

ICONOCLAST

FOR MILITANT ATHEISM & RATIONALISM

Vol.1. No.10. Nov. 1966 6d

H O L Y S P I T

by Frank Hughes

Because of its curative properties, spit is a very important commodity. In fact, it is so precious, that a law should be passed to prevent its wastage. In some of our buses, for example, there is a notice which reads "No Spitting Allowed, Penalty 40/=" Now surely they wouldn't have the nerve to fine a person for not spitting on a bus? After all, "No spitting allowed", means that you are allowed not to spit. It doesn't prohibit you from spitting

The holy word "spit" is mentioned 11 times in the Bible, with beneficial results far superior to that of say, holy water, or holy smoke. We read in Numbers 12-14 where the Lord suggest to Moses that fathers should spit in their daughters' faces to punish them; not a word about spitting on the son's faces to punish them. According to Mark 7:32-35, a man is brought to Jesus, who is deaf and has an impediment in his speech. And Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears, "and he spit and touched his tongue.... and straight away his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain." Next month I'll relate the one about the three bears.)

In Mark 8:22-25, a blind man is brought to Jesus, who is besought to touch him,

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HOW CATHOLIC IS POLAND?

by Charles Hunter

As every person knows, or ought to know, Poland has for 1,000 years been thoroughly Catholic, and one of the darlings of the Vatican - at least as much as Italy. It is true that it has been once again taken into the Russian Fold, and no doubt many Poles are delighted. But for most of the people, it is the Church and not the State which is still paramount, without however, the power to be so.

Still, as it is 1,000 years since Christianity was first introduced, one can well understand that such passionate believers, as probably most of them still are, want to celebrate the event - and who could better be honoured guests than a bunch of Cardinals?

One of those invited was Cardinal Heenan, who was called by the Daily Mail, Roman Catholic Bishop of Westminster. We wonder who gave him this title? Was it the Vatican - or himself? As far as we know, such a title has never been bestowed on any Roman Catholic Cardinal by any English - Protestant - body; who alone could bestow it.

We wonder what Franco would say if he found a Protestant calling himself the Protestant Archbishop of Barcelona? And how would the Vatican like it if its fervent members woke up one day

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THE POLICE CURFEW

and

THE FASCIST STATE

Just how far has England moved along the path towards becoming a Police State? The Iconoclast has been quietly collecting evidence now for some years which is nothing less than alarming. At the moment it is still kept just below the surface - out of the sight of the 'average' person - in precisely the same way that the activities of the Gestapo were in Nazi Germany in 1933.

Well authenticated accounts of police brutality have become so common as to elicit little response from most people. The actual evidence of police murder is harder to come by - and it is a brave man who will seek it. Few of us realise that there is a curfew in existence in England, largely because we are lucky enough to be able to get to bed before the time it comes into operation - just after 1.30 am. If you want to try the experiment do - but don't go out alone - take a witness or you, as an Iconoclast editor found, that you are assaulted by a blue-shirted thug who stated "We (the police) are the Masters now!"

ICONOCLAST

HOW CATHOLIC IS POLAND?

EDITORIAL: All correspondence and material for publication to Editorial, Iconoclast, 139 Elm Road New Malden, Surrey. Dateline for publication is normally 15th of the month previous.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: 9/- per annum including postage and packing for twelve issues. Single copies 9d. post free, or write for free back number.

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EDITORIAL: Those who are not too familiar with the Church were suprised to find a report published recently condoning "extramarital intercourse". True the Bishops immediately rejected the findings of the experts - but they will come round in the end - and the Catholics will, significantly enough, as yet only allow Nuns to use THE Pill. But the truth is, the church has always been obsessed with Sex - indeed. owes a great deal of its origin to it, as well as a great deal of its ritual. The world's two most obscene books are still the Bible and the Maleus Malefactorum - both products of the Vatican - which possesses the world's 3rd. largest collection of pornography.

Continued from page 1, col. 1 HOLY SPIT

by Frank Hughes

"....and when he had spit on his eyes and put his hands upon him... and he was restored and saw every man clearly." And it came to pass, that although Jesus did not seek publicity, on each occasion, the person who had been successfully treated, was commanded to tell no one about the cure, "But the more he charged them so much the more a great deal they published it." The added publicity that Jesus will receive when he returns to earth, will probably put the spectacle makers, and manufacturers of hearing aids out of business; and what about the eye, ear, nose and throat hospitals, will they resort to the old "spit and mend" method of treatment?

Bible law provides - Deuteronomy 25:5 - that if your married brother dies without issue, it shall be the duty of the surviving brother to marry the widow, regardless of the number of wives he may then have. This is in direct conflict with the marriage laws of our country. Why the preachers have not been busy on legislation to bring laws into harmony with holy writ, is past comprehension. If a man refuses to abide by this holy regulation, the widow has redress (Deut: 25:7-9) She shall report him to the elders of the church and they shall call the culprit on the carpet. If he still refuses to marry the widow shall "loose the shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face." The name of "the man that will not build up his brother's house, his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed."

by Charles Hunter
Cont. from page 1 col. 2.

one day, and found that say, Dr. Donald Soper was installed as the Nonconformist Moderator of Naples?

Of course, Cardinal Heenan would no doubt protest it was a 'courtesy' title, but that is just what most readers of our national newspapers do not know. But some of us who do know, realise how slowly and insidiously the Protestants of England - who still have long memories and remember 'Bloody' Mary, and that infamous - and fortunately the last - Roman Catholic King, James ii - want no more of their kidney, and certainly not the English titles to which they have no right.

We are not of course attacking the personal character of Cardinal Heenan, and as freethinkers may well deprecate this Polish refusal to admit his entry into what is a country with a high proportion of Catholics., to take part in an historical celebration of a Church we dislike. He ought to have been allowed entry - for one way or another it will not make the slightest difference to Roman Catholicism, and not, certainly to Poland.

We do not know the strength of Romanism in Poland. Perhaps if the celebrations are publicised, we shall obtain some indication; but from all accounts, the influence of Rome and the Vatican is slowly but surely dying in Poland.

HUMAN EVOLUTION - BRAIN OR HAND?

By F.A. Ridley.

In the year 1859, the naturalist Charles Darwin published his epoch making work 'The Origin of Species'. A work, that if it did not exactly discover the theory of evolution, at least raised it by exact demonstration from the level of mere speculation to that of ascertained fact. Actually the theory of evolution as a speculation had been known since the 18th. Century. The theory of evolution was enlarged 11 years later by Darwin in the year 1870 when he then extended the scope of evolution to include man in his book 'The Descent of Man'. The prolonged and bitter controversies that this then revolutionary idea aroused in both religious and in scientific circles are still too well remembered for any further reminder to be necessary even today.

HOMO SAPIENS? Charles Darwin himself belonged to the upper section of the Victorian Bourgeoisie, and although Karl Marx who greatly admired his revolutionary ideas in biology, sent him a copy of Das Kapital on its publication in 1867, there is no proof that the millionaire Darwin sympathised with its revolutionary ideas, or even read it. For the mid-Victorian era represented the heyday of the English Bourgeoisie; a universal predominance that extended not only to contemporary politics and economics, but also to their contemporary science and culture. It was accordingly, only natural, indeed inevitable, that the new theory of human origins should be currently interpreted in ways acceptable to the bourgeoisie mentality. And so it was. It was. It was of course, common knowledge that the Darwinian evolutionary struggle was, by the then bourgeoisie liberal philosopher Herbert Spencer, summarised as "the survival of the fittest". This meant in current practise, a "scientific" justification for the contemporary 'dog-eat-dog' competition carried out by the Victorian bourgeoisie. That ferociously competitive struggle which, as Engels described it at the time 'Transferred the Darwinian struggle for existence from nature to society with redoubled violence.' 'Whoso falls is remorselessly cast aside.' So much is common knowledge, but this essentially bourgeoisie interpretation of the facts of human evolution adds a

more subtle aspect, and it is to this precise aspect that I wish to draw attention in the remainder of this article.

WHY SAPIENS? I refer here to the theory of human origins then put forward in Victorian times, and still presumably the "orthodox" theory of the meaning of the manner in which pre-historic apere-man eventually evolved into a distinctively human species. This theory is both commemorated and explained by the biological description Homo Sapiens, man the thinker. For according to this still orthodox theory, mankind, homo, parted company with the animal world and eventually evolved into a distinctively human species as a result primarily of a superior intelligence an intellect that reflects his larger and more highly devolved physically, brain. Man became 'Homo' because he was initially 'Sapien'.! That is, he was possessed of a mentality altogether different from the rest of the members of the animal kingdom. It is surely easy today, to see how readily such a theory appealed to the Victorian bourgeoisie, since it corresponded entirely with their own class environment; for the bourgeoisie, at least after it had carried through its social revolution and become the ruling class, had little physical contact with any form of manual labour. They were writers, administrators, speakers, who operated almost entirely by virtue of their superior mental activity. The brain was their unique tool!

Continued on page 4 over -

Human Evolution - Brain or Hand

By F.A. Ridley

Continued from foot of page 3:

For what more natural than for Darwin, Spencer, and their readers to transpose their own conditions of life to those of primitive man, and to suppose that because they themselves had become the masters of modern society, and had distinguished themselves from feudal society by virtue of their superior intelligence, that the earliest human species had similarly risen from out the animal kingdom; Homo, being already Sapiens - that is to say - intelligent - was fitter to survive than his animal competitors. According to still fashionable 'scientific' theory, Man - Homo, is primarily a thinking animal because the brain, a primary organ, represents ultimately merely a convenient throwback to primitive pre-human conditions of the actual social and intellectual evolution of the modern bourgeoisie themselves.

OR HOMO FABER? Whilst the theory of human origins embraces the phrase 'Homo-sapiens' it has been generally accepted as the authoritative description of human origins. It was not, even as far back as the 18th century, the only explanation. For in the generation that witnessed the French and American revolutions, the American scientist and revolutionary, Benjamin Franklin, who took an active part in both the French and American revolutions, besides inventing the lightning conductor and first sending Thomas Paine to America, initially advanced the theory of 'Homo-Faber' - man the tool-user. During the following 19th. century, this then unorthodox theory of human origins found some adherents, chiefly in socialist circles. Notably Marx and Engels the latter of whom wrote a pamphlet which favourably mentioned this view of human origins. One can perhaps assume that the great founders of scientific socialism inclined to this view on the general principles of historical materialism, rather than because of any special evidence available in support?

Neither Marx nor Engels was a specialist in biology, and most of the positive evidence that can be adduced in favour of this theory has mostly emerged since their time.

WHICH CAME FIRST? There is nowadays

a strong and ever-growing body of evidence to indicate that ipso facto, Man - homo - does not possess any unique brain that operates to separate him from the rest of the animal kingdom; a conception that is essential behind the theory of 'Homo-sapiens - man-the-thinker. For according to a modern naturalist "A whale's brain is even more deeply convoluted than a man's, so that by size and convolutions the brain of the blue whale, will indicate a high level of intelligence." At this present time, an associate of mine in the reading room of the British Museum is writing a thesis designed to demonstrate that a dolphin has a definitely more highly developed brain than has "unique" homo-sapiens! Why then, we shall undoubtedly ask, is not Delphinus Sapiens - the thinking dolphin - the present lord of our planet? Or equally, big brother whale? The answer to this leading question was surely given long ago by a heterodox Victorian scientist, Professor Alan Sedgwick; "Had the whale a means of recording his experience, then he would have been the master of the world." "Possessing a better brain than man (my italics) larger, more convoluted, he lacks only the reversible digit, the thumb, which can grasp and hold the tool. Compare E.L. Grant-Watson 'Enigmas of Nature' page 131, Mr. Watson himself adds, "Had the whale but had the reversible digit, then such a civilization would have arisen from the sea as would be beyond the dreams of puny man."

Here surely, the descriptive adjective 'sapiens' should be attached to whales and dolphins and not purely to Man - 'homo' - who, after all, has "a reversible digit" which can grasp and hold a tool?

Continued back page column 1.

While morality is custom,
Immorality is customary....
Oscar Wilde.

Non-Christian Evidence of Christian Origins - 2.

by John A. Millar

TACITUS (C54 AD - C135 AD)

The Catholic Encyclopaedia lists five witnesses to the historicity of Jesus and as testimony to Christian mythology of the origin of their churches. In the first article in this series, it was demonstrated that, not only was the first of these 5 'witnesses', 'Flavius' Josephus, not a witness to the truth of Christianity, but a positive witness against it, in that positive evidence of forgery and conscious fraudulent interpolation was available.

Before leaving Josephus we might perhaps remark that although a contemporary of Tacitus, resident at Rome at the time of incidents attributed to him, yet nowhere in the whole of Josephus is there even the slightest reference to any incident recorded by Tacitus - a remarkable omission if we are dealing with fact! The writing in question was said to be contained in the "Annals of Tacitus, Book XV., Sect. 44" and is more subtle than the forgery in Josephus in that it purports to endorse by attacking. That is to say, the passage refers to the alleged persecution of the Christians at Rome by the Emperor Nero, and speaks in the most disparaging tones of them, e.g. "This pernicious superstition" etc.

Robert Taylor wrote a detailed account and exposé of the fraudulent nature of this passage, which unhappily is almost impossible to obtain:-

"This passage, which would have served the purpose of Christian quotation better than any other...is not quoted by any of the Christian Fathers. He points out that Tertullian's argument "called for the use of this quotation with so loud a voice, that his omission of it, if it had really existed, amounts to a violent improbability."

Clemens Alexandrinus who had set out to collate all pagan writings in support of Christianity was in ignorance of it.

Eusebius, who could not have failed to discover or to cite the passage, was in ignorance of it, in fact as Taylor stated "There is no vestige nor trace of its existence anywhere in the world before the 15th. century." "It rests then upon the fidelity of a single individual. And he, having the ability, the opportunity, and the strongest poss-

possible incitement of interest to induce him to introduce the interpolation."

Robert Taylor did not omit to observe that the writer of the passage revealed a delight in bloodshed horror and savagery that whilst altogether alien to a mild and gentle mind, like that of a cultivated historian of taste such as we know Tacitus to have been, so frequently characterises the Christian disposition.

Further, the passage is contradicted by even Christian writers including the "Apology of Tertullian" and Melito, Bishop of Sardis who states that up to the 3rd century there had been no persecution of the Christians. The passage even contradicts the New Testament! For at the very time this persecution is said to be occurring Paul is said to be living at Rome preaching in peace "no man forbidding him" Acts XXviii., 31. and in Romans Xii., 34 Paul is alleged to have written that there was no -thing to be feared from the government at Rome.

The oldest known version of the Annals of Tacitus goes back no further than the 13th. century when it was published by one Johannes de Spire at Venice in 1468. He had the only known copy and was in a position to do whatever he liked with it since all copies derive from this one. It was claimed that De Spire's copy was written in the 8th. century.

Christians are totally unable to explain why a document should have remained unknown in Christian hands for some 6 hundred years, when it would have formed a major argument for the validity of their claims. There is however, a simple answer - it was unknown for 1468 years because it did not exist until then.

HAS CHRISTIANITY FAILED?

and

HAS IT BEEN TRIED?

By Len Ebury

During the course of my long career as a public speaker and advocate of secularism, I have often been told that "Christianity has not failed because it has never been tried." This is just nonsense. It is not true to say that every time a man performs a kindly action, he is "Christlike", and every time he performs an anti-social act he is an "Anti-Christ". Goodness and kindness are human qualities, and are not peculiar to a particular creed. Ethics are social in origin and not supernatural. They are man made, not God made, and they are subject to improvement through evolutionary change. Morality like society, is not static.

Christianity, on any rational basis of argument, has to be judged on its teaching and historical record. It has also to be judged by its actions during its periods of strength as well as by its periods of weakness. Sensible people do not judge political parties by their election promises! Truly "by their fruits ye shall know them". From one point of view it would be easy to prove Christianity a stupendous success. But it depends on what we value most as to whether or not one would accept this judgement, as well as to the regard we place on that which has helped in the progress of humanity in the past, and is in line with its increasing welfare in the future. Let us examine the facts.

Every village and hamlet boasts its church and chapel; the church generally being situated close to the pub. There have been and there are, no slums too mean and squalid, no people too poor and fanished, to be left without spiritual sustenance. The foul slums of Liverpool boast their £3,000,000 cathedral; doubtless fitted with a lightning conductor - which many Christians would be foolish enough, and so ignorant of the Church's opposition to science, as to claim to be another proof of the success of Christianity!

If you count possession of wealth and power as success, the Roman Catholic Church is a great success, possessing wealth beyond computation, wrung from the pious by death bed fears, and from affectionate relatives paying for prayers for 'souls' in Purgatory, as well as from the sales of miraculous medals, fraudulent relics, and indulgences. As Sir Walter Scott makes Henbane Divining say: "The pardon of Popes and priests, encourages priest-ridden fools to venture on new crimes.....all the holy incentives to vice may be purchased for gold."

This is success indeed. But where the church has power, liberty is dead.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND the state church, described as the "Tory Party at prayer" waxed fat on tithes and royalties. Blood on coal and slave conditions for the agricultural worker while Bishops receive £10,000 a year to preach "Blessed be ye poor", and draw rents from the fetid hovels and bug hutches of the poor. This is success indeed! But the congregations are leaving the Church.

THE SALVATION ARMY 'Ere its leader was cold in the grave haggled over the millions gained by bastard charity, and from the sweated labour of the lowest of the poor. This is success indeed. But the real remedy for poverty lies in the equitable distribution of the material wealth produced by the community as a whole.

WHEN DID CHRISTIANITY SUCCEED?

Was it when Constantine the Great made it the state religion of the Roman Empire in order to provide a slace ethic to content the poor; or when later at an even viler period of slavery, not even a negro slave need die from the effects of his Christian Master's lash, without the sure and certain hope of a glorious ressurection?

THE DARK AGES Was it in the "dark ages", the "Ages of Faith"? They were the heyday of Christianity's power and success.

(Continued column 1 page 7)

HAS CHRISTIANITY FAILED?

By Len Ebury

continued from page 6

THE DARK AGES. What happened then?

Learning was despised; Art was stultified; Science suppressed; Literature static; Medicine was confined; surgery was forbidden and condemned. All the progress-ive arts of man were either limited or destroyed, and filthy 'Saints', like Simon Stylites, became the ideal of a Society that had known the Science, Art and Philosophy of Greece and Rome! Christianity taught from a 'sacred' book or 'Infallible' Pope, or from both. It taught geography, cosmogony, the origin of the world, of life and of man; it taught everything needful, it said, for man to know, and in everything it was wrong!

WHEN DID CHRISTIANITY BEGIN TO

FAIL? According to the test I propounded at the outset; In the moments of its apparent triumph. When GALLILEO was forced to recant; When COPERNICUS was prevented from publishing his work; when BACON was imprisoned; when VESALIUS was forced to flee; up to the time of Darwin and Spencer. Then our freethought champions forced the lie to falter on the lips of the priest, AND NOW:

Modern churchmen deny the leading tenets of their faith, in order that the WORLD that they have always professed to despise should not rock at their complete intellectual bankruptcy!

The Successes of the church are marked by PERSECUTION, MURDER, MASSACRE, and WAR. The duty to persecute heretics, unbelievers and those of other faiths, according to the Biblical commands, attributed to God, Moses, Jesus and Paul "believe or be Damned" led to such classical examples as the Crusades, the Massacre of St. Bartholomews Day, and in more recent times, the advent of such political-clerical dictators as Schuschnigg, Dollfuss and Franco. A shocking case of Clerical victory was the treatment of the proposed Mother and Child Welfare Scheme in Eire.

HAS CHRISTIANITY BEEN TRIED?

It has been tried too long.

Every step in social progress marks its defeat. So far as human happiness and welfare are concerned, it is a dismal failure. Scientifically, mentally and morally, we have defeated the forces of superstition and demonstrated the failure of Christianity. It has failed to maintain itself as true. It has been proved to be false. It is still, where its power remains, a menace to humanity, and its influence is evil. So far as the continuance of mental slavery and economic bondage is concerned, it is still playing its part in the world to maintain them, and the success of secularism is essential if we are to keep, let alone extend our gains, and to prevent Christianity from laying the dead hand of past mistakes across the path of progress. The failure of God is the triumph of Man.

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Human Evolution - Brain or Hand
by F.A. Ridley.

Continued from foot page 4

HOW DID MAN ORIGINATE? So far the available evidence refers to maritime creatures such as whales and dolphins and not purely to man, who after all, can utilise the tool. But human evidence from actual primitive man is also now accumulating. For a few years back, the anthropologist Leakey found vestigial remains of primitive man in East Africa, which are of extreme interest and importance, particularly within our present context. For these 'men' had brains even more primitive than those of modern apes, but they stood on their hind legs; their arms were therefore free, and they knew how to use the primitive tools buried along with them. Homo-faber - Man-the-toolmaker - here preceded Homo-sapiens - Man-the-Thinker -!

From the point of view of historical materialism, which the above fact appears strongly to support, it was surely only when man - homo- acquired what his perhaps more potentially developed maritime relatives lack, that is to say "a reversible digit" which can grasp and handle a tool, that by the agency of the tool, he was able to write his hitherto painfully limited experiences, and thus become Homo-sapiens - man-the-thinker "because his mental functions had a new opportunity to expand?". One can perhaps, relevantly add, that the modern manual worker who habitually made, and used tools can appreciate this vital distinction, and the theory behind it, much better than the bourgeoisie, who have as a rule, no practical experience of using tools, or indeed, usually regard manual work as positively degrading.

Accordingly, we think that the secular society of the socialist future will opt for 'Homo-faber' as against 'Homo-sapiens'? For, "In the beginning was the act" and in the beginning of human evolution was the tool!

Man, the worker preceded man, the thinker. And it was by the agency of the hand that homo first became sapiens.

UNIFORMED = UNINFORMED

THE TROUBLE with the world is that the stupid are cocksure, and the intelligent, full of doubt...

Bertrand Russell.

WANTED

A comrade in the U.S.A. has decided to emulate Len Ebury and his North London Group of the Secular League comrades, by reprinting in America that celebrated work by J.M. Wheeler and G.W. Foote "The Crimes of Christianity". Unfortunately neither he, nor we, possess a copy, so if any of our readers can oblige...a note to the Secretary please.

No man can raise the rent quicker than the landlord.

Those who admire the writing of F.A. Ridley will be pleased to hear that the completion of what we think will undoubtedly prove to be his magnum opus, is now looming into view. We refer of course to his monumental "Rise and Fall of the English Empire" which we are certain is destined to become a classic and standard work. We are going to need what we can only term 'lavish' assistance, both in cash and labour, and anxiously await your offers of assistance.

Genius is one per cent inspiration and 99% perspiration...

Thomas Edison

The State rests on the slavery of the poor; if labour becomes free, the State is lost...

Max Stirner

MEETINGS Outdoor meetings under the auspices of Kingston, North London and Camden Groups:

Marble Arch every Sunday from 4 pm.
Speakers: Jim Barker, Len Ebury, Charles Wood, John Millar - and of course Mr. Tinnins.

Tower Hill: every Thursday 12-2.00
Len Ebury.

Indoor Meetings: Every Friday at the White Hart, Kingston - Kingston and Surbiton Groups, Secular League.