

# PERSECUTION AND THE CHURCH.

The

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## Views and Opinions.

### Persecution and the Church.

LAST week I dealt with an article by Dean Inge on the question of Humanitarianism and the Christian Church. This particular essay was followed by another on "Is Persecution Ever Right?" which has brought the *Church Times* on the scene. What has specially roused the ire of the latter is the manner in which the Dean sums up the case for persecution. He says:—

Cronwell, says Froude, was convinced that Catholicism was morally poisonous; therefore he did not tolerate Catholicism. The Catholics were even more strongly convinced that Protestantism was morally poisonous; so they tortured and burnt Protestants. One party or the other was no doubt mistaken; but granting their convictions, were they not right to persecute? If a revelation was divine, the rejection of it is diabolical, and to stamp out diabolism is our duty. We can render tuberculous milk innocuous by boiling it; similarly the bacillus of heresy may be eradicated by roasting the carrier.

That, I think, puts the philosophy of religious persecution quite fairly, and offers the only possible excuse for it. And the Dean follows it up by giving an equally good reason why persecution has become weaker, or at least why persecution is not flaunted as a virtue to-day as it was when the Church was strong.

The only reason why we do not persecute now is because we do not believe heavily. We think there may be something to say on the other side. When we are thoroughly convinced we do persecute.

This, again, puts the case for religious persecution very fairly, and also describes a principal cause of its falling into official disfavour.

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### How History is Written.

It is this last passage which the *Church Times* does not like. It says it implies that a convinced believer will always be a persecutor. And to that we should reply that generally this is so. Without exception, every body of Christians have persecuted to the limits

of their opportunity to do so. When they have not done so it has been because, as Spurgeon once said, they had never the opportunity. And the *Church Times* so far forgets its facts as to say:—

Persecuted by the Roman Government, the apologists of Christianity demanded toleration on the ground that religion is a voluntary matter . . . So far was the Church of the fourth century from an acquiescence in the theory that strong belief justified the persecution of heresy, that it very emphatically condemned the first application of the theory . . . Yet for centuries no elaborate theory of persecution existed . . . More than a thousand years, however, had passed from the dawn of the Christian era before the Canon Law of the Church clearly justified the capital punishment of the heretic. Probably it was the action of the mob, rather than the desire of the theologians that called the Inquisition into existence . . . When the clergy did not act, the mob acted—as it acts to-day in the negro burnings in the United States—and the medieval Inquisition came into existence to ensure that some justice should be done, and that innocent and guilty should not suffer together.

Very, very pretty! One must really congratulate the *Church Times* on giving its readers as complete a distortion of the facts as could be expected from a journal that circulates among the educated of the Christian world.

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### Rome and the Christians.

The issues raised here are important enough to justify a rather lengthy examination. The statement that the Christians demanded toleration because religion was a matter for individual concern, one need only dismiss by saying it is pure fiction. The Christians met the Roman Government (granting the truth of the persecutions) by the broad assertion that they held the true religion, and dared not observe any other. They demanded the right to worship, not as a right to which every individual is entitled without regard as to what his religion is, but simply because they were the weaker body, and could only worship on sufferance. And that right was never denied by the Roman Government. It was one of the cardinal principles of Rome that each man was justified in worshipping the gods of his own country.

The assertion that the Church of the fourth century was averse to persecution, may be tested by the fact that so soon as Constantine took the Church under his patronage the persecution of the pagans began, their temples were suppressed in many places, and the clergy were clamouring for the possession of them to be handed over to the newly established religion. The distortion of historic fact becomes more marked when we are told that for centuries there was no elaborate theory of persecution, and that Canon Law never laid down the law for the capital punishment of the heretic until the eleventh century. Clearly, if

the Roman Government made religious persecution a part of its policy, there should have been at hand both a theory and a machinery of persecution. That this was not so, is evidence in favour of what we have just said concerning the Roman policy. As a matter of fact there is no law dating from Roman times which forbade heresy. And until somewhere about the eleventh century the power of the Church was so complete, that it was well able to deal with any sporadic cases that occurred without compiling a code, or creating a special machinery. It was the outbreak of organized heresies on a large scale that led the Church to frame one of the most diabolical systems of legal persecution the world had known, and to apply it on a scale, and with a ferocity, greater than the world has ever witnessed. And it would be interesting to get the *Church Times'* explanation of so kindly an institution so cheerfully launching out on such a course.

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#### The Gentle Christian.

The ingenuous remark that the Church of the fourth century was free from any inclination to encourage the persecution of heretics may be met with the plain statement of fact, that with very rare exceptions in the case of individuals, intolerance of heretics was universal. Apart from the official edicts prohibiting the service of the pagan temples, ecclesiastical records are full of the accounts of quarrels between different Christian bodies—not merely disputes, but physical conflicts. The great St. Augustine had written that it was merciful to punish heretics, even by death, if this could save them or others from the eternal suffering of the hell that awaited the unconverted. That is not so bad for a start, but one may say by way of extenuation—as Swift commented on the ignorance of Homer concerning the Thirty-nine articles—Augustine never read the *Church Times*. Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, after trying to get the person of Chrysostom into his hands, which would have meant his death, managed to secure his banishment. It was this Bishop who was responsible for the burning of the Alexandrian library. His successor Cyril shut up all the Novatian Churches, and led the crowd to a massacre of Jews. The murder of Hypatia is too well known to need more than a passing mention. And of the fifth century, Dean Milman's description runs:—

Monks in Alexandria, Monks in Antioch, Monks in Jerusalem, Monks in Constantinople, decide peremptorily on orthodoxy and heterodoxy . . . Persecution is universal, persecution by every means of violence and cruelty. The only question is in whose hands is the power to persecute . . . Bloodshed, murder, treachery, assassination, even during the public worship of God. These are the frightful means by which each party strives to maintain its opinion and defeat its adversary.

There is such a frightful monotony about these fights of the various Christian gangs, and over such ridiculous things, that it is quite enough to give samples from bulk. But they serve as a fine commentary upon the picture of the Christians as harmless people insisting that religious belief was an individual matter, and being without the sense of, or the desire for, persecution, until a secular power educated them in the art. Who was it said that Christian truth was equal to Punic faith?

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#### Christian Brotherhood.

We are dealing with the temper of Christian leaders before (according to the *Church Times*) the good leaders of the Church were forced to legislate for the

suppression of heresy in order to protect heretics from the fury of the mob. So I turn in passing to the charity of the *Church* in dealing with those it disagreed with. Here is a form of excommunication, used in the tenth century, and its tolerant spirit is evident to all. It is a lengthy one, but sufficiently curious nowadays to justify its citation:—

By the authority of God the Omnipotent Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and of the Sacred canons, and the Holy and unsullied Virgin Mary the Mother of God. We excommunicate and anathematize . . . that he may be delivered over to eternal torment with Dathan and Abiram and with those who cried to the Lord God, "Away with us we wish not to know thy ways." And as fire is quenched in water so may his light be quenched for ever and ever, unless he repent and render full satisfaction. Amen. Be he accursed of God the Father who created man, accursed of God the Son who suffered for man; accursed of the Holy Ghost which cometh in baptism, accursed of the Holy Cross which the triumphant Christ ascended for our sins; accursed of the angels and archangels, the princes and powers, and all the hosts of heaven: accursed of the worthy legions of Prophets and Patriarchs; accursed of St. John the forerunner and baptizer of Christ; accursed of St. Peter and St. Paul and St. Andrew and all the apostles of Christ . . . Let him be accursed wherever he be, whether at home or abroad, in the road or in the path, or in the wood, or in the water, or in the church. Let him be accursed living and dying, eating, drinking, fasting or athirst, slumbering, waking, walking, standing, sitting, lying, working, idling — and bleeding. Let him be accursed in all the forces of his body. Let him be accursed outside and inside; accursed in his hair and accursed in his brain; accursed in the crown of his head, in his temples, in his forehead, in his brows, in his eyes, in his cheeks, in his jaws, in his nostrils, in his front teeth, in his back teeth, in his lips, in his throat, in his shoulders, in his upper arms, in his lower arms, in his hands, in his fingers, in his breast, in his heart, in his stomach and liver, in his kidneys, in his loins, in his —, in his thighs, in his knees, in his shins, in his feet, in his toes and in his nails. Let him be accursed in every joint of his body. Let there be no health in him from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet. May Christ, the Son of the Living God, curse him throughout His Kingdom, and may Heaven with all the virtues rise up against him to his damnation, unless he repents and renders due satisfaction. So be it. So be it. Amen.

And when we bear in mind that this excommunication involved that no one was to supply him with food, or clothing, or shelter, we can realize how much this purely Church teaching must have done to encourage a spirit of toleration and readiness to regard religion as something which concerned the individual alone. Seriously, it is difficult to adequately realize the bestial quality of mind that could coolly excogitate a rigmarole of this description. For sheer malevolence it outshines anything that the pre-Christian world has to offer. One can safely say that no human mind could contemplate things of this kind as in the line of duty and justice without being degraded and brutalized thereby. And all that one needs add is that it was this type of mind which for centuries lorded it over Europe. In Boccaccio's story, the Jew comes to the conclusion that the Roman Church must be of God, since nothing but a continuous miracle could keep such a monument of villiany in existence. So one may say that there must be something indestructibly admirable in human nature to have stood against so vile a tuition as was given it by its Christian guides and teachers.

I will return to the historical aspect of the matter next week.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## The Pious Press Gang.

"I don't believe in principle  
But Oh I do in interest."

Lowell, *Biglow Papers*.

"Men are not great men because they happen to fill  
great offices."—*John Bright*.

THE fight for a free and unfettered Press is one of the most glorious pages of British history. In few other instances have the best qualities of Britons shown to greater advantage. Yet to-day the free press of England is a legend, and its place has been usurped by a commercialized Press, which is as corrupt and more degrading than the official publications permitted in those countries where Liberty is but a word in a dictionary, without any corresponding relation to actual life.

The reason for this transformation is the commercialization of the newspaper press. The power of the editors and writers has been steadily diminishing of late years, and the power of the commercially-minded proprietors constantly increasing. All have become the abject slaves of the circulation-manager, a being with the ideals and ambitions of a thousand-per-cent. money-lender.

Journalists can neither do justice to themselves, nor serve the public honestly, in a press dominated by advertisers. In spite of their rivalry, the British newspapers are of one mind in suppressing advanced thought, which is thought to be fatal to fat dividends. The conspiracy of silence against Free-thought is wonderful. The papers devote columns to the most brutal and disgusting murder cases, and report sordid police-court cases. In the summer, when space is plentiful, there is always the sea-serpent and the big gooseberry. Even in the midst of the awful world-war, room was found for fictitious accounts of "angels" on the battle-fields, or of the alleged miraculous happenings to stone statues of the "Virgin Mary."

Let there be no mistake on this point. The writers of this trash do not all believe it. It is not entirely due to fanaticism or ignorance, but is simply done to promote huge circulations. It is, in the final analysis, largely a matter of business. Journalists know better than that Freethinkers are weak, foolish, and ill-conditioned persons, but they wish to curry favour with the many-headed Orthodox, and to this end they "tickle the ears of the groundlings." The imbecilities of the Bishop of London, the inanities of "Woodbine Willie," and of Billy Sunday, are reported weekly in the newspapers, but the leaders of Freethought seldom have a line devoted to their work, unless it takes the form of studied insolence.

The result is that newspaper readers are kept in blissful ignorance of the intellectual ferment that goes on outside the very narrow limits of the "respectable" press; that is the press which is only a money-making machine. Journalists are the maids-of-all-work to the proprietors of the papers. They may be ever so ignorant, ever so shallow, and ever so disreputable; it is enough if they can write in a striking way, and flatter the passions and prejudices of the largest number of readers. They are soldiers of fortune, too, and will sell their pens to any "boss," Liberal or Tory, Catholic or Protestant, Labour or Capitalist. They will attack or defend anything at a moment's notice, provided that the pay is good.

The English newspaper editors are the most lick-spittle and sycophantic body of journalists in the world. Without the slightest necessity for flunkeyism, they consistently abase themselves, and debase

the moral currency in the process. In the case of Royalty they slobber and sentimentalize to the verge of incoherence, and with regard to religion their honesty is conspicuous by its absence.

The funeral of Thomas Hardy is a clear example. This famous writer was known to be a Freethinker. The fact was "four square to all the winds that blow." Yet scores of editors, not of local news sheets, but of really important newspapers, wrote as if Hardy were a Christian, and a devout one at that. With their tongues in their cheeks these editors did their best to dissemble and deceive their hundreds of thousands of readers. A sorry and an easy task, for large numbers of newspaper readers are almost as totally unacquainted with serious literature as the greyhounds they pay their hard-earned money to see on the race-track.

On the day of Thomas Hardy's funeral *The Times* printed a letter from a Church of England dignitary, drawing attention to Hardy's love for the Anglican Church, which was at least as fervent as that editor's love of fairplay. *The Morning Post* "out-Heroded Herod," and in a leading article on Hardy, professed to find "a great deal of the Christian in that infinite pity, which lies at the root of his philosophy." *The Manchester Guardian*, a Liberal amongst Liberal papers, congratulated the Westminster Abbey ecclesiastics on their growing toleration, because they refused burial to George Meredith and granted it to Thomas Hardy. So, one might go on quoting example after example of literary prostitution, for that is exactly what this dirty work represents.

These journalists knew perfectly well that Hardy was a Freethinker, and they know also that to bury such a man with the ritual of a Church he rejected whilst he was living was an outrage. Yet, in carefully calculated language, they mislead their public. "Oh! the sorry trade."

Journalists write for money. This simple fact explains why the entire press of an otherwise civilized country dismisses in a few lines such an awful catastrophe as an Indian famine, which means death from want of food of thousands of men, women, and children, and gives a tremendous publicity to the domestic lives of royal persons. Whether an august person reads a Bible or the *Sporting Times*, or whether another exalted party admires race-horses or chorus-girls, is a matter of small consequence; but the welfare of tens of thousands of human beings is of importance. It also helps us to understand why a "free and enlightened" press was moved to ecstasies of admiration at the sight of a fat Royal baby sucking its thumb, and blinking at the stupidity of the working class.

Is it not playing it a little low down on the average citizen thus to take advantage of his innocence and lack of knowledge? When the Education Act has run another half century, the readers of newspapers, perhaps, will cease to hunger for sawdust, and will prefer the bread of knowledge. In sober truth, and not in the facile cant of journalism, let us wish for the recovery of the editors. There are many editors for whom the inscription, "Died of Commercialism" is good, and good enough. But all the men who occupy the proud positions formerly held by Douglas Jerrold, Charles Dickens, Harriet Martineau, G. W. M. Reynolds, and W. T. Stead, should not be flunkies and toadies. So desperate is the dilemma that almost is one persuaded that the British Press has declined from its great estate upon a period of hypocrisy and vulgarity, as repulsive as the habits of uncouth monsters in the primeval slime.

MIMNEMUS.

## Relativity and Religion.

(Concluded from page 76.)

FAR from the new discoveries in science leading to an increase of religious awe and veneration for the cosmos, the contrary seems to be the case. Professor Eddington, who is one of the foremost workers in the new discoveries, observes: "I am afraid the knockabout comedy of modern atomic physics is not very tender towards our æsthetic ideals. The stately drama of stellar evolution turns out to be more like the hair-breadth escapades on the films. The music of the spheres has almost a suggestion of—jazz."<sup>6</sup>

That the so much talked of "music of the spheres" has an element of jazz in it, will come as a delightful revelation to the composers of jazz music, and jazz dances, who have suffered so much slating from the more orthodox exponents. We may even see brand-new jazz hymns, jazz temples, and a jazz God! However, they could not be more foolish and irrational than many of those we already have, and might, indeed, be an improvement upon some of them.

It has been claimed that Relativity favours the transcendental and subjective views of the Berkeley school. It does nothing of the kind. The famous French scientist, Prof. Paul Painlevé, delivered a lecture entitled, "Absolu et Relativite," in London last November, of which a short summary appeared in *Nature* (November 26), from which we quote the following. The italics are ours:—

M. Painlevé emphasized the essentially scientific character of the theory of relativity, which has often been falsely represented as a metaphysical doctrine. He considered it important to distinguish carefully between the scientific theory of relativity and the "transcendental subjectiveism, which assumes that our sensations alone are a fact, a reality, and that the universe is nothing but an illusion." *Relativity demands the objective reality of the external world.* What it does is to deprive time and space of the absolute character with which they have previously been endowed . . . Einstein has given us a view of the universe which entails a revision of the fundamental principles of science, but strengthens them enormously.

Relativity lends no support to the idealistic philosophy, which represents mind, and not matter, as the only fundamental reality.

Professor Wildon Carr is a professor of philosophy at London University, he is also a mathematician, and has written a book on *The Principle of Relativity* (1920). He has also just written a book dealing with the subject we are writing about, entitled, *Changing Backgrounds of Science and Ethics* (Macmillan. 7s. 6d.). Professor Carr understands the Relativity theory; it is his business, or profession, to do so, as a teacher of philosophy. He also writes on the side of religion, even going so far as to say: "To realize the need of religion we have only to bring to mind the horror of darkness which seemed for a moment to settle on the human outlook when the materialistic science of last century threatened the extinction of all hope of discovering spiritual values." (Page 220) "Horror of darkness" indeed! What we experienced was an infinite relief in the dawn of a brighter day, when men would get up off their knees and stand erect, casting away the "spiritual values," which had hitherto bound them in mental slavery to imaginary spectres. This rant of a Methodist preacher does not become a professor of philosophy. However, it is abund-

antly clear that if there is anything in Relativity that can be adduced in support of religion, it will not be overlooked, or understated, by Professor Wildon Carr. Let us have his testimony upon the point. He observes:—

There has come to pass in our generation what has more than once occurred before in the short historical period covered by the human continuous record, a sudden widening of the intellectual horizon, a new scientific conquest, a vast expansion or outward push of the cosmic environment, making the old religious conceptions inadequate. The imagery which once sufficed to overwhelm and awe the human mind has become childish, fanciful and even grotesque. We can no more picture the unseen world of spiritual reality in the imagery of what but yesterday were accepted symbols of religion, than we can believe in the cosmogonies of Dante or Homer. Milton, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Browning are all left behind.<sup>7</sup>

It would seem to anyone uninspired by "spiritual values," that the effect of the new science upon religion is quite as devastating as that of the old materialism. How in the world are the apologists for religion going to carry on without Wordsworth and Tennyson, to say nothing of Browning? The last chapter of these futile apologies always ends with a broadside from these poets, as if their opinion settled the matter; and evidently it does for them, for their religion is founded upon emotion and not upon science. As for the idea of a creative God, says the professor:—

For long ages cosmology was subordinate to theology. It was inferred that the natural world was God's creation. God was conceived as a Spirit, possessed of superhuman wisdom and power, who has formed the heavens and the earth, and fashioned them to provide the stage for the drama of human history. We of the scientific age have lost interest in the theological cosmologies, not alone on the ground of their naive anthropomorphism and anthropocentricism, but because being the reflection of a pre-scientific age, they no longer express our attitude to the world problem nor the form of our rational questions. It is true that the concept of God enters as an important factor into all the modern cosmological schemes, but no longer as an authoritative or transcendent idea. (Pages 19-20.)

We have not noticed that the concept of God enters as an important factor into modern cosmological schemes, or indeed as a factor at all, except in avowedly religious works written for edification. In the discussion of cosmological questions in our leading scientific journal *Nature*, we have noticed that the mention of God is conspicuously absent.

Professor Carr admits that: "The God of philosophers has always appeared a cold intellectual abstraction, affording no enlightenment to the perplexed and no consolation to minds in distress. Yet the concept of God is the alpha and omega of philosophy. Even science, though its progress has shattered the old idea of the great artificer, and though it has adopted the attitude of agnosticism, must posit some principle of unity, even if it has to name it the unknowable." (Page 71.) As for the concept of god being the alpha and omega of philosophy, many philosophers, like Prof. Bertrand Russell, would repudiate the suggestion. Note the admission too, that science has "shattered the old idea of the great artificer" and "adopted the attitude of agnosticism." Upon the whole, we cannot see that the new ideas are any more favourable to religion than Materialism.

Indeed, Dean Inge, the greatest intellectual power in the Church to-day, observes: "an outsider like

<sup>6</sup> A. S. Eddington: *Stars and Atoms*. 1927. (Page 27.)

<sup>7</sup> Carr: *Changing Backgrounds*. 1927. (Page 220.)

myself feels a strong suspicion that the new instrument which Einstein has presented to the mathematicians is being put to uses for which it was never intended. I cannot see how a purely mathematical theory can prove or disprove materialism. In fact, I am still unconvinced that it has much importance either for the metaphysician or for the theologian." (*Science, Religion and Reality*. A volume of essays by various writers, edited by Joseph Needham. 1925. Page 362.)

Dr. Barnes, the Bishop of Birmingham, is evidently of the same opinion, for he observes:—

It is a mistake to think, as some imagine, that Einstein has overthrown Newtonian dynamics: he has rather brought gravitation itself within a modification of his predecessor's scheme. Newton's fame is secure. But he, if he were alive, would be the first to praise the achievements of those who carry on his torch of knowledge. (E. W. Barnes: *Should such a Faith Offend*. 1927. Page 305.)

Materialism, in fact, stands precisely where it did before the new ideas of Relativity were expounded. On the other hand, according to the pious Professor Wildon Carr, the new science has made: "the old religious conceptions inadequate . . . childish, fanciful and even grotesque." W. MANN.

### Why I Am a Freethinker.

I DON'T think I ever became a Freethinker. I was "born sich." I was a wicked little devil, so full of original sin that, although I could readily believe Hans Andersen, I was extremely dubious about Moses, or whoever it was that wrote Genesis.

I recollect, as a small boy, asking whether God knew that the serpent was in the Garden. On being told that he did, I asked: "Why didn't God kill him, then?" It seemed to me a dirty piece of business to allow a snake to get in and tempt Eve when he could easily have been stopped. I could quite understand a snake talking, that was in line with the fairy tales. Another question was: "Did God create *everything*?" "Yes, dear, everything." "Did he create the Devil?" "Yes, I suppose he did." "Why?" When I was told that it was wicked to ask such questions, since God knew best, I classed the whole story as a fairy tale also, and pictured God as a sort of giant, and not at all an amiable one. This idea grew as Bible lessons proceeded, and I learned more of God's doings. I didn't like him, said so, and was promptly punished. This increased my aversion from the "nasty old man," as I privately called him. I pictured him as such, with a long beard, who was always in a bad temper, looking for a chance to punish people. And this notion never left me until I got rid of the "old man" altogether, as I did in my teens.

I liked the stories of the battles and other exciting events, but thought the Jews poor sportsmen. Saul throwing his javelin at David seemed a great joke, but I couldn't see why it was wrong to laugh at it. There were many things that I did not understand, of course, or that were not read to me. And when I could read, I remember asking to be informed about a certain passage and being very hastily suppressed. It was not until I went to school that I received enlightenment. If one should ask where young people get their nasty ideas from and their first introduction to immorality, the answer is easy—the Bible. I remember a certain Bible, at the preparatory boarding-school to which I was sent, that had all the filthy passages marked. The boys had marked them and they used to take the book out of the locker, where it was concealed, to snigger at.

But they were all most Christian little boys. Thus, with my eternal desire for information, I soon got into serious trouble. One of the assistant masters, an earnest youth in search of Holy Orders, who took the Scripture lesson, was unwise enough to invite questions. I forget exactly what I asked, but I remember saying: "I don't believe it." I was thereupon dubbed an Atheist by my young fellow-savages. Later, I was talked to by the

headmaster, a Church of England parson, all by myself, and very solemnly. Immediately thereafter, I, the heathen, engaged in deadly combat with a champion of the Cross and severely handled him. A master came on the scene and enquired the reason for the fracas. The little Christian blubbered: "P-please sir, he—he says he doesn't b-believe that J-Jesus went up in the air l-like a b-b-balloon." This nearly led to my ignominious expulsion. But I learned to keep my unbelief to myself.

So I grew to despise Christianity, and as the years passed and knowledge and experience grew, I not merely despised but loathed it. I came to look upon its exponents as conscious knaves and its devotees as half-witted fools. My earliest literary efforts appeared in the *Agnostic Journal* when "Saladin" was the editor. Since then I have travelled much, seen many countries, and studied many religions. As the result, I place Buddhism and Confucianism together at the head of the list of living religions in point of sanity, with Taoism as a possible third. Hinduism, in its philosophical aspect, is not insane; it is a mass of ingenious and, in many respects, clever speculations based, however, upon unfounded assumptions; it tends towards insanity in its popular aspect until it becomes wholly crazy on its lower levels. Lamaism (the religion of Tibet) is a form of Buddhism corrupted by Hinduism and other ingredients, and is saved from sheer lunacy by its Buddhist element. Judaism is a selfish, hidebound superstition which, keeping to itself, does no harm to anyone except such of the "Chosen People" who believe in it. The Jews, however, have much to answer for. But for them, the world would not have been afflicted by Mohammedanism and Christianity. Mohammedanism has this much to its credit, that it did keep the lamp of learning alight at a time when all Europe was, as Frederick the Great remarked, rendered insane and plunged into the darkest night of ignorance by Christianity. This last has been the greatest curse and scourge that the world has ever suffered under.

There is no need to recapitulate here, for Freethinkers, any of Christianity's long record of atrocious and unforgivable crimes. To-day, it is still the determined enemy of all real knowledge and of human progress. It would, if it had the power, even now, drag the peoples of Europe and of America back to the barbarism from which they have painfully struggled, but they have not yet shaken off the octopus. Its tentacles still grip them. It is by no means dead, but very much alive. Of this we have many indications. There is "Tennessee"; there was the recent hubbub about Sir Arthur Keith's pronouncement on evolution; there are indications in almost every newspaper one takes up of an organized effort at its revival. Mr. H. Cutner, writing on "The Christmas Legend," in the *Freethinker* recently, said that "The editorial mind . . . is generally devoutly religious." No doubt this was "writ sarkastik," for, knowing the Press as I do, I would say that the average newspaper staff has no more religion in its composition than would go on a threepenny bit.

The worst aspect of the dope served out, particularly in the Sunday slush-rags, is that it is written by men who know better. But they have found it a paying pose, a highly profitable "stunt." They know very well that what they write is "tripe," but it pays. We pity, even if we do not despise, the woman who sells her body; what are we to think of men who prostitute their minds? I need mention no names, they will suggest themselves. It is the newspaper "bosses" who are responsible for the boosting of religion, not that they have any themselves; but, as someone has said, "religion is the opium of the people." It is the most potent drug known for the softening of the brain and the prevention of coherent thought. This is why all the newspapers are "Christian," and why no frankly critical letter or article is published from a downright Atheist if they know it.

Not only this, there is no more effective solvent of "guts" and "backbone" than certain forms of Nonconformist Christianity. We have only to look at the array of jellyfish called "Labour Leaders" for evidence. One has only to be able to pour out a stream of words in order to become a leader of men in these days. Some of them suffer from a diarrhoea of verbiage. Where did

they contract the disease?—"Little Bethel," the Nonconformist chapel, the P.S.A. assemblies of tabby cats and pink-eyed rabbits. One of them described himself and his following as "the modern Puritans." Shade of Oliver Cromwell! The old Puritans were at least men, they were stark fighters. They were well named Ironsides. The "modern Puritan" is not even a lath painted to look like iron. He hasn't got that much rigidity about him when it comes to a "scrap." If anyone were to point a toy gun at him he would drop down dead. I am no politician, and in any case the *Freethinker* has nothing to do with politics. But the late abortive "General Strike," whatever we may think about it, showed exactly what the modern Puritans, who act as generals to the Army of Labour, are made of. Modern Puritan? Creeping Jesus would be a more fitting title. If I were a millionaire intent on holding Labour in check and preventing further developments in the way of democracy, I would heavily subsidize the Nonconformists, especially the Salvation Army. It is a religion fit only for slaves, and if it can be well soaked into the working classes they will be slaves.

We have still a big struggle before us, and the most effective way to counter the Christian superstition is to characterize it roundly as a Gigantic Lie. No such person as Jesus Christ ever lived, and the story of his life is a pure fable, as Pope Leo X openly asserted. The whole of the Christian theory is false from beginning to end. Not only is it false, but it is imbecile. A god who would carry on as the Christian god is supposed to do, is a lunatic, a fiend gone mad. In view of modern, positive knowledge about the universe, the solar system, this planet and its inhabitants, in view of the positive truths of modern science, the very existence of this puerile religion is a disgrace to our civilization. When we see Parliament engaged in solemn discussion as to what kind of hocus-pocus should be used by our witch-doctors in addressing their ju-ju, and the prevalence of ceremonial cannibalism, we may realize how small is the distance between them and the savages of Central Africa. The world is still a long way from sanity, and it can never be sane until the Christian superstition is generally recognized for what it is, the grossest imposture, the greatest fraud, that has ever been perpetrated upon the human race. This is why I am a Freethinker.

E. J. LAMEL.

### Acid Drops.

Those who like to flatter themselves with the notion that religion has lost all its power in this country, or that we are not priest-ridden, would do well to pay just a little attention to the B.B.C. When broadcasting began there was a stand against its being operated on Sunday. This was ineffectual, although, if we remember rightly, nothing was done during church hours. Then some parsons thought it might be well to use it for a short religious address. Against protests this was done, and the addresses became more and more religious. We have ourselves listened to Mrs. Bramwell Booth preaching about the "berlood" of Jesus with a crude enthusiasm that was an insult to civilized intelligence. Then an occasional Church service was tried, until we have a full church service every Sunday evening, whether one wants it or not. Finally, the parsons who have the leaders of the B.B.C. under control instituted a daily service. Where it will end no man knoweth.

The daily service was said to be in response to requests. But soon after the service was instituted, and because of the letters which we know were sent against this form of religious propaganda, to the exclusion of other forms of propaganda, a note was published to the effect that very few letters were received for or against it, and unless enough letters were sent approving it the service would be discontinued. This was, of course, a direct invitation to all the crass religionists in the country to hurry up with their letters, and also to parsons to see that their flocks responded. So the B.B.C. was able to announce that they had received hundreds of letters of thanks for the service, and very few against

it. We are not surprised at the hundreds in favour. We are surprised, after that open invitation, they did not have a hundred thousand letters. But we have our doubts about the very few against. And, candidly, we would not rely upon any statement made by the present religious "bosses" of the B.B.C. We would only rely upon a statement if the letters were sent to an independent authority. We know too much of the methods of Christian propagandists.

We have before us, as we write, two batches of letters to and from the B.B.C. One comes from Manchester, the other from Belfast. In each case the writers quite properly rest their objection to the religious service on the ground that as the B.B.C. claims to exclude "controversial subjects," it is ridiculous to permit discourses on Christianity, which is the most controversial aspect of one of the most controversial subjects. At least if they have addresses preaching Christianity, they should in common justice permit addresses which repudiate Christianity as an important factor in dealing with life. The B.B.C. replies that the impression they derive from a scrutiny of the correspondence is that the number of Freethinkers objecting is comparatively small—which is neither here nor there. As a matter of fact the number of actual non-believers in Christianity in this country must be very large. But the essential point is that, as one of their correspondents tells them, they are using an institution financed by all to push the religious opinions of one section only. One reply is that the B.B.C. must still regard this country as a Christian one, and that justifies their action. We quite agree. If this is a Christian country it certainly *explains* partiality, unfairness, and injustice. It is along these lines that Christianity has always worked.

Replying to the Belfast correspondent, the B.B.C. says it agrees that "no subject could be more controversial than religion, but an endeavour is made in the studio services to make them as general as possible without any particular denominational label, and specific services are allotted to other creeds in proportion to the number of followers in the country." This only means that care is taken to satisfy all Christians (there is an occasional talk by a Jewish Rabbi, to keep the religious doves quiet), but it does not matter a brass button about anyone else. The B.B.C. also replies that its charter prohibits it broadcasting controversial subjects, which is the reason why Freethinking is kept out. Its Belfast correspondent gets home by the remark that in broadcasting religion, an admittedly controversial subject, it is departing from its charter, and hopes it will mend its ways in the direction of either admitting all or excluding all. About this reformation we have our doubts.

After saying the above, it will be interesting to set out the case of Mr. R. Brown, the Belfast correspondent. He says:—

My grievance is (1) that as religion is the most controversial matter, and as by their charter controversial subjects are barred, religion should have no place on the wireless. (2) If it is allowed, then the answer to it has the right to the same treatment, as all listeners are citizens, but not all are Christians.

And here is a reply to the same gentleman from the B.B.C.:—

There is a great deal of point in your remarks, but the general religious policy of the B.B.C. has received more approbation than any other part of its programme. Should we find that your proposal meets with the support of a considerable body of opinion, representations will be made to the authorities on the matter.

Mr. Brown hopes that all Freethinkers will write at once to Savoy Hill so that the excuse of objectors to this illegitimate advocacy of religion is met in the proper way. We would like to back up that suggestion, and also to suggest that those who do write drop us a card to the effect they have done so. This may be useful. But the pretence that the eighty per cent. of the people who will not take the trouble to go to Church, are frantically eager to have a Church service brought to them over the wireless is too ridiculous for discussion. Now if the B.B.C. would collect all the comments that are

made on the religious service, and set aside an evening to broadcast them, that would be an interesting performance.

Finally, we would note that Mr. Phillip Guedalia and several others have withdrawn from taking part in some wireless debates on account of this barring of controversial matter. To bar controversial matter in a debate is quite the most laughable thing we have yet heard of. Only a people who could take the Christian religion seriously would be capable of it. Mr. Guedalia says it is a matter of indifference to him whether his remarks would or would not fall under the ban. The real outrage is the existence of the ban, not its application. We quite agree with that. It is an insult to every adult in the country for such a ban to be in existence. That it does not call forth a storm of protest great enough to destroy it, is evidence of what little real regard the mass of the people have for mental freedom or intellectual independence. We are still living with the mentality of the war-period when we eat and drank, got up and went to bed, applauded or condemned by war-time regulations. Officialdom rules the roost, and the issuing of an official order is accepted with all the unquestioning obedience of a "Thus saith the Lord," by a medieval monk.

Another example of the rule of the parson comes from Colne, Lancs. The summer is approaching, and there is the question of Sunday music in the park, also the opening of centres of dissipation such as a cafe where the wilder spirits can indulge in an orgy of coffee or ginger beer on the Lord's Day. So a deputation of clergy and ministers of the town waited on the Council, and earnestly hoped that the Council would so arrange matters as not to interfere with religious services in the Church, and would also consider the opening of the centre of dissipation aforesaid. And the Council, instead of showing the deputation the door, mildly obeyed their spiritual masters by promising that the bands should not play till 7.45 in the evening, and as to the cafe, they promised to reconsider the matter. Of course, the parsons were not so pleased as they would have been if the concerts had been stopped altogether, but they got as much as they could expect.

The Recorder of the City of Mount Ephraim, New Jersey, is in high favour with the churches. His court was the scene of a new kind of "faith and prayer cure." Two litigants appeared before him, one of them prepared with arguments and law. The other litigant was some new sort of pious tub-thumper. He asked permission of the court to engage in prayer. Recorder Walton approving, the case of Williams versus Butcher (of Salem) was brought before a very Supreme Court indeed . . . by Plaintiff Williams. God's decision came quickly. The Recorder merely recorded the decision of Heaven. A miracle happened on the spot. The defendant, Butcher (of Salem, naturally) was converted to instant agreement with the plaintiff. Williams and Butcher (of Salem) embraced each other, and presumably Butcher (of Salem) paid the bill. Quite an idyll, eh?

At a Whitefield's men's meeting recently, Canon Earfield Williams asked for questions to be sent up to him. One was: "Three of our fellows came back from different parts of India, having worked three or four years in their respective jobs. Each said: 'Christian missions in India do not touch the educated Indian, only the poverty-stricken Indian, who becomes a rice Christian.'" The Canon replied: "While our missions don't know how to make both ends meet, the idea of their paying men or giving them food to become Christian is ridiculous. There may not be a mass movement among the educated classes at present; it will come, and will make us see something in Christianity we have never seen before. But did not our Lord point out the difficulty? Is it not true of England? Does not the man who belongs to smart clubs and has wealth and

possessions find it harder to become a Christian?" Canon Williams appears to be adept at "dodging the issue." We should have a poor opinion of the questioners' intelligence if we thought they were satisfied with the Canon's replies. Still, we have little doubt that the Canon had correctly gauged the intelligence of the bulk of his audience.

"Wayfarer," of *Cycling*, says:—

In my judgment, a sportsman—and by that I mean a real, genuine sportsman—possesses that which, for want of a readier term, may be called the Christian essentials. It matters not to me whether he is a professing Christian or an acknowledged Atheist. If he is a sportsman he can be relied upon to give a square deal to his fellow-men. He will do unto others as he would be done by. He will help lame dogs over stiles. He will believe—and practise—the brotherhood of man. One always feels safe in the hands of a sportsman. He will do nothing of which he need be ashamed. He will play the game.

"Acknowledged Atheists" get rather tired of the Christian sportsman who, with the sublime impudence engendered by his religion, lumps together certain things as *Christian* essentials, and who obliquely implies that the Atheist sportsman adopts Christian essentials without his knowing he is doing so.

Dr. F. B. Meyer says he believes in the Second Coming of Christ, but not that this will be in the crude, spectacular form favoured by Second Adventists. He thinks it will be a time of special revelation of the spirit. "Life will then be enormously enriched for the spiritual, but the significance of it will be undiscerned by worldly and materially-minded folk." We think it a pity Dr. Meyer cannot furnish more concrete particulars, so that Freethinkers can be prepared. You see, in the past when Christians felt extra-spiritually uplifted and their life enormously enriched, they usually were anxious to shorten the lives of as many Freethinkers as could be found. Times of special spiritual uplift are usually times of special persecution of heretics.

Religion in Spain, was the title of a paper by the Rev. J. W. Lord, at a Leeds Fraternal meeting. He said that:—

Among Spaniards religion had worn at all times a gloomy and morose appearance . . . Up to the eleventh century the Spanish Church continued to manage her own affairs without the intervention of the Pope. But Rome gained the supremacy over the native Church, and it lost all power except that of keeping up an uncharitable hatred of infidels and heretics. Rome maintained her power through the cruelties of the Inquisition. Between 1481 and 1798, 32,000 people were burned at the stake, and 345,000 were tortured in Spain alone. So far from being ashamed of the Inquisition, modern Roman Catholic apologists justified it as a legitimate means of defence for the Faith against its opponents. The Decree against heretics had never been revoked . . . The religious despotism of the Inquisition had left its withering effects in every department of Spanish life . . . Seventy per cent. of the people could neither read nor write. As one Cardinal said, "Ignorance is the mother of devotion."

As a footnote to all this, we need only add that the pious ruffians responsible for these misdeeds got their inspiration from the Holy Christian Bible. And so, too, did the godly cutthroats who called themselves Protestants. Both the pot and kettle have a sooty hue.

Readers of the *Daily Express* are an ungrateful brood. The learned Mr. James Douglas, who specializes in "let's get back to pure and simple Christianity," has been producing lovely little tinkling articles with machine-gun regularity, and all in the best Fleet Street tradition. Yet many readers are dissatisfied. One reader says Mr. Douglas over-dresses all his ideas, and another suggests that the ideas are too feeble to stand being dressed. Still another calls for less words and more wisdom. Wisdom? Mr. Douglas thought that was what he was giving them! There's no satisfying some people.

A prologue is to be added to a motion picture "The King of the Jews," and also certain revisions are to be made exonerating the Jews from all the blame in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. This was a pronouncement, according to the *New York Herald Tribune*, made by Alfred M. Cohen, in Cincinnati, and the reasons for making biblical history (as distinct from ordinary history) to fit the times, is explained by Jewish opposition to the film in its original state. To show how accommodating the producers are, they stated that they did not want to do anything that would offend any race or creed. And, as Pirandello says, that is the truth if you think it is.

The *Times Literary Supplement* had an excellent article on Thomas Hardy's Novels, written with knowledge, insight and fairness, memorable because it was not journalism, and striking because the writer was sincere and brought none of the childish nonsense of parsons into his subject. It is a tribute that Hardy would have liked himself. The writer states: "Of no one, however, would it be more unfitting to write in terms of rhetorical eulogy. His only demand upon us, and there is none more exacting, was that we should speak the truth." A few ashes add distinction to Westminster Abbey, for the place represents that which has made truth speaking an offence and reason an abomination.

We must introduce Dr. T. R. Glover to Mr. Robert Lynd, both of whom are writers for the *Daily News*. Mr. Lynd states, in the course of reviewing a book that:—

Like the sermon, good counsel is no longer a branch of literature.

As Dr. Glover's weekly articles are sermons and counsel, we must recall the famous advice of the Inca of Peru given to the King of Siam, that little birds in a nest must agree.

In that part of the Christian kingdom known as Scotland, a woman and her two children were found drowned. The woman, it is said, was faced with the workhouse because she had lost her support from her brother, who was without work. Here in the twentieth century, are medicine-men haggling about the prayer-book and the other world; the dining table of the United Kingdom is not big enough to make room for a woman and two children. We refuse to believe it, and we do not trust the Church's authority on souls when they have not satisfactorily settled anything in connexion with bodies.

We give herewith two items of news appearing on the same page of a daily newspaper:—

The Elements, "if reserved at all, be only reserved outside the parts of the church used for public worship, e.g., in a closed safe in a vestry."

A Rubric should be inserted, indicating the lawfulness of reserving the Elements for the Communion of the Sick, but the unlawfulness of reserving the Elements for purposes of adoration.

The Transport Workers' Union has been seeking in conference with the chairman and officials of the L.C.C. Tramways Committee to limit the number of tramway cleaners displaced by car-washing machines. About 300 cleaners have been displaced.

There are a hundred and one comments that we shall not make.

A great many people are talking now of Disestablishment who never thought of it before, says the Rev. W. Russell Maltby. If Disestablishment, he adds, came as the results of a demand from within the Church, it might be all gain for the Church of England. If it came by way of attack from without, it might easily be a very hard thing both for religion and for the State. What Mr. Maltby seems to fear is that if public opinion brings about the disestablishment of the "national" Church it may in the end succeed in disestablishing religion. Mr. Maltby, of course, dreads that, because it means

stripping the Churches and priests of their self-assumed privileges, and reducing the priests' status to that of ordinary citizens'. In which case religion would suffer, but we should want a lot of convincing that the State would thereby be harmed.

Says a Nonconformist writer: "Anglican communicants have gone to Anglo-Catholic services and found there . . . something that released them from the critical mood, made them receptive, and helped them to be humble." Quite so. But we have yet to discover that Progress in any department of life has been benefited by that absence of the critical mood which Churches of every kind encourage. It is the presence of a large number of critical, analytical, reflective intelligences that has aided Progress most. The mission of the *Freethinker* is to foster those kind of intelligences. That is why this paper is so thoroughly hated by all Churches and all priests. We appreciate the implied compliment.

Prof. George Trevelyan, of Cambridge University, recently gave a commemoration address on John Bunyan and the *Pilgrim's Progress*. Of Bunyan, he said that "He shines as one of the brightest stars in the firmament of English literature." Dr. T. R. Glover, chairman of the meeting, added that the *Pilgrim's Progress* had been too long regarded as a children's book. And that is another way of saying that, by general consent of adult intelligence, "one of the brightest stars," etc., was considered fit to shine only on the immature minds of adolescents. Quite innocently the learned Doctor appears to have added an anti-climax to the Professor's eponium. But we don't suppose the solemn audience had the wit to see that—which is a pity.

Southport has been much upset over a picture that was exhibited in the Art Gallery there, entitled "Adam and Eve," and eventually decided that it was not suitable for exhibition. Evidently these people do not think that the Lord turned out Adam and Eve in a quite respectable and proper manner. We do not know what the picture is like—we expect it was nothing worse than an absence of clothing. But of one thing we may be sure; this is that these Christians, by their action, have succeeded in making unclean to everyone something that without their interference would have been quite clean to all save the few whose minds had been filled with suppressed filth by a puritan education.

The Rev. Leslie Weatherhead writes, in the *Methodist Recorder*, about the Christian "free-will" theory, under the heading of "God's self-imposed Limitations." God, it appears, has given man a free will, and having given a gift will never take it back again. It was very good of God, of course, and we all ought to be thankful. But the gift was more creditable to God's heart than to his head. He didn't give man the necessary intelligence to use the gift properly. Soon after the gift had been presented, God saw that he had made a blunder, and so he builded him a torture chamber for his creatures who had not used their free-will in a proper manner. After a few thousand years had rolled away, he sent a bit of himself to be murdered by man, just to show how sorry he was that he had made a blunder at the outset. The essence of being a Christian consists in being able to discover the wisdom of God in all this.

If your face wants to smile, let it! This advice is posted up outside a church. Outside, mark you. It is for the benefit of those who pass by the sacred edifice, not those who enter to take part in the solemn mummeries and to watch the quaint antics of the priest. If the advice was posted up inside every church in the land, the result might be disastrous for religion. Christian people would be tempted to smile at what they were witnessing. And once Christians start laughing at their religion they are setting a foot on the road that leads to unbelief.



## National Secular Society.

THE Funds of the National Secular Society are now legally controlled by Trust Deed, and those who wish to benefit the Society by gift or bequest may do so with complete confidence that any money so received will be properly administered and expended.

The following form of bequest is sufficient for anyone who desires to benefit the Society by will:—

I hereby give and bequeath (*Here insert particulars of legacy*), free of all death duties, to the Trustees of the National Secular Society for all or any of the purposes of the Trust Deed of the said Society, and I direct that a receipt signed by two of the trustees of the said Society shall be a good discharge to my executors for the said legacy.

Any information concerning the Trust Deed and its administration may be had on application.

### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Those Subscribers who receive their copy of the "Freethinker" in a GREEN WRAPPER will please take it that a renewal of their subscription is due. They will also oblige, if they do not want us to continue sending the paper, by notifying us to that effect.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—R. C. Alger, 7s. 6d.

W. WEARING.—The fact that the achievement of such objects as the disestablishment of the Church, the repeal of the blasphemy laws, the abolition of religious teaching in State schools, etc., ultimately involve legislative action, does not mean that the N.S.S. must take a part in politics. People belonging to any and every political party may take part in the advocacy of each of these, and we have supporters belonging to every political group. And they are ends which are quite independent of party political activity. We see no objection to a Branch of the N.S.S. opening its platform to an occasional discussion of almost anything. But it is not carrying out its work as a Branch of the N.S.S., if it devotes the major part of its energies to these topics. Still less if it makes their advocacy a part of its programme.

T. A. WILLIAMS.—Sorry we are unable to give you any good news about Mr. Lloyd. He is still very seriously ill.

A. L. BRAINE.—Sorry we are unable to find room for the verses.

M. SEIDAN. We cannot see any good in discussing in these columns whether a speaker said quite what a listener expected to hear, or to invite the speaker to explain why he spoke in one way rather than in another. Every speaker deals with a subject as he thinks fit, and selects what subject he pleases. Those who do not like him or it, have a very obvious remedy.

W. MATHIE.—Your lecture notice reached us on Wednesday. Notices for the current week *must* reach us by the first post on Tuesday.

G. L. LAWSON.—Thanks for cutting. Perhaps it is the weather, but we do not quite catch the point of the paragraph to which you direct attention.

J. C. THOMAS.—Sorry you were unable to attend the dinner. Better luck next year.

*The "Freethinker" is supplied to the trade on sale or return. Any difficulty in securing copies should be at once reported to this office.*

*The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.*

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*When the services of the National Secular Society in connexion with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Mr. F. Mann, giving as long notice as possible.*

*Lecture Notices must reach 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, by the first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.*

*Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, and not to the Editor.*

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*Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.*

*Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.*

*The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):— One year, 15s.; half year, 7s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 9d.*

## Sugar Plums.

To-day (February 5) Mr. Cohen will visit the Chester-le-Street Branch. In the afternoon, at 2.30, he will speak in the Miner's Welfare Hall, West Pelton, and in the evening, at 7.30, in the Chester-le-Street Co-operative Hall, on: "The New Warfare Between Religion and Science."

The National Secular Society's Executive is arranging for a Social and Dance at Hill's Restaurant, Ludgate Hill, on Saturday, March 3. There will be an excellent band, good singers, and plenty of dancing. Tickets, which will include refreshments, will be 2s. each. We want all who intend coming to signify their intentions as early as possible—at once if they can. The number is limited, and those who leave it to the last day or so will probably find they are too late. Application should be made to the General Secretary, Mr. Fred Mann, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

We want to draw special attention to some notes in the "Acid Drops" column on the Broadcasting of religious services. Freethinkers may find there a suggestion which they might well take up with energy. It is high time they made their influence felt in this matter.

Mr. George Bedborough writes:—

The American Radio service has some outstanding advantages on the British system. For one thing there is nothing to pay. You provide your wireless set, and receive all sorts of "programs" free, gratis, for nothing. As far as I can judge the religious organizations run an almost continuous course of pious supplies, including organ recitals, choir mush, and sermons of all grades. Most of the big newspapers vie with each other in supplying concert stuff. Business advertisers get busy and offer a popular medley of music and enlightenment. All of them, churches included, take care that the hearers are in no doubt as to the name and address of their benefactors. The important point about it all is that a great variety is open to listeners-in. If you don't want "Chicago Tabernacle"—and I confess after a long spell of it that I don't—you can easily switch on to more congenial programmes. This raises an interesting problem. These preachers boast that they address so many million listeners. But do they? Is it inconceivable that all the churches' expenditure on high-power Radio stations is wasted, and that actually nobody at all listens to these sermons except through an occasional accident?

We see from the *Ardrossan Herald*, that our contributor, Mr. Andrew Millar, was recently the subject of a presentation from Saltcoats Literary and Debating Society. Mr. Millar had been seventeen years a member of the Society; the occasion of the presentation—which took the form of five volumes of essays, and "a packet of treasury notes"—was his appointment to a new post at Rankinon. Some very nice things were said of Mr. Millar, and he responded in a neat speech, which was well received by those present. We wish Mr. Millar every success and all happiness in his new post.

We are asked to announce that Mr. MacEwan is unable to deliver his lecture in the City Hall Buildings, Glasgow, to-day (February 5) as announced, but that its place will be taken by "Some Remarks on Jazz," followed by a Saxophone Recital by Messrs. Lancaster and Fry. We are glad to learn that, in spite of the inclement weather, Mr. Hale had a good meeting for his lecture on Charles Bradlaugh on Sunday last.

## Seemingly.

On the first Easter morning, near the rock tomb in which the body of Jesus had been laid on Friday evening, Mary of Magdala saw a man whom she did not know, and whom she supposed to be the gardener of the grounds about the sepulchre. The Gospel of *John* says the man was the risen Jesus.

If we read the story for the first time, we might be curious enough to turn to another evangelic booklet, *Luke*, in order to ascertain if a similar uncertainty happened to be noticed elsewhere. Here, also, appearance and reality differed. Two disciples, says the writer, were walking to Emmaus village, and a stranger joined them, and "their eyes were holden that they should not know him"; and yet the seeming stranger was the familiar Jesus.

We pass to *Matthew*. This historian tells how eleven disciples travelled to Galilee, to a mountain where they expected to behold their resurrected Master; and "when they saw him, they worshipped; but some doubted." Thus, for the third time, we find a sort of mist hanging over the Easter scenery.

To *Mark* we run for fuller information, and he, three times over, uses the singular word "appeared"—Jesus appeared, appeared, appeared. The term "appear" is translated from the Greek verb *phaino*, a word that rather suspiciously connects with such words as *phantom*, and *phantasy*.

We feel that we tread a valley of the shadows, where "things are not what they seem."

Suppose, then, we imitate the two disciples of Emmaus, and take a walk into the country. That is to say, we will go outside the New Testament, and examine a remarkable manuscript, which is said to have been composed in the middle of the second century. This Greek (also Latin) pamphlet is called, the *Acts of John*.\* The author of this pamphlet represents himself to us as the Apostle John, personal companion of Jesus. Many astounding happenings, far beyond any American kinema in hair-raising potency, are related. I pass them over, because I have to follow up the theme indicated in my title, "Seemingly," and to reveal a certain peculiar significance in the references already made to the Four Gospels.

In the latter half of the *Acts of John*, the honoured Apostle pours out a long story about the "Lord" (Jesus), which I will shorten into a speech, quoting Dr. James's version at times, but usually employing a paraphrase. Imagine the venerable person sitting in the midst of a group of admirers, and thus discoursing:

"Brethren, you know that the Lord chose me and my brother James, also Peter and Andrew, for his companions. It happened on the shore of the lake of Galilee. My brother beheld the Lord, and asked me if I saw a child; whereas I saw the Lord as a full-grown man. After the Lord had invited us to accompany him, we did so; and, as we walked, I observed him as a bald man with a long, thick beard, but James told me the Lord was a youth with a chin newly sprouting. Sometimes, I saw the Lord as quite a small plain man. At other times, he seemingly reached up to the sky. At meals, I sat on the couch next to his couch, and leaned upon his breast as his favourite disciple, and occasionally I felt his breast soft, and occasionally stony-hard. I and James and Peter climbed up a hill with him, and saw him illumined in a transfiguration, and his head touched the

heaven. But when I uttered a cry of fear at the sight, the Lord diminished into a little man, who caught hold of my beard, and hushed me into silence. Brethren, it was a constant wonder. One moment, I touched him—all was rigid and solid. At another moment, my hand seemed to come in contact with nothing material. Just before his crucifixion, brethren, he bade us Apostles join hands in a ring and dance, and say Amen to each of his mystical utterances. We did so. When he cried aloud: 'I would eat, and I would be eaten,' we responded Amen. And when he cried aloud: 'I would flee, and I would stay,' we responded Amen. After this dance of grace and hymn of praise, the Lord went forth, and I wept as he was led to crucifixion."

The rapt listeners would hold their breath at this point. John was approaching the climax.

"When the Lord was crucified on the Friday," continued the illustrious Apostle, "darkness covered Calvary hill, and Jerusalem, and all the earth. I was then on the Mount of Olives, whither I had fled in terror. A light blazed. The Lord appeared to me, unwounded, unharmed, with a calm, sweet voice. He seemed to hover above a cross of blazing glory. He told me the true cross was not of wood, but of celestial radiance. He told me his being took many appearances, such as Jesus, or Christ, or a Dove, or a Way, or Bread, or Seed, or Resurrection, or Son, or Father, or Spirit, or Life, or Truth, or Faith, or Grace, or Wisdom, or Harmony, or the Logos (Word). He told me his heavenly nature did not permit of fleshly and material suffering. And he revealed to me, brethren, that those who worshipped him in truth might attain to his splendour, and our souls would dwell with him eternally. So after that vision, brethren, I went into Jerusalem, and told my friends that the Lord had only suffered on Calvary in a symbolical mode, and only seemingly. We thought we had touched him with our physical hands. It merely seemed so. And therefore, friends, if we would gain immortality, we must seek, not a Lord with a material body—for he never had one, despite what folk think and say—but the spiritual God invincible and unchangeable and infinite."

Here I will cut the narrative off, not having space to describe John's death, and burial, or to discuss St. Augustine's story that the earth over the grave was seen (it was said) to move as if stirred by the breath of the Apostle, only seemingly dead.

During the first three Christian centuries, a considerable number of people in Anatolia and elsewhere (Marcion, for example) believed in this doctrine of a seeming Jesus. In course of time, the belief was classed as a heresy, and was known as the *Docetic* creed; the name being derived from the Greek *dokein*, to seem. It will not strike us now as extraordinary that even the Four Gospels should hint at Docetism, or Phantasm. Many books and many cyclopædia articles deal with the record of this "heresy," but it is not worth our while to pursue that subject. What I desire, in the present place, to point out is the quite uncontested historical fact that, in the very early period when the legend of Christ's birth, crucifixion and resurrection was spreading in the Roman Empire, the Docetic heretics were going about denying the reality, in a physical sense, of the whole story. The Docetists were not opponents of the new Christian faith. They worshipped Christ. Yet they laughed to scorn (the *Acts* book uses the word "laughed") the belief of the common Christian multitude that Jesus ever had a body. He ate, seemingly. He drank, seemingly. He suffered, seemingly. He died, seemingly. He rose, seemingly. He ascended, seemingly.

\* See translation by Dr. M. R. James in the *Apocryphal New Testament* (Milford; 10s.).

And in 1928, the British bankers, politicians, scientists, artists, journalists, and peccesses who went to church last Sunday, all believed in the physical reality of the New Testament story—seemingly.

F. J. GOULD.

## Sex "Morality" of Roman Catholicism.

(Concluded from page 75.)

JOHN XII was brought before a synod, and it was publicly proved he had committed murder, perjury, incest (with his two sisters), had turned the papal palace into a brothel, cut out the eyes or castrated those who criticized him, raped girls and women who had come to St. Peter's to pray, etc., etc.

It must be remembered that all particulars about the papal blackguards who followed each other in succession for over a thousand years (up to the Reformation) are from Roman Catholic sources. And many of the particulars are embodied in official documents.

The Council of Constance, for instance, drew up an accusation against John XXIII, covering two folio pages, and divided into fifty-five articles. He was pronounced guilty of promiscuous concubinage, incest, violation of nuns, atrocious cruelties, massacre, etc., etc.—in fact, according to the Council, he was known as "the Devil incarnate."

God seems to have been unaccountably careless in the matter of his branch managers for this earth of ours. Many of them have been the very scum of the earth. Alexander VI is generally considered the worst of them. Daniel, the historian, tells us that "his debauchery, perfidy, ambition, malice, inhumanity, and irreligion made him the execration of Europe." Rome under his administration, and by his example, became the sink of filthiness, the headquarters of atrocity, and the hot-bed of prostitution, murder, and robbery. He formed an illicit connexion with a widow and her two daughters. He afterwards formed another criminal connexion with Lucretia, who was in fact his own daughter, of whom he had a son; this son was therefore his own son and grandson!

Bright specimen of a Holy Father, eh?

It is a popular illusion (says Lecky) that the atrocious immorality of the monasteries during the century preceding the Reformation was a new fact. An Italian bishop of the tenth century said, that if he were to enforce the canons against unchaste people no one would be left in the Church except the boys, and if he were to observe the canons against bastards these also must be excluded.

A tax called "culagium," which was in fact a licence to clergymen to keep concubines, was during several centuries systematically levied. The writers of the Middle Ages are full of accounts of nunneries that were like brothels, of the vast multitudes of infanticides within their walls, and of that inveterate prevalence of incest among the clergy which rendered it necessary again and again to issue the most stringent enactments that priests should not be permitted to live with their mothers, aunts, or sisters.

It was a common thing for lay Catholics to insist that their priest should have a concubine—to prevent him from prowling round like a parish bull. That this latter was the usual rôle of a parish priest is shown by the extraordinary accounts given, such as that of an abbot elect of St. Augustine's, Canterbury, who was found to have seventeen illegitimate children in a single village; of a Bishop of Liege who had sixty-five illegitimate children. It was either this last man, or another Bishop of Liege, who actually

boasted at a public banquet, that in less than two years he had had fourteen children. An abbot of St. Pelayo, in Spain, was proved to have kept seventy concubines.

Just before the Reformation in Scotland was an actual fact, a Council of the Church was called to see what could be done. As a preamble, it first owned up that lewdness of churchmen, along with crass ignorance, were the two chief causes of the trouble. Dr. Fleming (*The Reformation in Scotland*) says, "The venerable and most reverend father in Christ, Archbishop Hamilton, who presided over this very Council was a dissolute scoundrel. He had a number of bastards by the dishonoured wife of a kinsman of his own; and she was not the only victim of his foul lust. Six other bishops were on this council—Gordon of Aberdeen had six bastards by one woman and several others by different women—Hepburn of Moray had many bastards by different mothers; ten of them were legitimated—Chisholm of Dunblane had ten or twelve—Druic of Whithorn had, for his filthiness, the nickname of Abbot 'Stottikin,' a broad Scot word with a very impolite meaning."

Things must have become pretty desperate when men like these were forced to own up that it was their own lewdness that was the main thing that brought about the rebellion of the laity.

Roman Catholics are at a low stage of anthropomorphic culture. Notwithstanding their talk of spirituality, they are gross materialists. Their religion and their animalism get mixed up in some curious kinks. Things that normal English people consider both indecent and blasphemous are done by the Roman Catholics in a religious manner, and thereby made (according to the priests and priests' dupes) "spiritual." For example:—

When a little boy or girl is naughty, he or she is slapped—you know where and how. As a school-master once observed, Nature seems to have arranged a portion of the anatomy specially for disciplinary purposes. Smart pain can be inflicted without injury. The situation supplies indignity to the slapped and humour to the beholder—both of which increase the moral effect of the discipline.

Could you imagine that the operation thus slightly sketched might be adapted to adults as a religious exercise? You couldn't? You little know "Holy" Church! "Holy" Church has no sense of humour, and can therefore make a very humorous spectacle of itself—that is if one is not of too serious a nature; otherwise "Holy" Church's depravity may be very shocking and distressing. It is best however to laugh where possible, for "Holy" Church would not care a fig for your highly moral distress. The facts I am now going to give briefly, may be found at much greater length, and told with an elephantine skittishness typically German in Greisner's *History of the Jesuits*, translated by A. J. Scott (with the exception of one or two chapters which had to be left untranslated.)

Scourging and other self-inflicted punishment has been a very common form of religious exercise and discipline. As our German puts it, "the more a man lacerated the body by means of rods and straps, the purer were the tears of joy shed by angels and archangels; so was it taught by the priests." The Jesuits were the boys to put some improvements into this pastime. The "hard bed" saints had done their own flogging, they did it ferociously, with scourges that drew blood, and made it hurt. But the Jesuits undertook to do the job themselves, and adapt it according to the varying merits of the sinners, "exercising it very softly, with fine rods and straps—even with bare hands—never with proper scourges or those on which thorns were fastened."

They had two "disciplines" one *supra* the other *sub*—in other words one above—on the neck, shoulders and breast, and the other below, on the loins, hips and thighs. "Those parts of the body which were subjected to discipline were completely uncovered."

These were called "Spiritual (!) Exercises"—but you see what is coming. The Jesuits said that, in order that women should receive no injury from these "spiritual" exercise, they might have the discipline "sub."

And the women came in shoals for it!

The epidemic started in Spain (hence its historical name of Spanish Discipline) and spread like wildfire through all Roman Catholic countries—France, Austria, Italy, the Netherlands, etc. For the convenience of the "whippers," the slappees had a minimum of clothing. And as a final artistic touch (or you may choose another adjective if you like) the Jesuits announced that the "sodalities" were under the patronage of the Queen of Heaven! They were certainly under the patronage of the Queen Regent of France (Catharine de Medici) for she headed a "sodality" of ladies at Avignon, and her son, Henry III, regularly made his appearance with rosary, waxcandle crucifix, rod and prayer book. In Paris "women and maidens were almost daily to be seen running about in the streets, with nothing on them but a loose garment, and with scourges in their hands" (giving each other the "discipline") "and even ladies of the highest rank, as e.g., the Duchesses de Guise, de Merceur, d'Aumale, d'Elboeuf and others, exhibited themselves in a state of semi-nudity in order to show the example to the other women."

It took a lot to drive the Spanish discipline underground. In Spain it was done largely because the Dominicans were jealous of the Jesuits. In the first round the Inquisition (a Dominican organization) forbade the practices. The Jesuits replied by organizing tremendous processions in Seville, Toledo and other towns, "in which women in extraordinary numbers took part, all being barefoot, with naked shoulders and legs—during the course of such processions every now and then a halt was made, and then the ladies uncovered themselves still more, in order to allow the use of the scourge. In short, indecency attained such a height, and the Jesuits publicly pushed the matter so far," that their rivals the Dominicans put their weight out and drove the Jesuits indoors—where the women followed them, as the Jesuits themselves, with much pride, affirmed.

In Louvaine the magistrates issued prohibitions, which, owing to female influence, were actually withdrawn.

In Paris, the Jesuits and their dupes met with a good deal of ribald scorn. So the processionists were allowed masks—and the spectators had the added zest of guessing. Finally the French Parliament passed a severe law against the public exhibitions, and simply drove the practices underground—where they may continue, for ought I know, to this day.

Here I must again draw attention to the fact that in convents priests have all the conditions for practising vice in secret—unless the nuns are protected by State supervision. Garibaldi said, "In Rome, in 1849, I visited every convent. I was present at all the investigations. Without a single exception, we found instruments of torture, and a cellar with the bodies of infant children." Facts like these have caused Roman Catholic countries to sternly regulate both monasteries and convents. Dr. Robertson (*Roman Catholic Church in Italy*, pages 173-180) gives particulars of enactments in Italy, France, Austria, Spain, Por-

tugal, Belgium. The number of monasteries, etc., have been reduced (*i.e.*, many of them have been dissolved) and the establishment of more forbidden. Those left are kept strictly in order. *Priests cannot keep themselves in order.* Only in face of strong public opinion do they ever keep up an appearance of decency. And in England, be it noted, convents are secret places, *not* supervised by the State, and out of reach of public opinion.

But we are not going to allow Roman Catholic priests in England to palm off on us the Roman Catholic women in England as a representative sample of Roman Catholic influence. They are the best sample the priests could submit—but the credit for it is due to us. We are not to be imposed on. What the priests must be judged by are samples taken from Roman Catholic countries. Here is one—it is given by Mr. McCabe in an account of an extended tour he took in 1923, and published in the June 1923 *Literary Guide*. He was told by a friend in Santa Cruz, that adjoining this friend's garden was a monastery, where "the monks let the young folk have at a *peseta* a time, the key of one of the outhouses at night." The next day they "sold them *bulas* (indulgences); and the Church made a handsome profit on each *bula*."

And these same priests and their "Holy" Church are what our ultra-pious Anglo-Catholics set out to imitate and amalgamate with. To help to save England from being degraded by these men, both strong language and strong measures are justifiable. And let this be also said—amongst the most despicable of the traitors are bishops of the Church of England.

C. R. BOYD FREEMAN.

### Books and Life.

IN *A History of Russian Literature*, by Prince D. S. Mirsky, we read that the powerful eloquence of an old Russian poem, "The Appeal of Adam," has deeply influenced the style of the prose-poems of Remizov, a writer saturated with the form and spirit of old Russian apocryphas. With only a slight acquaintance of Remizov through reading *The Fifth Pestilence*, it would appear that saturation, instead of drowning, was his good fortune. The characters in the book are a few degrees worse than pigs and sheep, and there does not appear any reason for the book to have been written. Its publication will do no service to a student of Russian novels, and one chapter of Gorki's worst book is like a breath of fresh air in comparison. Gorki looks at the great book of life itself; there is, in his works, sky, space, beauty, and sympathy in his treatment of his worst characters. He is not tied in metaphysical knots over the Trinity, a future life, sin, and other needless impedimenta; in other words, he is not saturated with the form and spirit of old Russian apocryphas. *The Fifth Pestilence* will confirm the weak-minded in the truth of original sin, and also, it will in some way explain the utterance of one of Dostoevsky's numerous characters, who explained that there was nothing left but suicide if one did not believe in God. And he was another author who, from the rag-bag of his imagination, fished out conundrums and asked the reader to answer them. As we have, in these notes, always aimed at finding the best in the printed word, counting our mutual time as wasted in railing at bad books, there was just one little phrase in *The Fifth Pestilence* that cries out for rescue. It was "the cement of kindness"—a metaphor perhaps in close company to our English habit of calling a good sort "a brick."

Mr. Geoffrey Dunlop has translated three plays of Georg Büchner, and they are published by the enterprising house of Gerald Howe, Ltd., 23 Soho Square, London, at the price of 7s. 6d. net. The period of Büchner (1813-1837) is very clearly defined in the sketch of his life and adventures preceding the plays. He was born on October 17, 1813, the day of the battle of Leip-

zig, in the village of Goddelau-bei-Darmstadt, and died in political exile at Zurich, on February 21, 1837, at the age of twenty-three. In the words of the translator, to Büchner, "there was only one tyranny—the empty belly," and the implication of this can easily be grasped, when, even in England, following the Napoleonic wars, victory had given conquerors the privilege of eating the bark off trees. The first play "Leonce and Lena," is crammed with good things, it is lyrical and whimsical, but as modern as Ernst Toller or Halcott Glover. The second, "Danton's Death," is terrific in its utter simplicity, and it ought to speedily find a home on the stage for its superb qualities of intense interest, movement, and philosophic background. We are shown Thomas Paine in prison in company with Chaumette, Mercier, and Héroult de Séchelles, and this, scene 8 Act II, should be an event for all those who thought that Paine was dead. His three fellow prisoners lean on him before going to their execution. These two plays and the third (unfinished), are turned out in good, sound English; for some reason, however, the author of the "Rights of Man" is called Tom Payne. We must leave the reader to find the wealth in this particular play, and the book is worthy of a place next to *Cyrano de Bergerac*. "Robespierre is the dogma of Revolution," says Danton to Lacroix, and dogmatism is stupidity with its back to the wall. In our edition of Carlyle, we find that many years ago, the old savage's description of Danton was underlined by us: "He was of Arcis-sur-Aube; born of 'good farmer-people' there. He had many sins; but one worst sin he had not, that of Cant. No hollow formalist, deceptive and self-deceptive, *ghastly* to the natural sense, was this; but a very Man: with all his dross he was a Man; fiery real, from the great fire-bosom of Nature herself. He saved France from Brunswick; he walked straight his own wild road, whither it led him. He may live for some generations in the memory of men." Mr. Geoffrey Dunlop, by his service to the real reading public, and the stage, has, by his choice of translation, captured a Man, and ratified the prophetic judgment of Carlyle. We trust that his work will receive the recognition that it demands and deserves. If Mr. Matheson Lang, with "The Wandering Jew" and "Christopher Sly" to his selective credit is looking for a good play, here it is.

*The Outline*, a new weekly, appears to be a Sunday edition of *John O' London's Weekly*. It is therefore a mystery why an article "The Gospel According to Nietzsche," found an entry into its sedative pages. Nietzsche is presented in his best clothes, and the article will have done good if it sends its readers off to read this provocative philosopher for themselves. The Bishop of Birmingham is the subject of an examination, and the writer of the notice states: "Every advance in knowledge necessitates, sooner or later, a restatement of the Church's traditional tenets." And this is a delightful example of a state of mind that cannot grasp one little truth mentioned in our previous notes. Are you listening? *Things that are different are not the same*. But we suppose, the subtleties of the Trinity being the natural water in which these theological fish swim, everything seen must be blurred. A re-statement of inspiration might even make the most stupid doubt inspiration.

Frequently the jaundiced question comes along: What will you put in its place? There is a nice implication in the query that assumes it to be necessary. Apart, however, from the question being superfluous, one has not to look far beyond one's nose to see much that can be done in the world of art, literature and science. Observant eyes will have noticed what wonderful colours and designs can be had in the commonest of things—wallpaper. There is a decided move for more and beautiful colours, and as four walls claim a good part of beauty, and good taste can be companions—silent, but at the same time making environment congenial, soothing and elevating. In the January issue of *The Studio*, under the title of "Retrospect and Prospect" the writer reviews the life of the journal from 1893 to 1928, and shows the effect of Mars on its

struggle for existence. Brighter days for it are apparently in view, and the number before us contains miscellaneous articles showing the ingenuity of man and woman to fashion beautiful things. The reproductions of the pictures of Herbert A. Budd show us that the artist finds beauty in ordinary town and country life—and why not? The sun shining on half a brick will throw up colour and beauty to the discerning eye, whilst all the treasures of the world may sometimes be found on a sunlit wall in ruins. Japanese and German art are represented, and Mr. Alan Odle's illustrations of Rabelais seem to have caught the freakish and frolicsome style of he who had to rid France of monks. Architecture and Pottery, Woodcuts and Sculpture, Designs for Rugs and Posters all make *The Studio* sing a few little notes in the mighty theme of William Blake, that: "Empire Follows Art." Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, and all those choice men, who had, in the words of G. T. Wrench, "a positive mastery over things and life," who thrust at you noble limbs of man and woman, who sing a human song of praise to life, all these men were glorious events in the history of Italy. How much Italy is in line with its Renaissance heroes may now be gauged by the exhortation of a Catholic Cardinal not to shake hands with a woman if her arms are bare. Who would waste logic and reason on such nonsense?

WILLIAM REPTON.

### Vicente Blasco Ibanez.

A LIGHT has been extinguished, and all who love the cause of freedom, whether of thought or deed, must feel somewhat sad at the news which has come of the death of Vicente Blasco Ibañez.

Within a day of reaching his sixty-first anniversary he has died at Mentone, after a life spent in fighting those greatest of enemies of Freedom, Ignorance and Oppression. But his battles have not been in vain, and his works will live long after his body has mouldered.

Born in Valencia on the 29th January, 1867, he was early in the fray of practical politics, and his native city returned him to the Spanish Parliament on no less than eight occasions. But his views did not meet with the approval of those in power, and the result was that he suffered terms of exile, hard labour and frequent imprisonment in the defence of his opinions.

Ibañez had the name of being an anti-feminist, but it may be possible to explain in some way. A man bitterly opposed to priests and priesthood, he saw the danger which lay in the emancipation of women in advance of their education, more especially in such a land as Spain. One has to read *La Bodega* to trace this view; and the work mentioned is, to my mind, his greatest. Others will doubtless not agree with me, but there is the cry of the persecuted, priest-ridden son and daughter of the soil rising from every line.

It is said that his writings are ignored by the majority of his fellow countrymen, but that is yet another of the religious evasions with which we are all conversant. His writings were not known in Spain because they were banned by those in power, lest the light of truth and justice should be so great that the rulers would be shown as they truly are, and not as they would wish the masses to consider them. We have proof of this in his literary invasion of Iberia by means of aeroplanes.

Spain has lost a greater man than has yet graced her nationality, but let it be hoped that this one will inspire, not one other, but a host so great that the forces of darkness may be for ever defeated.

L. M. WERREY EASTERBROOK.

### Correspondence.

#### ZENO'S PROBLEM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—When a fast train, some distance behind a slow train is performing the process of catching up, the "common sense" analysis is as follows: There is an initial distance or space between the two. This we will call  $x$ . The fast train takes time to traverse  $x$ , the same

time being occupied by the slow train in traversing a space which we will call  $n$ . This description applies whether it is a case of miles, yards or inches. As long as this description does apply the fast train is behind the other, and on "common sense" lines the final act of catching up cannot be made a concept of.

I take it that Mr. Wright considers the solution to be given on page 230 of Prof. Whitehead's *Introduction to Mathematics*, thus:—

The general definition is as follows: the differential co-efficient of the function  $f(x)$  is the limit, if it exist, of the function  $\frac{f(x+h)-f(x)}{h}$  of the argument  $h$  at the value  $0$  of its argument. How have we by this definition of a limit really managed to avoid the notion of infinitely small numbers, which so worried our mathematical forefathers? For them the difficulty arose because, on the one hand, they had to use an interval  $x$  to  $x+h$  over which to calculate the average increase, and on the other hand they finally wanted to put  $h=0$ . The result was they seemed to be landed into the notion of an existent interval of zero size. Now how do we avoid this difficulty? In this way—we use the notion that corresponding to any standard of approximation some interval with such and such properties can be found. The difference is this, that we have grasped the importance of the notion of "the variable," and they had not done so.

Now in my book *Towards the Answer*, where the problem is mentioned, I am trying to point out that there are things and happenings in the Universe, which though obviously *there*, are beyond our mental outfit to make a concept of. The "common sense" analysis breaks down when  $x=x+h$ . Up to this point  $x$  and  $h$  have both been plus quantities whose sum is obviously greater than either taken singly. Will the "notion" just mentioned enable Mr. Wright to visualize where  $x < x+h$  becomes  $x=x+h$  and how it is done? Scientists have never seen an atom, but they *visualize* it as a sort of planetary system. The solution of the present problem should include (1) a determination of the fraction of an inch when the "common sense" analysis ceases to be correct; (2) some sort of a visualization of what happens between this point and the actual overtaking. The theoretic solution should also have experimental proof. Space does not allow even mention of the various possibilities and problems opened up, and I shall be glad to see first how Mr. Wright will proceed to attack the problem. C. R. BOYD FREEMAN.

#### A PROTEST.

SIR,—I have never before felt impelled to differ from any of the views expressed by your contributors, but a passage in Mr. Boyd Freeman's otherwise excellent article on Page 74 calls for comment.

Herein he make an almost dogmatic assertion regarding the probable prostitution of chorus girls.

I can only surmise that his personal contact with this type of worker is strictly limited. It is seldom by desire that they discard practically all their garments before coming upon the stage, (usually a fairly draughty place) and at the conclusion of a show they are generally much too tired to indulge in anything so strenuous as he suggests. I confine myself to this simple repudiation merely in consideration of your valuable time: much clearer evidence will be forthcoming if desirable.

As for the following remark, anent "pandering to our animal lusts," the less said of this the better. It smacks altogether too much of the "woman tempted me." M. B. DARLING.

#### Society News.

##### LIVERPOOL BRANCH.

LAST Sunday's lecture by Dr. C. Carmichael on "Materialism Re-stated," proved of an exceedingly interesting nature and preparedness to meet the theologian has been greatly improved. As no questions were forthcoming, we can only hope that the audience departed quite clear on the issues raised.

To-day (Sunday, February 5) we shall have the pleasure of hearing Dr. Carmichael resume his exposition of Materialism Re-stated.—A.J.

#### NORTH LONDON BRANCH.

MR. LOMBARDI's interesting opening on "Crime—Its Causes and Cure," evoked an animated discussion, and hopes were expressed that the lecturer would speak for us soon again. To-night Father Vincent McNabb and Mr. T. F. Palmer are debating on Free-Will. We expect a big audience, and advise our friends to be in good time as our seating accommodation is somewhat limited. For further particulars see Lecture Notice.—K.B.K.

#### SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by the first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on postcard.*

##### LONDON.

###### INDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Debate—"Is the Human Will Free?" *Affir*: Fr. Vincent McNabb, O.P.; *Neg*: Mr. T. F. Palmer.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Oval Station): 7.15, Mr. F. P. Corrigan—"Sufficient Unto the Day—"

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7.0, Walter Hogg, B.A.—"The Use of Talking."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (The London Institution Theatre): 11.0, Dr. Bernard Hollander—"What is Life? What is Mind?"

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (34, George Street, Manchester Square, W.1): 7.30, Mr. Roberts—A Lecture. Thursday, February 9—A Lecture.

###### OUTDOOR.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Messrs. Hyatt and Le Maine; 6.30, Messrs. Campbell-Everden and Jackson. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith): 3.0, Mr. Hart—A Lecture. Freethought Meetings every Wednesday and Friday in Hyde Park at 7.30. Various lecturers.

##### COUNTRY.

###### INDOOR.

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (Assembly Rooms, Front Street): 7.15, Mr. T. Brown—"Science and Modern Problems." Chairman: Mr. T. Birtley.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY, Branch of the N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, Albion Street): 6.30, Some Remarks on Jazz—followed by a Saxophone Lecture-recital by Mr. Lancaster and Mr. Fry. The Discussion Circle meets every Thursday at 8 p.m., in the Hall, 83 Ingram Street.

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