted or denied. It would be just as reasonable to question the historical existence of Alexander the Great and Charlemagne on account of the legends which have gathered around them.

"The great religious movements which have stirred humanity to its depths and altered the beliefs of nations spring ultimately from the conscious and deliberate efforts of extraordinary minds, not from blind unconscious co-operation of the multitude. The attempt to explain history without the influence of great men may flatter the vanity of the vulgar, but will find no favour with the philosophic historian".

And in *The Scapegoat*, Frazer writes: "The doubts which have been cast on the historical reality of Jesus are in my judgment unworthy of serious attention". And again in *The Scapegoat* he writes: "To dissolve the founder of Christianity into a myth as some would do, is hardly less absurd than it would be to do the same for Mohammed, Luther and Calvin. Such dissolving views are for the most part dreams of students who know the great world chiefly through its pale reflection in books".

Sir James Frazer believed that Jesus was a historical reality, and that he was crucified at Jerusalem under the governorship of Pontius Pilate.

Yet we still have Freethinkers denying dogmatically and arrogantly the historical reality of Christ. I, for one, am certainly not impressed by what they say, and therefore they have very little chance of leading me astray.

I say it is possible that Jesus did exist and that a virgin birth and resurrection is only a mere legend. It certainly takes a powerful figure to be the essence of any religion like Christianity, and behind it all I think there was a Jesus of flesh and blood.

R. SMITH.

## PORTSMOUTH DISCUSSION GROUP

There must be many people today in a town the size of Portsmouth who have abandoned belief in the traditional sanctions of morality (the fear of Hell and the hope of Heaven) who yet feel the need for a foundation for their moral standards stronger than that of mere habit.

The Portsmouth Humanist Society believes that there is an unsatisfied, indeed unrecognised, demand for a forum where ordinary people can meet and talk about ethical principles, and we are fostering the establishment of a Discussion Group which will cater for this demand.

This Moral Philosophy Discussion Group is being formed as an autonomous body. Membership will not be limited to Humanists but open to anyone, irrespective of nominal religious commitment, who feels sufficiently interested to attend a weekday evening meeting at fortnightly or monthly intervals in Portsmouth to discuss with others the ethical problems of our times. It will, of course, be for the members of the Group to arrange the actual frequency and venue of their meetings.

Anyone who would like further information about the Group should write to the Convener, Mr. M. McKechnie, at 176 High-bury Grove, Cosham, Portsmouth, who will be pleased to provide further information.

We hope, in a few months time, to publish the results of our efforts to establish this Discussion Group for the consideration of Humanists and Freethinkers in other towns.

DONALD E. W. HOWELLS, Chairman.



## HUMANIST CONFERENCE

"REVALUATIONS of the Family" is the subject of the third annual conference of the British Humanist Association, to be held from August 27th-30th at the University of Keele, North Staffs. The speakers will be Professor Lester Kirkendall, Head of the Department of Family Living, Oregon State University, on "The Twentieth-Century Context"; Michael Power, a Psychiatric Social Worker, on "The Family: Therapeutic or Pathogenic"; and Brigid Brophy, the novelist, on "The Immorality of Marriage—an Ethical Appraisal". H. L. Elvin, Director of the Institute of Education at the University of London, will be guest of honour at the dinner on August 28th. The conference fee will be £6 15s. for members of Humanist, Rationalist or Secularist organisations, £8 5s. for non-members. Further details may be obtained from the Secretary of the British Humanist Association, 40 Drury Lane, London, W.C.2.

## CORRESPONDENCE

## ECUMENISM

The Cardinal-Archbishop of Utrecht well known by his progressiveness at the Vatican Council made a speech at Utrecht on Ecumenism to an audience of theological students. One of the attendants having remarked that the liberty of religion in Latin states was a sheer mockery, the prelate answered that, though he would not try to justify all that is happening in these countries, one must not believe everything written in Dutch newspapers. The Protestant "sects" (as he pleased to call them) had "gone out of" (i.e. deserted) the Church. Therefore they became "rancorous" and provoked by their behaviour "a certain resistance". (What kind and from whom, the Cardinal did not reveal). Their Protestant brethren in Holland did not appreciate them, he continued, and no Christian community in good faith could gain honour with these "figures".

A. M. VAN DER GIEZEN, (Middelburg-Holland).

## DEMOCRITUS ON DEATH

"Darius, a barbarian and a man of no education, the slave both of pleasure and grief . . ." mourned distractedly for his dead wife. Democritus agree to bring her to life again if Darius would inscribe on his wife's tomb the names of three persons who had never mourned for anyone . . . Darius could not find any man who had not had to bear some great sorrow, whereupon Democritus burst out laughing, as was his wont, and said, 'Why then, O most absurd of men, do you mourn without ceasing, as though you were the only man who had ever been involved in so great a grief, you cannot discover a single person . . . who was without his share of personal sorrow?'"

--Emperor Julian's letter (69) to Himerius.

KIT MOUAT.

## FRAUDS, FORGERIES AND RELICS

The North London Branch of the National Secular Society has followed up its *Crimes of the Popes* (still available at 6d.) with another couple of chapters from *Crimes of Christianity*, entitled *Frauds, Forgeries and Relics*.

It is a photographed reproduction of Foote and Wheeler's original pamphlets, with a preface by F. A. Ridley, showing that the "lucrative rackets" have not ceased and "relics and impostures" still form a solid basis of Vatican wealth. It fully justifies the quotation on the cover from Edward Gibbon "The Church of Rome defended by violence the Empire she had acquired by fraud".

They are available from THE FREETHINKER Bookshop at 1s., and we are confident that this effort will meet with equal enthusiasm from the thinking public.

EVA EBURY,

(Hon. Sec. North London Branch, National Secular Society).

**SPECIAL OFFER** to readers of this paper. The Autobiography of Major Christopher Draper, DSC, entitled *The Mad Major*. First published in 1962 at 25/-. A limited number offered at 10/- post paid. 230 pages fully illustrated and autographed from C. Draper, 2 Conway Street, London, W.1.

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