

# The Freethinker

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PROFESSOR OLIVIER LUTAUD — who will not have been forgotten by those who were at the World Union of Freethinkers' Congress at Beatrice Webb House in September, 1961, for his mastery of English and Cromwellian literature, as for his geniality, and who will be one of the speakers at the next international Freethought congress on September 2nd-5th, 1966, in London — gave me recently a little book, *Les Communards*, by M. Winock and J. P. Azema, published by Editions du Seuil, Paris.

I have read it with deep interest, and can recommend it to readers with a knowledge of French and an interest in the last century. In September, 1872 Charles Bradlaugh took his daughters, Alice and Hypatia both to a school in Paris. And it was there Alice remained for a year, but Hypatia, falling ill, did not return after the Christmas holidays. Nevertheless, these three months left indelible memories of which she occasionally spoke in later years. Paris had not yet recovered from the destruction caused, first by the Prussian bombardment during the siege, second by the cannon of Mont Valérien during the civil war, and lastly by the wild destruction in the last few days of the expiring Commune. For my grandfather these visits to Paris were overshadowed by profound sorrow and regret, for in the Commune he had lost several good and respected friends. For him the whole affair had been a tragedy, hopeless from the first.

## Not Forgotten

Nearly ninety-five years have passed since then; there can be very few still alive with any first-hand recollection of those far-off days. Nevertheless, the Commune has not been forgotten in France, and from time to time May 24th is celebrated at the Wall of the Fédérés.

The Commune was a milestone in social history. It is, I think, worth while recalling, even if briefly, what happened then.

In July, 1870, Napoleon III, called by Victor Hugo, Le Petit, who, by craft, had wrecked in 1852 the Republic and by ruthless murder made himself Emperor, was foolish enough to declare war on Prussia. Bismarck and Moltke could have asked for nothing better. In two months the Prussians had overwhelmed the French armies, taken Napoleon prisoner and invested Paris. On September 4th, a new Republic was proclaimed in Paris and a Government of National Defence was formed under General Trochu, an unfortunate choice, as he had not the slightest idea what could be done by way of defence. The impelling personality was a little man, Gambetta, who escaped from besieged Paris in a balloon and reformed the government at Tours. A government which, it may be noted, sent a letter to Bradlaugh thanking him for the vigorous propaganda he was making on behalf of the new Republic. Army after army was raised against the Prussians but, ill-equipped and untrained as they were, marched only to defeat at the hands of the expert Prussians.

In the meantime, Thiers and Favre opened negotiations

with Bismarck — negotiations, no, Bismarck was prepared to dictate terms, not to discuss them. The Trochu government finally accepted these terms and on January 24th, 1871, an armistice was signed, and Gambetta fled to Spain.

In Paris there was much heart searching. The wealthy and conservative elements of the population escaped as best they could, especially when the Prussian artillery opened fire on January 5th. In October 1870 there had been manifestations by the batallions de gauche under Flourens, the ex-university professor, against the parleys with Bismarck, and feelings had risen to such a point by October 31st, that there were the beginnings of a revolt. The Hotel de Ville was invaded whilst the government was in session there, and many cries of "Vive la Commune!"; there was talk of forming a Committee of Public Safety. Much talk, but no decision.

## Many Meanings

What did they mean by *La Commune*? It is to be doubted if many of those who cried it had any clear notion. It was a "mystique", a slogan, a millenium. For a Marxist it meant the dictatorship of the proletariat. For an anarchist it meant the destruction of the State, including the proletarian despotism; it meant the formations of small autonomous groups which could co-operate where and when needful. For many Parisians it meant getting rid of those conservative, pro-Prussian, or bonapartist or monarchist obstructionists and fighting against the Prussians. For Louis Blanqui, at this time serving some of his 37 years in jail, and his followers it meant just destruction of all obstacles to that ultimate freedom out of which would come the earthly paradise.

For a while nothing came of all this but talk. The Prussians entered Paris, took over the eastern fortifications and waited. A new French National Assembly was elected and met at Bordeaux. Thiers, once a Liberal, became chief minister. The Assembly was composed largely of provincials, and included a monarchist majority. In Paris the National Guard (there was the Garde Nationale mobile, *moblots* of men under 35, and the Garde Nationale Sédentaire, over 35) established a Federation with a Central Committee of control, distinct from the military control. They were henceforward to be known as *les fédérés*. Practically all Parisian men had received rifles, mostly out-of-date, and ammunition; the National Guard had also several batteries for the defence of the city, and these were to be a source of trouble. They had, apparently, been bought by the Parisian Guard with money collected from the people.

Thiers and his government returned to Paris on March 16th, 1871, but not for long. An order was given for the above-mentioned cannon to be removed from their positions and taken over by the Army. This the Parisians would not tolerate. A National Guardsman on duty was shot dead by the soldiers sent to take away the guns. This was a signal for a general call to arms of the Fédérés.

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

## The Paris Commune of 1871

By C. BRADLAUGH BONNER

Amid rapidly growing excitement, Thiers and his ministers fled to Versailles. General Lecomte at the head (?) of a brigade ordered his men to fire on the crowd. They refused. The Fédérés arrested the General, and imprisoned him at 6 rue des Rosiers, where he was joined by General Clement Thomas, ex-chief of the National Guard, a man who was much disliked. A mob formed and, despite the efforts of the guard, dragged away the two generals and shot them. This was the signal for the civil war.

#### Formations of the Communes

Ten days later, on March 28th, the Paris Commune was formed by democratic vote; it was just a parliament to legislate and accomplish municipal freedoms, similar to our County Councils.

Other Communes, similarly municipal councils, were formed about the same time at Lyons, Marseilles, Narbonne, Toulouse and St. Etienne. They were all crushed by the military in a few days.

The military situation in Paris was roughly thus. The Prussians held the eastern defences. The Thiers government, or the Versailles as they were called, were attacking along the western edge of the city. The western parts were also the richer quarters, inhabited largely by sympathisers with the Versailles, many of whom had left before the siege or left hurriedly following the example of the Thiers ministry. The Government held the dominating fort of Mont Valérien, from which they could bombard the city at will.

The Commune held out for two months. There was no lack of bravery; but there was no one man capable of command, no real leader acceptable to all. In the first week Flourens was captured and slaughtered. One by one the forts held by the Fédérés were taken. On May 21st the Versailles entered the city and then ensued *La Semaine Sanglante*, the Week of Blood. In every street the Parisians built up barricades and fought to the end. Some of the barricades were held by women only. The soldiery shot every man, woman or child they could catch, including some of their own side. The communards in fury shot all their prisoners and set fire to every building that the soldiery did not leave in flames. The hideous nightmare finished in a strange battle among the tombstones in the great cemetery of Père-Lachaise. It is estimated that 25,000 died in those few days.

According to the victors the communards (who called themselves *communeux* — the ending *-ard* is abusive) were beasts of indescribable habits. In truth they were not. Despite the bombardment there reigned a happy serenity. Rationing was well organised, though there was a shortage of meat. Supplies were cut off from the west, but could be obtained from the east, for the Prussians were neutral in this civil war. Concerts were held almost daily, some for the benefit of the widows and orphans of the fallen fédérés. The schools were kept running and even a new school established for girls; and, of course, hospitals. As for newspapers, they multiplied endlessly, and their editorials were lyrical. There seemed to be no awareness of the imminent catastrophe. The Freemasons (Grand Orient and also freethinking) proceeded in solemn procession, banners flying, grave music playing, to the line of battle and placed their banners in the most exposed spots.

Much to his astonishment, Bradlaugh was requested by the Gambetta government to come to France and act as intermediary between the Commune and Thiers; the terms he was empowered to offer were clearly set out. He received this request as he was about to set out for a course of lectures in Scotland. Instead he took the train

for Dover. At Calais he was arrested by order of the Thiers minister, Jules Favre, and taken to Boulogne, where he was detained under a guard of three policemen. The next morning he was accused of presiding over a meeting in Hyde Park in favour of the Commune, which he had not done; of stirring up revolution in Prussia, where he had never been, and told he was a rallying point for dangerous men. Telegraphing to Jules Favre, he received a reply that he was to leave France without delay, which he did. After the fall of the Commune he again had occasion to visit Paris, and was again arrested at Calais, but after three days' detention was allowed to continue his journey. The Calais Commissary showed him the order (which had not been cancelled) that Mr Bradlaugh was to be prevented from entering Paris at any price.

Many of the communards who escaped from Paris after May 28th, 1871, came to London. As they were destitute, Bradlaugh gave a series of lectures, the proceeds of which were handed to the treasurer of *La Fraternelle*, the society which these unfortunates formed for their mutual benefit. A mean lie was circulated in the London press that the refugees had refused to accept anything from Bradlaugh.

The Commune will not be forgotten. If the French Revolution of eighty years earlier was a great step forward for *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*, it was the bourgeoisie which mostly benefited. The Commune, though it failed disastrously, was yet a step forward for the working classes.

## Boozers

By DENIS COBELL

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS was founded at Arkon, Ohio, USA, in 1935 by two staunch members of the Oxford Group (later known as Moral Re-Armament — an organisation I examined critically in *THE FREETHINKER*, 28/2/64). They built AA on a dual principle: dependence on "life-changing" techniques adopted from the Oxford Group, and the theory that alcoholism occurs only in a particular allergic condition. Expert opinions deny the validity of both premises. Religious conversion, although possible, is not a practical method of treating alcoholism; AA only appeals to those who are able to swallow its pseudo-religious atmosphere, and gloating accounts of past excesses, which AA members love to indulge in at their meetings, over cups of tea. Furthermore, their theory of alcoholic allergy is completely unscientific. These views, plus counsel towards a fuller understanding of our fellow creatures are expressed in a recent book, *Alcoholism*, by Neil Kessel and Henry Walton (Penguin, 4s.).

Alcohol is a useful agent in promoting people's ability to socialise; inhibition is reduced and tension relieved, but the speed of reactions is also slowed down. Teetotallers, who form only 30 per cent of Britain's population, are very suspicious of the beneficial effects of alcohol; but almost everyone, drinker or abstainer, concurs in censure of the drunkard or alcoholic. Anyone who drinks enough alcohol will eventually become drunk, but its addictive powers are minute by comparison with opium. The part played by alcohol in artistic development, for example in Brendan Behan or Dylan Thomas, is questioned severely by these authors.

In 1952 the World Health Organisation described alcoholics as "those excessive drinkers whose dependence on alcohol has attained such a degree that they show a notice-

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# The Five Saints of Leicester

By F. A. RIDLEY

I AGAIN recently had the pleasure of addressing the oldest secular society in England, the Leicester Secular Society. I do not think that there can be any radical platform in Great Britain that has had so long and distinguished a list of speakers since the official opening of the Secular Hall on March 6th, 1881, an occasion adorned by the presence and oratory of Charles Bradlaugh, G. J. Holyoake and other Secularists and Freethinkers of the period. Nor do I recall any of the (by this time innumerable) halls in which I have myself either spoken or been present that preserves so well the (for want of a better term) atmosphere of the early radical and pioneering days of the English Secular movement, as does the Leicester Secular Hall in Humberstone Gate. If one were inclined to subscribe to the dubious *mystique* of occultism, one could almost believe that the ghosts of Robert Owen and G. J. Holyoake still hovered over the Secular Hall. For both these great pioneers were closely associated with the origins of secularism in Leicester; to be sure the descriptive term "secularism" was itself coined by G. J. Holyoake and in the self-same year, 1853, that the name, the Leicester Secular Society, was first officially used.

That learned historian and former secretary of the Leicester Secular Society, the late F. J. Gould, informs us in his official *History of the Leicester Secular Society* that some kind of an organised secular and radical movement had been in existence in Leicester since the French Revolution. Indeed, the Revolution Club ante-dated that event, for it was founded in 1785 in order to commemorate William III and the Glorious Revolution of 1688-9. And the present Society dates back uninterruptedly to 1853, thirteen years before the official foundation of the National Secular Society.

The Leicester Secular Society is certainly the oldest secular society in Great Britain and if there is an older one anywhere in the world, we have not yet been made aware of it.

The most arresting, not to say intriguing, adjunct of the now eighty-four-year-old hall is to be found in the five busts which surmount the entrance. If one were disposed towards religious analogy, one would almost be inclined to term them the patron saints of the honourable building over which they preside. But were we to make (at first sight tempting) comparison, the result would be somewhat curious; perhaps, indeed, incongruous would be the more apt and accurate description. For the views held and disseminated by these five eminent persons throughout the course of their earthly pilgrimages were, to put it mildly, dissimilar. They are: Jesus, Robert Owen, Thomas Paine, Socrates and Voltaire; surely about as composite a quintet as could be found on any building of any kind in Great Britain.

Let me proceed to examine this sacred assembly in more appropriate detail. (1) Jesus — a Jew (or a god) : probable date, if any, first century AD; professional revivalist (previously worked as a carpenter); executed by Pontius Pilate and rose again on the third day. Present (posthumous) occupation — Second Person of the Trinity. (2) Owen, Robert — English (or rather Welsh). Socialist, Atheist and Utopian. Born and died in Newtown, Montgomery, North Wales (1770-1858). May perhaps be termed the founder of British Socialism, as also of the Leicester Secular Society, and as such visited Leicester and lectured there. (3) Paine, Thomas (1732-1809) —

born in Thetford and died in USA. English republican, radical and anti-Christian Deist and biblical critic. Took part in three major Revolutions, in America, France and England — the last of which failed to ignite despite his efforts. Principal published works: *The Age of Reason* and *The Rights of Man*. Corresponded with Leicester (Cf F. J. Gould, p. 47), but never apparently visited it. (4) Socrates — Greek philosopher; born and died (judicially murdered) in Athens, 5th century BC. Career and character at least partly legendary and due to his pupil Plato, who recorded (or invented?) his teaching. For example, the two contemporary accounts of Socrates by his pupils, Plato and Xenophon, differ considerably as do the extant biographies of Jesus. According to Plato, Socrates was a Deist and perhaps the first philosopher to formulate a rational defence of human immortality. May, perhaps, like his pupil be termed a Christian before Christ, as Nietzsche described Plato. (5) Voltaire (real name Arouet). French writer, wit, critic and probably best known as a satirical writer. (1695-1778.) Born and died in France. Was for long an exile in Switzerland. Outspoken critic of both the Catholic Church and the French feudal *ancien regime*. Best known work, *Candide*, a satire on the philosophy of Leibniz. A Deist, resided in England for some time and wrote a book on the English, *Letters on the English*.

Such, in briefest outline, are the "five saints" of Leicester. Evidently they form a pretty heterogeneous quintet: a Jewish preacher, a Welsh socialist, an English radical, a Greek philosopher, and a French satirical writer. Surely no institution was ever placed under such an eminent and eminently varied set of patrons.

The first question that must occur to the visitor to the Secular Hall in Humberstone Gate is, why Jesus? Owen, Paine and Voltaire are all in the (if one may employ such a contradictory term) the orthodox radical tradition. Even Socrates (at least to those not too well-versed in the evolution of Greek philosophy) might conceivably pass as a Humanist; after all, even Voltaire and Paine were Deists and believers in a personal God and in human immortality. But Jesus? What has the Carpenter of Nazareth (or still less, the Second Person of the Trinity) to do with the oldest secular society in Great Britain? To answer this I turn to the well-documented pages of the late F. J. Gould. After describing the erection and opening of the present Secular Hall in 1881 he tells us: "In the carved capitals of the five stone pillars which carry the front on the ground storey are to be read the names of Socrates, Jesus, Voltaire, Thomas Paine and Robert Owen, and in corresponding niches above are placed terra cotta busts of these personages modelled by A. L. Vago."

So far, so good. But still, why Jesus? Here, Mr Gould comes directly to our assistance, for he proceeds to inform us as if in anticipation of our legitimate astonishment: "It is not to be supposed that the five worthies commemorated in the series of busts are chosen as the supreme teachers of Secular doctrine. They stand in a general way for wholesome criticism, for revolt against pretensions and for endeavours after a happier social environment. They are types of great moral and intellectual activities."

No doubt the above explanation is sufficiently satisfactory as regards four of the five Leicester "saints"; but again, what about the fifth? What moral and intellectual

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## This Believing World

"WHEN PAUL TILlich died the number of eminent American theologians was reduced to one—Reinhold Niebuhr," we were told, and on December 8th, the BBC presented another discussion about him between Sir E. Boyle, MP, the Rev. D. Jenkins and Canon R. Preston. *The result was really quite amusing.* Of course Niebuhr was a thorough Christian, but he was not really a theologian. In fact, nobody would call him even a biblical scholar. The two reverend gentlemen, as well as Sir Edward Boyle, thought he could properly be called a "secular Christian", or a "Christian Secularist." And a speech by Niebuhr himself, suggested such a confusion.

★

A SOUTH AFRICAN parson has actually "outlawed" dear old Santa Claus (or Father Christmas), on the grounds that he is "un-Christian" and "un-Africaans" (*Evening News*, 30/11/65) which is perfectly true. In fact, the Rev. W. A. Jooste claims he is a survival of Paganism and "detracts from the proper reverence of Christmas." Again the parson is right, but so long as there is a Christmas there will be a Santa Claus. After all, can anyone imagine "our Blessed Lord" slithering down a sooty chimney with a heavy load on his back, full of presents for the kiddies? It's almost blasphemy to think about it!

★

WE LEARN from the *South London Press* (19/11/65) the ruling of a doctor who was asked by the Rev. F. Bull of St. Paul's, Herne Hill, whether the communion cup, as it passed from mouth to mouth, made some of the drinkers of the Holy Wine think of poisonous germs. "There's no malice in chalice" was the finding. After all, it would be a bit thick to learn you could catch some ailment or disease when drinking the Blood of Jesus. In fact, we were told, there is greater risk of infection from merely talking to some people, than in eating the flesh of Jesus, or drinking his blood at the altar table. So that's that!

★

AND COMING again for the 1583rd time to the momentous problem as to whether Jesus did or did not die on the Cross (*Evening News*, 20/11/65) a research anthropologist, Dr M. Harner, "believes that Christ may not have died after all". It was certainly possible for Jesus to seem to die after taking vinegar, or a drug made from the mandrake.

★

THE MANDRAKE is mentioned in Genesis, though it requires an ardent believer to connect Jesus not dying on the cross with the plant just for this reason. However, Jesus either did or did not die on the cross. It's just as simple as that. But if he did not die on the cross this makes the Ascension perfectly feasible. Jesus came into the world as the result of a miracle; why, then, is there anything wrong with another miracle helping him out of it—as we believe was contended by Thomas Paine?

### FORUM

#### RELIGION IN THE SCHOOL

Alliance Hall, Caxton Street, London, S.W.1, Tuesday, January 18th, 1966 7.45 p.m. Speakers include Ernest Armstrong MP, R. Gresham Cooke MP, David Tribe. Written questions to the organisers: National Secular Society, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1.

## BOOZERS

(Concluded from page 410)

able mental disturbance or interference with their mental and bodily health, their interpersonal relations and their smooth social and economic functioning; or who show the prodromal signs of such developments." There is a vast difference between a heavy drinker and an alcoholic, although the dividing line may be crossed easily. Alcoholics are addicted, but they do not suffer withdrawal symptoms in the same manner as addicts to other drugs do.

The psychiatric disturbances found in alcoholics are not always the same, and the cause of alcoholism varies enormously from one person to another. Alcoholism is familial in certain instances, but there is also strong evidence to show that children brought up by rigid, puritanical teetotallers drink excessively later in life, as an act of rebellion.

Alcoholics Anonymous only caters for a certain type of alcoholic; the authors of this excellent study write, "this narrow approach does a serious disservice." Alcoholism affects the families of sufferers to a great extent, and unfortunately it is often considered in the wrong light. Medical practitioners do not always see the importance of effective treatment; they often advise the patient to "pull himself together"! Treatment of alcoholism is frequently not contemplated until physical disorders manifest themselves as a result of alcoholic poisoning.

Each alcoholic has his own history, and although the physical disorders, such as anorexia and gastritis or later cirrhosis of the liver and delirium tremens (DTs), may be the first to present, the doctor must regard psychiatric treatment on a more personal basis. This book gives details of the modern treatment of alcoholism with antabuse, and stresses the importance of psychotherapy during the follow-up stage after the patient's initial treatment in hospital. It deplores the facile reliance on the good offices of Alcoholics Anonymous in caring for the patient after discharge. Unfortunately, the final result of treatment is often poor; the adjustments required of the patient and his relatives are frequently ensnared with difficulties uneasy to overcome. Many alcoholics despair and commit suicide.

There is insufficient medical education for doctors on the subject of alcoholism. The advances that have been made in treating the condition are few, and have only been made within specialised units; treatment at most mental hospitals still remains largely custodial. A *Quarterly Journal of Studies in Alcoholism* has been published at Yale School of Alcoholic Studies to encounter this disinterest. The authors believe that too much confidence has been placed upon a few successful case histories issued by such bodies as Alcoholics Anonymous, who offer no statistics about the general success of their work.

The evangelistic fervour of AA produces a reliance upon the organisation as great as many already felt for drink itself! The authors make few constructive proposals to prevent the condition occurring, they pin their faith on hopes for better treatment in the future, but recommend increased taxation of spirits as a half-way measure. This might help to prevent accidents which surround the approaching Christmas season, as a result of drunken driving. Spirit drinking reached the highest peak for forty years in 1963 and the average family spends 13s. 6d. a week on alcoholic beverages in this country. Remembering this, there is little room for hypocrisy!

## 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—Marble Arch and North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. L. EBURY and C. E. WOOD.

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

Manchester Branch NSS (Platt Fields), Sunday, 3 p.m.: MESSRS. CLARE, MILLS and WOOD. (Car Park, Victoria Street), 8 p.m.: MESSRS. COLLINS, WOODCOCK, and others.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

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

### Notes and News

THE second oration at the closing of the Council was also "apparently written by the Pope" (*The Guardian*, 9/12/65) but spoken in French by various cardinals told the world's rulers that the Church "asks of you only liberty. The liberty to believe and to preach her faith, the freedom to love her God and serve him." It told "the intellectuals that your paths are never foreign to ours"; and the artists that "If you are friends of genuine art, you are our friends." Women were no doubt pleased to hear that "The hour is coming, in fact, has come, when the vocation of women is being achieved with fullness." Whether it helped the poor, the sick and suffering to know that the Church's suffering was "increased at the thought that it is not within our power to bring you bodily help, nor the lessening of your physical sufferings," we can't say.

★

IN the past, the speech continued, there have been "regrettable misunderstandings" between the Church and the working man, which have "maintained a spirit of mistrust and lack of understanding between us." Today, the worker was informed, "the hour of reconciliation has sounded," and the Council invited him "to celebrate this hour without suspicion." How naïve can you get?

★

THE Vatican Secretariat of State is reported, however, to be initiating a new "opening out" phase towards the Communist countries (*The Observer*, 12/12/65), and a papal visit to Poland is contemplated for next May. Mgr Casaroli, the Pope's special envoy to East Europe, will go to Warsaw in January to prepare for the papal visit and to lay the ground for an agreement with the Polish

Government similar to that reached between the Holy See and Hungary. But Cardinal Wyszynski, the Primate of Poland, is expected to be away in Rome during Mgr Casaroli's mission. The Cardinal is a particularly obstinate man—"a considerable personality" is the *Observer's* euphemism—and well out of the way when tactfulness and diplomacy are called for.

★

ROMAN CATHOLICS may not know whether they can officially use contraceptives, but they have at least the Pope's permission to eat meat on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, which both fall on Fridays. A papal authorisation reported by Reuter on December 10th, permitted bishops to dispense their flocks from both fasting and abstinence on the two days. Our readers require no such dispensation and we have no power to grant it anyway. We must content ourselves with wishing them a merry Christmas, Yuletide, or whatever name they care to give to the Winter Solstice.

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AN open-air ceremony in St. Peter's Square marked the end of the Vatican Council during which, we are told, the Roman Catholic Church came to terms with the modern world. Pope Paul was carried into the square on his portable throne, following a procession of 2,000 bishops clad in their special white conciliar robes and mitres. The Holy Father celebrated mass and delivered an oration; a second speech was then delivered by other bishops "in the name of the Council." The Pope's own speech in Italian, referred especially to those "brothers who are unjustly detained in silence, in oppression, and in the deprivation of legitimate and sacred rights owed to every honest man." But the "brothers" in question did not, we suspect, include those "unjustly detained" by such regimes as the Spanish and Portuguese—regimes which Pope Paul could particularly influence, if he so desired.

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THE Polish Roman Catholic Church has been strongly criticised by *Zycie Warszawy* for sending an invitation to West German bishops to visit Poland next year on the occasion of the thousandth anniversary of Polish Christianity. The newspaper accused the hierarchy of failing to inform the Polish Ambassador in Rome of the invitation, which was extended during the Vatican Council; it stated that Cardinal Wyszynski, Archbishop Kominek and Bishop Machowski visited the Ambassador after announcing the invitation to the West German press, but did not tell him about it (*The Guardian*, 11/12/65). "Who are the Catholic bishops to whom the message has been addressed?" the newspaper asked. "They are the bishops who, together with the Bonn Government support the policy of revisionism and question our border on the Oder, Neisse and Baltic Sea. They include people who, in the time of Hitlerism, sided with the brown-shirted regime and blessed the German Wehrmacht marching against Poland."

#### THE YEAR'S FREETHOUGHT

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# Was This Translation Really Necessary?

By OTTO WOLFGANG

*Tutankhamen*, Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt, a Penguin Book, price 12s. 6d. (first published 1963.)

A NEW publication dealing with the most amazing period in the history of the most amazing people of Antiquity — the Ancient Egyptians — is, I think, superfluous unless it can add something new to solve the riddles posed by the Amarnan period. And on this score I am sorry I have to answer the question in the title in the negative. To rehash, once again, the story of the discovery of the Tomb of Tut-'ankh-Amon with its unique treasures was, at least in this country, not necessary. Hardly anything is known about the short reign of this young king, and the little we do know or presume to know hinges on too many question marks in the life of the founder of the Tell al-'Amarna heresy — Akhen-Aten or Ikhn-aton — and these riddles have been left unsolved in the book. Worse even, many quite plausible theories of late have been disregarded because they come from scholars who have not qualified as Egyptologists. And yet, one could publish a fascinating book on how many important discoveries were made by amateurs just because of their ability to think along non-conventional lines.

The definitive value of this paperback lies in its illustrations, in particular its 32 colour plates. They really are gorgeous.

The photographic reproduction of nature is not art; the real artist must abstract until merely the essence of what he wants to represent is left. The ancient Egyptians, starting from their hieroglyphic script, were past masters in this art of fundamental simplification. The Amarnan period, however, shows already the influence of Hellenic realism, and the marriage of these two tendencies renders the art production of this period particularly touching.

This goes also for the famous hymn to Aten, ascribed to Ikhnaton,\* which gave rise to the romantic nonsense of his being a monotheistic reformator. But as said before, he is the kingpin of our understanding of the whole period — and he is the person we as Freethinkers would be most interested in. And just in this respect the text is very disappointing. The questions are being put and left unresolved; however, despite the author's frequent admission that she does not know the answers, she deliberately makes her choice and goes on from there. So for instance she says that the "highly-controversial question of a possible co-regency" (of Amenophis III and IV) remains a stumbling block and quite uncertain — yet she goes on and builds on this submission her whole story. Even more doubtful are the family relations which are treated as if they were established.

The 19th century educationalist, Pestalozzi, already taught that our mainspring is self-interest, even in the good-doer. (This in part explains the survival of religion even in Socialist countries, because of the expectation of some reward.) To take an up-to-date example: all preaching about integration is of no avail, unless you can show that the acceptance of immigrants serves points of self-interest.

All the conjectures about the idealistic aims of Amenophis IV, the Ikhnaton, are off the point, as I tried to show in a previous article (in the *Humanist* of May, 1958). Aten worship had existed long before the Ikhnaton and

the older Amenophis had already strongly favoured it; like the "Investiture Contest" between the German Emperor (Henry IV) and the Pope Gregory VII it was in fact a quarrel about spheres of influence and their spoils. The haggling that went on between Pius XI and XII and Hitler was a more recent case in point. Since about the middle of 12th dynasty the power of the kings had decreased in Egypt, while that of the Theban priesthood had grown beyond all proportions. There is no competition among pagan gods; but the Aten (sun globe) was something of an outsider, so it was chosen as a ramblock to dispose the mighty god of Thebes, Amon.

Nowhere in the whole book is mentioned the fact that Thebes was the name given by the Greeks to a city properly called UASET (the No-Amon of the Bible). And this — in connection with the oddity of a sphinx in a Greek legend — gave Immanuel Velikovsky the idea which he plausibly developed in his book, *Oedipus and Akhnaton* (Sidgwick & Jackson, London, 1960), namely that Ikhnaton was the historical prototype of the Oedipus story (see my comments in the *Humanist* of April, 1963). It seems that Amenophis Junr. had been abroad before suddenly appearing to claim the throne. Then Amenophis Sen. died and his queen ruled from Ikhnaton's Aten-city, whereupon his favourite queen, Nefertete, mysteriously disappeared. Far from keeping his incestuous relations with his mother quiet, the mad king had bas-reliefs cut showing him in more or less compromising attitudes with Tiye, who bore him a daughter. At the same time he raped all his children, starting with Smenkh-ka-Re (whom our author considers his brother). When the tomb of the latter was found, the discoverer was amazed that the mummy had an apparently feminine pelvis; but at least in this connection our author admits that the corpse had been given the attitude preserved for the burial of royal concubines.

Velikovsky's theory can even explain why Smenkhare was hastily and untidily buried whilst all the treasures went to Tutankhamen; with him everything seems to fall into line and the least one could have expected from a later writer was to deal with this book in one way or another. Even more inexcusable perhaps is her omission of the observable fact of Ikhnaton's bodily deformity through progressive lipodystrophy. The 1930 British Museum *Guide to the Egyptian Collection* already stated that Ikhnaton probably was "a pathological subject, hypernervous, and with an irritable brain . . . while at the same time his body degenerated. It is more than probable that he died mad . . . his daughters were made by an absurd flattery to look almost as grotesque as he; it was court fashion to admire the royal ugliness and imitate it."

## NO FAIRY TALE

The tendency to over-emphasise Christmas as the children's festival sometimes hides the meaning of it for adults, says Canon George Lamb, Rector of Whickham.

He writes in his parish magazine that it is vitally necessary that we should learn that Christmas is no fairy tale.

"The festival of Christmas takes its meaning and the reason for its existence from the Christian doctrine of the incarnation," he says.

"This is the teaching that God has entered into our very life and shared all the experiences of which we are capable."

—*Newcastle Evening Chronicle*— (2/12/65)  
Sounds suspiciously like a fairy tale to us, Canon.

\* To flatter their oriental despots, court poets used to ascribe their best works to their own ruler. We have many similar instances from India, Judaea, etc. (e.g. Solomon).

## A Billy Graham Reverie

By F. H. SNOW

I HAVE never seen Billy Graham in the flesh, and probably never will, so availed myself of the opportunity of watching a film of a great meeting of his at Los Angeles Stadium, in the United States. The church hall in which the film was shown was full, the audience, as usual with religious meetings, mainly comprising the feminine sex. My home town of Folkestone would seem to have had small contact with sceptical views, like most provincial places, and the size of the attendance and the reverent singing of the hymns did not surprise me. The audience was an obviously church-going one, and the Billy Graham Crusade can have profited little from the show, save in the way of cash.

That goes, probably, for most of the American evangelist's meetings, to which, drawn by the man's notoriety, the religious and merely curious flock. It is unlikely that Graham's efforts, over all the years of his ministry, have effected any appreciable change in the vast society at which his eloquence has been directed. If he has caused ripples on its surface, they have had a brief existence. He fails to "light up" more than a infinitesimal proportion of the sinners on his own continent, and remains but a name in the world he so urgently wishes to redeem.

And yet, what a preacher he is! The word is inappropriate to him. As I watched the film in that church hall, he impressed himself upon me as a great personality. He is alive as I think few people are. His eyes gleamed with infectious optimism as, with animated gestures, he talked to his great audience, turning to all parts of the assemblage. His tones were very clear and strong, his words grammatical and well-conceived. In spite of his energetic motions and rapidity of speech, there was nothing suggestive of the rant about him, and he conveyed the illusion of addressing himself to one personally.

For the short while that I listened to his recorded voice, Billy spoke almost non-stop, interestingly, appealingly, eloquently. With an open Bible in one hand, to which he referred as the indubitable Word of God, he stressed its almighty author's love for His sinning children, and entreated his hearers to seek the glorious salvation He offered them. It was the usual stuff, with a vast difference. Nothing could have been less sermon-like than what I heard of that address. The man's personality dominated it. He spoke with terrific conviction, and appeared to personify the happiness he advocated. I felt that, of all men's lives, Billy Graham's was surely the happiest.

Reflecting upon the film, on my way home, I was freshly impressed with the American evangelist's power to influence those unarmed with the weapons of critical thought. Had I been young, my emotional self would have been enthralled by this master of the art of Christian propaganda — albeit, in my view, a sincerely artless one. It was, indeed, the sincerity of Billy Graham's eloquence which was its most captivating feature, allied with the supreme confidence of the smile that played about his lips. I could well imagine that to anyone ignorant of the salient weaknesses of the Christian creed, or even the unintelligently doubting, Graham's message would stamp itself with the hall-mark of truth.

Why, then, had not his heaven spread far beyond its nucleus? With the advantage of two thousand years of Christian teaching, and the virtual unacquaintance of the

masses with the sceptical viewpoint, why had not Graham's dynamic gosselling kindled a spiritual blaze? Bluntly because, having due regard to the modern secularising trend, religious fervour is unnatural to the great bulk of humanity, especially in the western world. Even in the heyday of revivalism, the masses remained unkindled by devotional fire, and the great majority of converts became "damp squibs". It is just contrary to most people's natures to get spiritually lit up, still more to remain so. The zealot is exceptional, even amongst the religiously emotional Catholics, who, like members of other faiths, are transiently warmed and, away from the mystic influence of priest and church, remarkably unspiritual.

So the good Lord for whom Billy works has provided him with material almost entirely unsuitable for his job. Is it that the good Lord is content with the tepid homage accorded him by the aggregate mind? In which case Billy, like all the revivalists that ever were, is under a hallucination, which provides him with rapture, but effects little more. If only a flame of love could sweep the world, through the agency of whatever religious personality, I would acclaim it, though it meant perpetuation of the superstition of the sky god. The resultant breakdown of ideological hates, the outlawing of wars, the upgrading of the lowly, the relief of the starving and oppressed, I would account more important than the emancipation of humanity from its hoary misbeliefs.

As man's make-up precludes the possibility of such a conflagration, and religious propaganda, even through the medium of the inimitable Graham, is inefficacious to deflect men's minds from narrow self-interests and corrupting engrossments to zeal for the welfare of their human brethren and the promotion of global peace and goodwill, these ideals can only be realised through secularism.

Plainly, the world has need of a humanist crusade. The material which the finest religious oratory fails to set aglow, is potentially receptive of the sceptical viewpoint. The very nature that resists religious ravishment would readily respond to reason's appeal, if made cognisant of it through a great acceleration of rationalism's sedate progress. After the first rude shocks to their religiously-indoctrinated mentalities, the generality of people would, experience assures me, be intrigued by the case against God, and its humanitarian objectives. There would be no surge towards a lofty ethical state, but the creation of a thinking public would bring much nearer the triumph of secular principles.

Billy Graham is having a wonderful time, blissfully blind to the impotence of his burning eloquence to salvationist society. Humanism must comprehend the full potentiality of its appeal. With unhindered propagation, it would find immense response from the truth-starved, and prove that the "dead horse" of old-fashioned scepticism is the liveliest menace to the superstitious faiths that disgrace our twentieth-century civilisation.

### A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

*Evening prayer of a Catholic lady*

"Blessed Lady Mary, thou who gavest birth without sinning, grant that I may sin without giving birth."

—Swedish weekly *Aktuellt* (29/10/65)

## THE FIVE SAINTS OF LEICESTER

(Concluded from page 411)

activities was Jesus responsible for? Evidently the Leicester Christians of 1881 vintage shared our astonishment, for Mr Gould goes on to tell us: "Of course the bracketing of Jesus with Freethinkers such as Voltaire, Paine and Owen caused much searching of hearts in the town." "I was considerably surprised and shocked," wrote an indignant correspondent to a local paper, "to see the name of Jesus in such a position, and I am altogether at a loss to find how the Secularists can claim him as a teacher and expounder of their views of life."

This critic was not alone in his surprise. For soon after, a popular Leicester preacher edified his congregation with remarks on the five busts. The real prophets of Secularism, he averred, were Owen, Paine and Voltaire. And the preacher was somewhat mystified at the respect shown to Jesus by the Secularists. "I suppose," he said, "there is something in the life and teachings of Jesus which even in them [sic] awakens a dim perception of the beautiful and true." The clergyman ended his discourse by complaining that Secularism robbed man of "that truest in the unseen and that hope of immortality which is the main-spring of all noble endurance and work".

This outburst was soon followed by one of an even more pontifical character by Canon Vaughan, a notable figure in Leicester religious circles. Alluding to the promoters of Secularism, he said: "Even if they themselves feel able to resist the enervated, demoralising influence involved in their denials or disavowals of God and immortality, and to live virtuous and honourable and useful lives in the strength of or in spite of their own agnostic principles, yet who can doubt what the tendencies of those denials and disavowals must be, and that from the new Hall in Humberstone Gate there will radiate ugly vices most injurious to morality amongst us."

To this cascade of denunciation aroused presumably by the Secularist appropriation of Jesus, Mr Josiah Gimson, then President of the Society, rejoined that "Jesus enjoined the performance of right actions towards our fellow-men as our first duty and that *his* gospel was moral rather than theological and therefore secularist".

Not a very convincing reply! On the whole, the Leicester Christians would appear to have had some ground for their complaints.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### SUNGODS AND MESSIAHS

LINGUISTICALLY Mr. Goodman's last contribution (26/11/65), I am sorry to say, is a hotchpotch of half-truths and outright howlers; one of the worst blunders was his lumping together of theophoric names (such as Isa-iah) with "Messiah" (Hebr. *Māshiyakh*). The most elemental knowledge is that a Hebrew root consists of three letters; therefore his playing about with Ia, Iu, etc., doesn't mean a thing. The root is in one case J.H.W., and in the other the root is M.Sh.Kh = to smear, anoint; quite apart again from M.Sh.H. = to draw out, deliver (Moses).

Further: Krishna was not an "anointed" Messiah and has etymologically nothing else in common with Christos but a similarity in sound that is accidental. Krishna has a short *ri*, hence Mr Goodman starts already from a wrong premise for *kri*, dropping altogether an explanation where the remaining *-shna* is to come in. How often must it be said; Krishna = the Dark One (and not a Christos). In the *Bhagavadgītā* he reveals himself as the Supreme Spirit, the one God, hidden in all things but pervading all. When after his revelation to *Arjuna* he again assumes human form, he says: "I cannot be seen in this [human] form by anyone but you [whom I have initiated]."

Mr Goodman's derivations from Greek (*chrysalis* — properly from *chrysos* = gold) and Latin (*crux*, cross — *crusta* — crust

etc) are too ludicrous to be dealt with. And his information about Egyptian he might have gathered from Theosophists.

*Ka* is the inner person, self but the mummy = *qas* or *qasiu*. Who or what are his "Anup and Aan (or Taht-Aan)," is the latter to be Taueret, the hippopotamous goddess, equated with Hathor, the goddess of the dead in the desert? Anup is the Jackal-god and a local deity of the necropolis at Abydos. Perhaps G. or somebody else mixed them up with the brothers *Anpu and Batau* of the D'Orbiney Papyros — the tale after which the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife was modelled in the Old Testament. Again the equation with Hermes is far fetched.

That Egyptian *Sa, Se* etc, is "quite often . . . with the . . . masculine *f*, like *Saf, Sef* . . . meaning son . . . etc" is a half-truth at best. We have *se -a* = son mine; "*f*" is the masculine suffix of the third person only (derived from *entuf* = he).

OTTO WOLFGANG

### PIUS XII

AS AN answer to Mr. S. G. Knott's question to me re Pope Pius XII and the Abyssinian War, I would like to cite the following paragraph from the book of Nazareno Padellaro, *Portrait of Pius XII* (Dent), page 110, where he says:

"There are some who maintain that the Secretary of State [Cardinal Pacelli was not yet Pope] should have taken advantage of this opportunity [namely, his meeting with President Roosevelt] to allay the indignation of American Catholics at the Vatican's conciliatory attitude in the matter of the Abyssinian War. But this is a view that has no basis . . . In any case, the Vatican's alleged attitude of appeasement towards Fascism is a myth; Pius XI and Cardinal Pacelli both saw in the conquest of Abyssinia a spark which might ultimately cause a worldwide conflagration."

I think no unprejudiced and well educated man can admit Mr. Knott's assertion. Pius XII was a very holy man, and a real defender of Peace, as one can see from his encyclicals. To the famous two questions proposed by St. Bernard: 'What would knowledge do without love? What would love do without knowledge?' Pius XII used to reply: 'Love would have no eyes, knowledge would be puffed up with pride.'

G. M. PARIS

[We must be prejudiced or badly educated.—Ed.]

### NO DANGER?

IN "Humanist Policy on RI" Margaret Knight uses the following phrase "Because of the danger that if the child later rejects Christianity he may throw out the moral baby with the mythological bath water . . ."

What evidence is there of such a danger, seeing that practically every unbeliever has passed through such a phase with entirely the opposite result? Surely the ethical codes she herself describes as Christianity is the very thing we wish to eradicate in the rising generation.

The Christian moral code is bad and when thrown away with the mythological bath water there remains the natural moral code.

W. G. QUIGLEY

## OBITUARY

ALFRED INESON who died at the age of 87 was an ardent Freethinker and Socialist, an active propagandist ever eager to espouse his views with a doggedness and good humour worthy of emulation. Literature, music and poetry (both as reader and writer) were his main interests and he was also a keen follower of "the summer game with the beautiful name".

Mr. Ineson had lived at Poole, but after the death of his wife in October, came North to stay with relatives in Moreton, and to them we offer our deep sympathy.

It was my privilege to pay tribute to the memory of this "happy warrior of Freethought" and to express the appreciation of the National Secular Society for his services, at the Birkenhead Crematorium on December 3rd.

W. COLLINS

Mrs. R. Leven-Book who died recently after a long illness had been a Freethinker reader and member of the National Secular Society for many years. She was cremated without ceremony at Golders Green Crematorium.

Details of membership of the National Secular Society and inquiries regarding bequests and secular funeral services may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1. Telephone: HOP 2717.