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Views and Opinions

Fascism and the Church

WE have often said that the Roman Catholic Church has no politics. The only justifiable retort to that statement is that it is all politics; and both statements would be true. For while the Roman Church has no politics in the sense that it will support only one political system, it is all politics in the sense that it will support any political system that will support the Church. It is also true that it embodies all the vices of the lower order of political life. It will use falsehood and slander about its opponents, it will suppress the truth, it will manufacture falsehood, it will disfranchise its enemies, it will persecute, it will trade upon the ignorance of the masses, and will do it all with an air of righteousness that politicians may seek to emulate, but which they cannot hope even to equal. There is, indeed, not a shady trick in politics, which cannot be shown to be a representation on another stage of the practice of the greatest and the oldest of the Christian Churches.

But the Church is a little concerned about Fascism. It is not opposed to Fascism in principle, because in exploiting ignorance and intolerance, in preaching freedom while practicing despotism, in denying the right of men or women to form their own opinions and express them with freedom and without fear, it has fundamental features that are one with the German, Italian, Austrian and British Fascists. And while it is quite ready to support the Fascism of Italy and Austria because it gives advantages to the Church, it is sullenly hostile to German Fascism because that wants to form a new religion that shall be independent of the Church, and it is suspicious of the British contingent of the German movement, because the Mosleyites dare not offer to back up Roman Catholicism in this country for fear of losing Protestant support. And when it comes to fooling with phrases, the Roman Church has been too long at that game to be taken in by such an amateur of verbal fooling as Sir Oswald Mosley.

Words and Phases

Anxious to find out what were the aims of the Nazi organization in Britain the *Universe*, the leading organ of Roman Catholicism in this country wrote the British Union of Fascists to find out what is its attitude towards Eugenics, a "Corporate Council of Religious Bodies," and other matters. Very foolishly, the British Union of Fascists replied. I say very foolishly, because that body with all its ability to play upon the intelligence of its followers—who so long as they can parade as boy scouts and shout empty phrases, are quite happy—ought to have known better than to imagine that the Roman Church could be fooled by the same methods. With regard to Catholic schools in the new State in which Sir Oswald Mosley is to be dictator—by the permission of those who are behind the scenes, Catholics are to have their children brought up in schools where there is a "definite code of moral values," and schools are to be judged "entirely on their educational merits." The individual is to have "all such freedom as does not conflict with the welfare of the State," but the Catholic Church must not expect Fascism to "accept in permanence all Catholic values."

Now all this has the artfulness of that under-developed intelligence which is so manifest in the Fascist crusade. On the other hand it may be urged that as Fascism is planned solely to capture the under-developed intelligence of the country, there may be greater wisdom behind it than I think. True, intelligence may be behind it, but certainly it is not in its selected figure-head. In any case, it was sheer folly to expect this kind of thing to pass muster with the astute leaders of the Roman Church, who do not lack intelligence where its own interests are concerned. For the replies to the questions are banalistic almost beyond belief. All will have such freedom that does not conflict with the State! But who is to say when a man's thought does interfere with the welfare of the State? The Fascist dictator. There is to be in the schools a definite code of moral values. Good, but who fixes the "values?" The Fascist dictator. Schools will be judged by their educational merits. But who determines their educational values? The Fascist dictator, and so on through all the British-Nazi-German-fed philosophy. Britons are to have the same freedom as is given to Germans. They will have the freedom to obey, or take the consequences. Sir Oswald Mosley and his crowd of boy scouts are quite ready to sing "Britons never shall be slaves," but they evidently hope that Britons always will be fools. For none but fools could be led away by such empty balderdash. And to imagine that this kind of childish stuff could hoodwink the Catholic Church! Matthew Arnold said that if we are doomed to perish, the English people will perish because of their impatience with ideas. If the British public can be

fooled by the Mussolini cum Hitler cum Mosley crowd, it will deserve to perish, for it will have proven itself unfit to live.

* * *

Delicate Ground

It is interesting to note the manner in which the *Universe* deals with the Fascist reply to its questions. The Fascist is artful enough to attempt to disarm the Catholic by saying that Fascism and Roman Catholicism have much in common. They have—too much. Both agree that one supreme power ought to lay down the law as to opinion and, therefore, as to conduct. Both agree that there should be one religion in the State, although the German example cannot be followed by the Roman Church because it is based on the tradition that Jesus Christ was a Jew, and it cannot now discover that he was a German, without falling out with Englishmen, or find out that Jesus was really one of the ancient Britons without quarrelling with the Germans. The Catholic Church is a universal Church, and as the Christian world has become reconciled to the belief that its saviour was a Jew, it is safer to let things be, so far as that is concerned, where they are. On the other hand, if it does not disown the Jewish Jesus, it loses the driving force of anti-semitism, which is a very powerful force all over the world with those who love to dwell on the quite false picture of the fifteen millions of Jews in the world as being so superior in brain power to the other hundreds of millions of Gentiles that the Jew can twist them all round his fingers, and that therefore the only safe plan is to kill him. And at this point, so far as persecution is concerned, the Roman Catholic Church does touch Fascism, although the Fascists have outdone even the Roman Church in the naked barbarity of its treatment of those who did not act so as to promote the welfare of the State by adopting Fascism.

* * *

The Final Tussle

The *Universe* will not have salt put upon its tail quite so easily as it can be put on the tails of a limited number of the public. And it promptly replies that the difference between Fascism and others is the demand for "an absolute and unquestioning obedience to the decisions of a State in which one party alone is permitted to decide policy," and as to schools, it takes the value out of that windy proclamation by pointing out that "everybody knows that in a Fascist State the Fascist leaders alone are the judges of what shall be regarded as an anti-national policy." It also points out that "Catholics have serious ground for hesitation before giving allegiance to a party which claims absolute obedience from its members." To that we say, hear! hear! How can the Church agree with a system which demands absolute obedience from its members? It is dishonouring, it is unmanly, it is impossible for a Catholic to agree with it, particularly as it is the very claim which the Roman Church makes of its own members. And how can a man belong to two systems, each of which demands unquestioning obedience, unless these two systems have agreed to make identical demands? I think the *Universe* is putting a poser to the Fascists, but I think the Fascists could make a good reply, if there was real intelligence in that movement and not mere cunning and trickery, and concealed aims. At that game the Roman Church will beat the Fascists every time. They have been playing it for a very long period, and know every possible move.

The one thing that does overcome the Church in the long run, is a complete honesty of speech and purpose that aims at freedom all round. But that is the one thing the Church dare not preach, and it is

the one thing that Fascism dare not encourage. The unfortunate thing is that the public, in this country as well as elsewhere, are losing faith in freedom of thought and speech. Like the Belgian gentleman who imagined that if he gave Colonel Hutchinson a punch in the jaw, that would prove the Colonel to be a liar, a great many think that the quick way to reach the millennium is to establish a tyranny that would make whatever was achieved quite valueless when it was attained. I do not wonder that neither the Church nor Fascism dare encourage freedom of thought and speech. The success of either depends upon suppression, and suppression involves persecution. It means putting the bully and braggart at the head, and exterminating the sense of human dignity and independence. "Ye are my sheep," says the Church to its followers, and Fascism likewise wants to cultivate a nation of sheep that will all think alike, talk alike, and obey orders without question when they are issued at the command of a "leader." And every flock of sheep has a leader, and if in the case of human sheep the leader trains his sheep to be uncomplainingly shorn the analogy is carried out to its destined end.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

A Tame Torquemada

"Never were such sharp questions asked as this day."

Walt Whitman.

"Miching mallecho—this means mischief."

Shakespeare.

MR. GILBERT K. CHESTERTON is one of the best known figures in the literary arena, and it is customary to refer to him as an up-to-date, or even up-to-the-minute, journalist. Yet it is as plain as a pikestaff that Chesterton does not represent contemporary thought. What he does represent is a reaction against the views current in the latter years of the nineteenth century. He has attacked Woman's Suffrage; he dislikes Jewish people; he is never happier than when telling the working-man when and where he is wrong. The truth is, probably, that Chesterton is at heart a Democrat who has strayed into the Catholic Church, and, being in Rome, does as the Romans do. He is not a hard-shell Tory, for his humour is continually coming to his rescue, but he has delighted the Conservatives more than the Intellectuals. His humour, too, is slap-stick, and the printed page remains to show his Puck-like prejudices and perversity. Don Quixote, democrat, Romanist, jester—he is one of the oldest human combinations.

Chesterton has a liking for burlesque, but it often pops up unexpectedly. In his *Short History of England*, a remarkable book with a hackneyed title, he dips his brush in crimson lake and paints a very fanciful picture of our island-story. Our history is to be traced less through kings, statesmen, and documents than through such picturesque personages as Edward the Confessor, Thomas à Becket, and other buttresses and pillars of the Romish Church. His very imaginative point of view is expressed in the phrase: "the thorn of Glastonbury, from which has grown the whole story of Britain." It is as absurd as to say, "the beanstalk from which has grown the story of Jack and his exploits."

This fantastic method applied to history has its drawbacks, for it might drive readers to drink. Indeed, instructed citizens of an educated nation should know that Chesterton's rabid Romanism is misplaced in a work purporting to be sober history. As an example, Chesterton says that the English who destroyed the Armada and Spanish aggression were "as

dingy, as undeveloped, as petty and provincial as Boers"—which is ungallant nonsense. It is as much heated rhetoric as the remarks made by a "non-com." in the Peninsular War: "You men, reared on the roast beef of Old England should know what to do with a lot of Dagos who live on oranges." Throughout Chesterton's alleged history, Romanists receive all the applause and flowers, and sometimes he rises to pontifical heights of theatricality. "Though the Stuarts failed in England," he shouts at the top of his voice, "they fought for things that succeeded in Europe"—an assertion that should make the faces of all the European despots broaden to a smile, if such fanatics can smile.

Naturally, Chesterton sighs, or pretends to sigh, for the return of the ages of faith. We prefer the comparative freedom of our own day. Men and women are not now burnt alive for their religious opinions at Smithfield and Stratford. There is now no Star Chamber to pillory, lop the hands, slit the noses, and cut the ears of a Stubbes, a Prynne, or a Leighton, men misguided enough to voice liberal opinions. Such were the freedom and civilization which Chesterton dreams of. "The man died in our hands," is the terse comment in a contemporary document describing the treatment of an offender in the bad old days. Chesterton's pictures of the past are coloured, not plain. One might say too highly coloured for a sophisticated audience.

In the *Victorian Age of Literature*, Chesterton uses his ability tyrannously in the service of the most reactionary of all the churches of Christendom excepting that of Abyssinia. He has nothing but jibes and insults for the great "intellectuals." According to this Romish critic, Thomas Hardy is "a village Atheist." In writing of Swinburne's *Songs Before Sunrise*, he snorts that the sunrise never turned up. Indeed, all the great Victorians were to him "lame giants." Browning is reproached for making puns about Cardinals Newman, Manning, and Wiseman. Even women come under Chesterton's lash, and Emily Bronte, a rare genius, is described as "unsociable as a storm as midnight." The only Freethinker to whom Chesterton is even civil is James Thomson, the author of *The City of Dreadful Night*, who, he declares, "knew how to be democratic in the dark." As Chesterton spells the poet's name with a "p," the compliment is a doubtful one after all. And this is the critic who challenges the dogmatism of the Secularist; convicts science of irrationality; and who pretends to find liberty inside monasteries and nunneries.

Although he keeps his eyes on the narrow path to Rome, and ensures, by his robustious piety, a hearty welcome in the Christian backwoods, Chesterton has his good points. Compared with doleful deans and bigoted bishops, he is at least a tolerable and breezy companion. He seems to say with Sir Toby Belch: "Dost thou think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale?" He displays more than a passing acquaintance with Freethought, witness his portrait of "Saladin" (W. Stewart Ross) in his novel, *The Cross and the Ball*. Here, for example, is a pleasant diversion on the lack of authority in matters of religious belief:—

Of all conceivable forms of enlightenment the worst is what these people call the Inner Light. Anyone who knows anybody knows how it would work; anyone who knows anyone from the Higher Thought centre knows how it does work. That Jones shall worship the god within him turns out ultimately to mean that Jones shall worship Jones. Let Jones worship the sun or moon, anything rather than the Inner Light; let Jones worship cats or crocodiles, if he can find any in his street, but not the god within.

From his abundant mine of epigram and paradox Chesterton shovels out diamonds and rubbish with a good-humoured carelessness. Here are some of his good sayings:—

"My country, right or wrong," is like saying, "My mother, drunk or sober."

"Tradition means giving votes to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead."

"The newspapers which announce the giant gooseberry and the raining frogs are the modern representatives of the popular tendency which produced the hydra, the were-wolf, and the dog-headed man."

"What have we done, and where have we wandered, we that have produced sages who could have spoken with Socrates, and poets who could walk with Dante, that we should talk as if we had never done anything more intelligent than found colonies and kick niggers?"

"What is the good of words if they are not important to quarrel over? If you called a woman a chimpanzee instead of an angel, wouldn't there be a quarrel about a word?"

Farm Street Jesuits and priests from Forest Gate cannot write like that. Chesterton is a licensed jester. Try as he will he cannot keep his big, breezy personality out of his writings. Too much has been made of Chesterton's supposed likeness to Doctor Johnson. Thus, when someone said, "you cannot put the clock back," meaning that you cannot ignore events, Chesterton answers triumphantly, "The reply is that you can put the clock back." Old Sam Johnson was fond of verbal victory, but he would have disdained such word juggling as this. The fact is that Chesterton has barked up the wrong tree. "Mythology and newspapers cannot co-exist" is a lively and also a true epigram. Did it never occur to him that in pressing the claims of Priestcraft to a mixed modern audience he had done a rash thing? And if it had, would he have been better pleased at the knowledge that Chesterton in cap and bells cuts a much braver figure than Chesterton in a cassock?

MIMNERMUS.

THE REFORMER'S BANE.

The leaders of the more advanced movements are, in general, men of quite unusual disinterestedness, as is evident from a consideration of their careers . . . they have shown that the hope which inspired them was not for themselves, but for mankind.

Nevertheless, though the desire for human welfare is what at bottom determines the broad lines of such men's lives, it often happens that, in the detail of their speech and writing, hatred is far more visible than love. The impatient idealist—and without some impatience a man will hardly prove effective—is almost sure to be led into hatred by the oppositions and disappointments which he encounters in his endeavours to bring happiness to the world. The more certain he is of the purity of his motives and the truth of his gospel, the more indignant he will become when his teaching is rejected. Often he will successfully achieve an attitude of philosophic tolerance as regards the apathy of the masses, and even as regards the whole-hearted opposition of professed defenders of the *status quo*. But the men whom he finds it impossible to forgive are those who profess the same desire for the amelioration of society as he feels himself, but who do not accept his method of achieving this end. The intense faith which enables him to withstand persecution for the sake of his beliefs make him consider these beliefs so luminously obvious that any thinking man who rejects them must be dishonest, and must be actuated by some sinister motive of treachery to the cause. Hence arises the spirit of the sect, that bitter, narrow orthodoxy which is the bane of those who hold strongly to an unpopular creed.

Bertrand Russell ("Roads to Freedom")

The Latest Revival

"Lecky says that the Methodist revival, by turning the thoughts of the working-class from earth to heaven, saved England from a revolution like that experienced by France. One of Lenin's favourite maxims was that religion is the opiate of the workers." (Rev. G. Milner: *The Threshold of the Victorian Age*. p. 214.)

THE great religious Revival, of which Wesley was the inspirer, in the eighteenth century, was the last great religious Revival originating in England. It seems to have exhausted the soil, for all the succeeding ones have been imported from America.

Moody and Sankey appeared during 1873-75, and again from 1881 to 1883. The latter venture I remember very well, as I had just come to London then; although I did not take part in it, as I was at that time undergoing a very different conversion and discarding religion altogether.

Moody was a stout, vulgar, uneducated man, and his appeal was to the masses. He shocked the cultured by his familiarity with sacred subjects. For example, he would commence an address: "I met Paul in the Strand yesterday. He said 'Hullo Mr. Moody.' I said 'Hullo Paul.'" At his meetings at Cambridge, students, dropping in from the Colleges, would mock his illiterate speech, such as Dan'l for Daniel. In fact, the success of the whole thing was entirely due to the simple and catchy hymns they had composed, and which Sankey sang, accompanying himself on the harmonium. The hymns were, thoughtfully, provided with a chorus, in which the congregation joined with great gusto. They were willing to endure Moody for the sake of this. In fact, although Moody got all the credit, it was the speechless and unobtrusive Sankey who carried the whole thing.

The next Revival campaign, also from America, was the Torrey-Alexander combination, at the beginning of this century, working on the same lines; they had, in addition, a trained choir. They were, as usual, boomed and boosted by the Press. The largest halls were engaged regardless of expense, for they received the support of the clergy, who hoped to refill their empty pews, and also the enthusiastic support of the Captains of industry and finance, who thought that, if the working man could be induced to attend the church and study the Bible, he would be less inclined to study Karl Marx.

But, unfortunately for these noble and altruistic benefactors, the working man absolutely refused to avail himself of the means of grace, and thought more of his Social Salvation, and improving his condition on earth, than in laying up treasure in heaven. It was true that the great meeting-places were filled to overflowing, but it was by congregations attracted from other churches and chapels, who wanted to participate in the pious orgy so much boomed by the Press. And that was the last of the great Revivals. When the mission was over, and it was found that the empty pews continued to be empty, even the religious papers admitted the failure. It was hardly worth while to bring over two American evangelists, at great expense, to convert the already converted. Moreover, the two evangelists proved to be uncommonly expert in finance, and their operations in this direction were severely criticized in the Press. The Captains of Industry and Finance were equally disgruntled with the clergy. These Captains had nothing to show for their subscriptions and were inclined to think they had been done.

Now we have another revival in our midst, although the Press lords have not issued any orders to their editors to boom and boost it, for it has received nothing like the attention the others received. We refer to the so-called "Oxford Group Move-

ment." This also is another American movement, but on totally different lines. No solo singing, no trained choir, in fact, no music at all, and no sermon.

Frank Buchman, the founder of the Groups, was born in Pennsylvania, fifty-six years ago, his ancestors originally coming from Switzerland. After training at a Lutheran theological college, he became minister of a Lutheran church in 1902, but resigned his position in 1905. In 1908 he visited England, where he experienced some mystical change, which turned him into an evangelist, and led to his starting the Group Movement. Returning to America, he was appointed lecturer at Hartford Theological Seminary, a post he held from 1916 to 1923, when he resigned, and he has travelled about, organizing Christian Groups ever since.

But why, it will be asked, call it the "Oxford" Group Movement? That is just what Oxford wants to know. Leading men in the University have publicly protested that the name of Oxford attached to the Groups is quite unauthorized and misleading. The movement did not originate at Oxford, neither does it count many adherents in the University. Miss B. E. Gwyer, Principal of St. Hugh's College, tells us: "It is right to say that the number of undergraduates in my own Society who have been influenced by the Group Movement has always been, and remains, very small." And, in a footnote, she adds: "Though I have no exact information I believe the same may be said of the majority of the one-and-thirty colleges and halls."¹ We have seen it stated Buchman has attracted three hundred undergraduates out of nearly five thousand at Oxford.

But let Oxford protest as strongly as it may, the Groupers are not going to drop the name, for it gives the movement an air of learning and respectability that the name of Buchman, or the Hartford Seminary would, be very far from conveying. Not to put too fine a point on it, they are practically sailing under false colours.

Unlike previous revivals, the Groups do not appeal to the working-class, they work among the upper class. Neither do they attempt mass conversions; they work upon individuals. When a convert joins a group he makes a confession of his sins to that group. But as Dr. Jacks points out:—

Unfortunately, we Christians have contracted a habit of regarding our sins as the most important and interesting facts about us, and we assume that God takes the same view of them. It follows that, when a man comes to die, our first thought is to induce him to confess his sins, than which a more ingenious method of making death horrible could hardly be conceived. Similarly, when we start a new religious movement, our sins are made the growing point of all the rest, and even when "sharing" is chosen as one of our principles, it is the knowledge of our sins that must be shared before we think of sharing anything else. (*Oxford and the Groups*. Ed. by R. H. S. Crossman. p. 126.)

As Dr. Jacks further observes; it is, no doubt, a great relief to the religiously-minded, to get rid of their guilty secrets. Especially when they know in advance that they are confessing to a small group of friendly and tolerant people—who, we may add, expect a like toleration for their own transgressions—but it would be extremely unwise to reveal them to treacherous and evil-minded people. And even as it is, there is a danger that they might leak out in a careless moment, and the confessions pass on to scandal-mongers always ready to make mischief.

And again, how about when a member withdraws from a Group and returns to his sinful ways? What is to restrain him from making use of his knowledge,

¹ *Oxford and the Groups*. A collective work, edited by R. H. S. Crossman.

either for mockery, or out of pure mischief? Probably this idea occurred to the confessors themselves; for as Dr. Jacks points out:—

The cases of sharing to which the Groups are able to give publicity, in the records of the good work they are doing, are precisely those whose general character is too trivial to make a very deep impression on the reader. One looks in vain through these records for a self-revelation likely to damn the maker of it in the eyes of the world or get him into serious trouble—such as a bigamist to having two wives, of a poisoner to putting arsenic into his wife's tea, of a gangster to a bank robbery, or the head of a foreign office to the lies that he has been telling for his country's good. . . . The leaders in the Groups are evidently conscious that such difficulties exist. "The question of just how much to share,"² says Mr. Thornton-Duesbery in his pamphlet on *Sharing*, "must be left to the guidance of the Holy Spirit." The point of the remark is readily understood. It strengthens the impression gained from the literature alluded to above, that the sins shared are, on the whole, those that can be safely shared, and that the Groups are not recruited from the worst class of sinners. But perhaps the Groups have "secret archives" which, if they could be revealed, would prove this impression to the unjust. (pp. 127-8.)

As Dr. Jacks further remarks, many of us shrink from this "spiritual nudism," as much as we do from physical nudism. But if, as Dr. Jacks tells us, nothing is revealed that would "damn the maker in the eyes of the world or get him into serious trouble"; if, in fact, all the serious sins are kept back—we do not believe the Groups have any secret archives—then the whole thing is reduced to a farce. It is just for the big sins that sinners require the relief of confession, and not the trifling, every day, small ones. On the other hand, it is more probable that those who have been guilty of criminal offences would give the Groups a wide berth, and seek reformation by less dangerous methods. In that case the worst sinners escape the influence of the Groups altogether, and the new revival would be repeating the old revivals' fatuity in converting the converted.

W. MANN.

(To be concluded.)

² The italics are Dr. Jacks'.

Whitefield: A Reverend Slave-Owner

THAT the past should be forgotten is perhaps a wise counsel sometimes. Certainly we are far from condemning men of to-day for the crimes of their ancestors. Also we are pleased when we are able to record that Ministers of God to-day are practically unanimous in condemning the Negro Slavery which Ministers of God little over a century ago generally regarded as wholly admirable.

It is advisable for Freethinkers to have by them for ready reference Mr. Chapman Cohen's *Christianity and Slavery*. And this for more reasons than one. This book proves up to the hilt with chapter and verse, that "God" ordained slavery according to the Bible; that Jesus Christ never made the least protest against the institution; that the clergy, Episcopal and Nonconformist, defended it and profited by its traffic in human flesh; and that the "abolitionist" movement was everywhere befriended by "infidels" and opposed by the churches.

It has become nowadays part of the lying propaganda of Christian ministers and writers to claim that it was their own creed and church which conferred the blessing of abolition of slavery on mankind. The

latest, but we fear not the last, to make this untruthful statement is the Rev. A. D. Belden, minister of "Whitefield" Memorial Tabernacle in Tottenham Court Road, the scene of the "labours" of George Whitefield, M.A., Minister and Slave-owner.

Mr. Belden believes, or at any rate says, "is it inconceivable that He (Jesus) should have looked upon it (slavery) with an indifferent eye?" But he admits "we have no record of a definite statement of Jesus condemning slavery"; and surely all we are concerned with is what the Holy and inspired Bible says He said on this or any other subject. If Jesus himself favoured (or opposed) Radio broadcasting, we cannot tell. But Jesus declared in favour of all that Moses taught, except, as in the case of adultery where he made the law more severe. And if Mr. Belden is ignorant of what Moses taught about Slavery, we advise him to read Exodus, Deuteronomy and Leviticus in any copy of the Book he quotes so often.

But Mr. Belden is unscrupulous. He not only pretends that Jesus made "an absolute demand for human freedom," but goes so far as to quote Matthew 20, as His "demands of Christian men the most passionate devotion to freedom." Let us remind our readers that the chapter quoted says not a word about any sort of "freedom," has no reference whatever to the subject of slavery, and (as far as it relates to labour) approves of the dictum: "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own," meaning that an employer had the right to make whatever bargain he liked with his workers. In the parable, the "boss" had unusual ideas about payment, but he did not approach the question of slavery in any sense.

Mr. Belden, whose article in the *British Weekly* is one long column of Christian egotism, cannot spare a single word of appreciation for the infidels who, without an inspired book to guide them, were always in the van wherever human liberty was at stake.

Who was George Whitefield, that a fine building should be raised in his honour, and a gentleman like Mr. Belden be paid to misread history to the honour and praise of this dead hero of the Church? Mr. Belden may well be proud to succeed this "great divine."

George Whitefield was the son of a Church clergyman, known to his contemporaries as "Dr. Squintum," because of a defect in one eye which always prevented his seeing straight (physically of course). As a youth he was distinguished for lying, stealing, and other "roguish tricks," as he called them in later years. His biographer, Gledstone, says that even in these unregenerate days "he feared God," and gave in charity some of his stolen money, instead of spending it all on himself!

Young Whitefield's character was formed under very evil conditions, that is to say he was familiar with every possible religious influence, and was quite in harmony therewith. It is recorded that his vile temper early associated itself with the vindictiveness of the Bible. He loved the imprecatory psalms, which were always on his lips. He would retire to his room "and with many tears, pray the whole psalm" (especially Psalm 118) "over, finding relief to his feelings in the terrible refrain of the tenth, eleventh and twelfth verses. . . he was always fond of being a clergyman, and frequently imitated the ministers reading prayers."

Whitefield shared with Wesley the establishing of Methodism in England. He became an ultra-fashionable minister, selecting as his particular "corner of the Lord's vineyard" the corner where most money was to be found. Walpole chaffed him about his love for "your big sinners," i.e., the rich ones. It was Walpole who said about the Methodists "this sect increases as fast as any religious nonsense ever

did." The list of rich women, mostly titled, who patronized this crude Christian zealot, reads like a Court Circular.

George Whitefield was not only a Minister of God. He was also an owner of slaves. He was instrumental in introducing slavery into Georgia, a State which had never permitted slavery to exist until the pious Whitefield, at that time a chaplain there, begged for its introduction. He continued his agitation when safely in England. His contemptible, sanctimonious letter "Thanks be to God" is the standard specimen of pious humbug. He pretended to believe that even the negro slaves themselves would thank God for being doomed to perpetual slavery in Georgia.

It "rejoiced the soul" of this reverend slave-owner, to hear that "one of my poor Negroes in Carolina was made a brother in Christ." But the mask is unconsciously lifted, the real object appears in the same letter. After declaring that the Bible, Old Testament and New, supports slavery, he continues: "However this be, it is plain that hot countries cannot be cultivated without Negroes. What a flourishing country Georgia might have been, had the use of them been permitted years ago." His "Soul" indeed!

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

REV. GEORGE WHITEFIELD'S DEFENCE OF SLAVERY.

(The "Colony" referred to below is the American State of Georgia, where Whitefield had been Chaplain, and whose Government had recently decided to legalize negro-slavery, for the first time in Georgia's history, and after earnest prayers and petitions from Whitefield, who already had slaves in other States, but was prohibited by Georgia's laws from bringing his slaves into Georgia territory hitherto).

The following is a complete copy of the "letter," as given in James P. Gledstone's life of *George Whitefield*, M.A. (1901 edition):—

"THANKS BE TO GOD THAT the time for favouring that colony seems to be come. I think now is the season for us to exert our utmost for the good of the poor Ethiopians. We are told that even they are soon to stretch out their hands to God. And who knows, but their being settled in Georgia may be overruled for this great end? As for the lawfulness of keeping slaves. I have no doubt, since I hear of some that were bought with Abraham's money, and some that were born in his house.

"And I cannot help thinking that some of those servants mentioned by the apostles in their epistles were or had been slaves. It is plain that the Gibeonites were doomed to perpetual slavery, and though liberty is a sweet thing to such as are born free, yet to those who never knew the sweets of it, slavery may not perhaps be so irksome. However this be, it is plain to a demonstration that hot countries cannot be cultivated without negroes.

"What a flourishing country might Georgia have been, had the use of them been permitted years ago! How many white people have been destroyed for want of them, and how many thousands of pounds spent to no purpose at all. Had Mr. Henry (Matthew Henry?) been in America, I believe he would have seen the lawfulness and necessity of having Negroes there.

"And although it is true they are brought in a wrong way from their own country, and it is a trade not to be approved of, yet, as it will be carried on whether we will or not, I should think myself highly favoured if I could purchase a good number of them, in order to make their lives comfortable, and lay a foundation for breeding up their posterity in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

"You know, dear sir, that I had no hand in bringing them into Georgia, though my judgment was for it, and so much money was yearly spent to no purpose, and I was strongly importuned thereto, yet I would not have a Negro on my plantation till the use of them was publicly allowed in the Colony. Now this done, let us reason

no more about it, but diligently improve the present opportunity for their instruction. The Trustees favour it, and we may never have a like prospect. It rejoiced my soul to hear that one of my poor Negroes in Carolina was made a brother in Christ. How know we but we may have many such instances in Georgia ere it be long. In the Fall, God willing, I intend to see what can be done towards laying a foundation."

Acid Drops

The following is from *World Jewry*, for May 4:—

Sixteen Orthodox Jews belonging to the Sabbath Observance Society were arrested in Tel-Aviv during a street clash with motorists while they were trying to induce them not to drive on the Sabbath. Being refused bail because they would not give an undertaking that they would not repeat their action on the forthcoming Saturday, they formed a *minyán* in their prison cell.

Tel-Aviv was established as a place of refuge for persecuted Jews. The facts bear out what we have so often said, namely, that so long as you have religion you will have savagery. These Sabbatarian Jews were as stupid and as intolerant as our own Sabbatarian Christians. The persecution they had suffered had taught them nothing except to strive to persecute others. One more proof of the truth of two things we have so often said. First that the only good religion is a dead one, and, second, that you no more cease to be religious because you have dropped a number of orthodox religious doctrines, than you are in robust health because you are able to walk about after being confined with a fever. It takes a long while to get the religious poison completely out of the system.

Hats off to a *Church Times* correspondent who writes that because the word "Mass" is a "most suitable designation for something which is entirely beyond human comprehension" it is a quite suitable word for use. That is quite good. When we are talking of something of the meaning of which we are quite ignorant, what is better than to describe it by a word which is without any meaning? Again, hats off to this writer! Perhaps he is just pulling the editor's leg.

Lord Nuffield maker, of the Morris Cowley motors, is one of our captains of commerce; and as such he has all the high-grade intelligence that so many of our captains of commerce, the Rothermeres and Northeliffes, etc., have. Recently he informed two men whom he found selling papers outside his works that they had all started level, and asked them to see what he had made of his opportunities, and how little use they had made of theirs. The stupidity of it is staggering. Presumably Lord Nuffield is foolish enough to believe that everyone can become a millionaire or a great leader of industry. Everybody can be on top, and when everyone is on top, those at the bottom (Lord Nuffield will explain where they will come from) will have nothing of which to complain. When one finds this illustration of the mentality of our money-kings, one ceases to wonder at the world being as it is. W. S. Gilbert would have explained to him that "Where everybody's somebody, no one is anybody." To make this quite plain to even Lord Nuffield's intelligence we hasten to explain that if someone is on top it is absolutely essential for some one to be underneath.

The Methodists announce with great glee that they are arranging for seventy-eight open-air demonstrations in London during the coming Summer. They are "getting in touch with the Bishop of London and others, so as to show a united front." We have heard of that "United Front" before, but we have never seen it. Catholics and Unitarians, Christadelphinians and Christian Scientists, to say nothing of Jews and Islamites, are not invited or welcomed to the "United Front."

Two of Monsieur Alfred Loisy's books are reviewed in the current *Hibbert*. Loisy cannot accept the "Myth" theory of Jesus, but he refuses to respect the usual "historicity" nonsense, nor will he endorse the absurdities of the alleged "reportership" of the Gospel writers, whoever they were. He believes a sort of Jesus lived, and that the Gospels reproduce "the traditions of a cult which grew more fervid as it developed to the deification of its Object" . . . "the teaching attributed to Jesus has been built up to meet the needs of the Christian propaganda." The liberal "modernists" are slowly but surely on the way to the old Freethought common-sense view.

Dr. James Black, in the *Christian World*, sneers at Ruskin's fine *dictum*: "It is better to live in a cottage and have Warwick Castle to be astonished at than to live in Warwick Castle and have nothing to be astonished at." Dr. Black objects, because he sees that by the same reasoning if you lived with God, life would be bereft of the great charm of wonder. Hell may be bad enough, but at least there would always be something outside worth thinking about. Perfect Paradises would be perfectly boring.

The Churchman, New York, has some comic jingles, called "Piety in Limericks." The current specimens are too reminiscent of well-known "naughty" Limericks, to be tried on an ordinary churchgoer. This is an actual sample:—

There was a wise man who said "Odd,
If the Heavenly path could be trod
By spending your cash
On pleasures and trash
And not spending any on God."

What is the fatal attraction of war to the men of God? On the front page of last week's *British Weekly*, there is a glorification of 2 Samuel xxiii., a chapter which is a shocking illustration of what "brotherhood" means in religious stories. Splendid friendships between members of the same regiment, with horrible massacres of the "enemy" people. The writer, Rev. Dr. Glaister, D.D., sentimentalizes over David's devotion and his comrades' heroism, but not a word about the wholesale death-dealing against the Philistines. The moral our Rev. Doctor draws is "A nation lives on the self-sacrifice of the best of her children." The priests of Moloch could say no less.

A Belgian priest, calling himself, "Fr. Jerome," has written a book called *A Catholic Plea for Reunion*. Catholics, particularly in England, are anxious for no "reunion." They consider it is only a question of time before they will easily swallow the Church of England and make England a happy land for Roman Catholics. The book, therefore, has been most severely denounced by their newspapers, and "Fr. Jerome" told to mind his own business. He has even, we believe, been told to get out of the country. If anyone wants to get proof of genuine Christian charity, brotherly love, and those other sweet qualities we are so often told about as being exclusively Christian, he should read the vituperation that has been poured on the poor priest by his Catholic confreres. Scratch a Catholic and you will find something far worse than a tartar.

At a meeting of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, the Secretary, Canon Waddy, who had been on an extensive tour, visiting various foreign missions helped by the Society, spoke about the Church in Corea. He pointed out how very very "patient the Corean Church had always been. Seven years was it not, without a single convert?" This ought to be most enthusiastically received by the people who had subscribed for such a marvellous example of patience. We wonder what the actual cost of the first convert must have been? It reminds us of the year in which £40,000 had been spent to convert a couple of Jews to the glorious gospel of Christ—and nobody was quite sure of the happy con-

verts in the end. Seven years' work—and cash—to convert a single Corean, and thousands of people starving in this country! What a confession!

A new Church Quarterly called *Ecumenia*, is being published, and in one of the articles, by the Bishop of Truro the writer seems most uncertain about his position. The Church, he contends, must be God's Church, "but the moment the meaning attached to these words is explained, division begins." A reviewer puts it this way:—

Did Christ found the Church with the first principles of order and government, as well as of doctrine, or did He teach a purely individual Gospel, leaving men to decide how the Gospel should be extended? In other words, is the Christian religion corporate or individual?

So that after nineteen hundred years of a Divine religion, specially given by God to man through Christ Jesus, what the Bishop of Truro now wants is someone to explain with *certainty* what exactly do the words "the Church of God" mean? We don't know—so it's no use asking us.

The Bishop of Durlham, regarding the admission of Unitarians to Church of England pulpits, makes his position very clear. He says, "I desire then, to state as clearly as possible that I have never at any time included Unitarians among those Non-Anglican Christians whose closer fellowship with the Church of England I have advocated." Poor Christian Unitarians! It is very hard on those who so passionately love the title "Christian" to be so completely shut out from the fold by brothers in Jesus. Why not take the bull by the horns and subscribe to the divinity of Christ and have done with it? Surely the one true God could have had a tiny, weeny Son? Why limit God's powers?

Miss Evelyn Underhill, the well-known "mystical" writer, talking of "the radiant delight of Christianity," says, "Supernatural joy is perhaps the rarest, as it is certainly one of the most precious, of all spiritual qualities." The way in which "mystics" manage to get such phrases as "supernatural joy" and "radiant delight of Christianity" into their writing, expecting normal people to know what they mean, is delightful. After pondering for some time on such blithesome, rollicking words as "supernatural joy," and trying to fathom the author's meaning, we gave it up. But how can a hard-boiled materialist hope to fathom the mysteries of a "mystic's" language?

A contributor to *Cycling* remarks that cyclists of the present generation will hardly believe that riding on the Sabbath was sternly discountenanced down to the end of the past century. He remembers the time when bicycles were used very furtively, if at all, on the Sabbath; and he was severely frowned upon for defying the conventions of those puritanical days. He adds: "The outlook of the elder brethren has undergone a tremendous change since that period, and we are all the better for it." We may as well add what he would not be permitted to mention; namely, that the people who were instrumental in bringing about the "tremendous change," and in broadening the public mind in that respect, were mainly Freethinkers. Cycling Freethinkers openly—not furtively—defied the stupid Christian taboo concerning Sunday, and thereby encouraged—or shall we say, gave moral support to—timid cyclists to follow their good example. Whenever there is a tremendous change for the better, brought about despite Christian opposition, Freethinkers are always the pioneers of it. But "keep it dark"—for Christ's sake.

Mr. Seton Gordon appears to have discovered at least one part of the British Isles where the human intellect has stagnated under the influence of Christian theology. He says: "There are parts of the Highlands where no petrol is supplied on Sunday except for a journey to church." We have to assume that compulsory con-

formity to the Scottish Sabbath—and to the mental level of these pious Highlanders—is pleasing in the sight of the Christian God.

A Methodist journal has discovered "an urgent need." This is "a call for at least 50 ministers for new areas." We don't suppose for a moment that the aforesaid call came from the majority of persons in the new areas. It came from "God"—that is to say, the ministerial fraternity are very anxious to push the sale of their commodity among the new residents. No one can say that Methodist ministers have not a keen eye for business.

In a certain Welsh Sunday school, we learn, a man aged 95 still teaches. It is safe to assume that he must, during his "teaching" career, have perverted many thousands of youthful minds, decivilizing them with the primitive fancies of the Christian superstition. No one can say that he has not earned everlasting boredom in the Christian Heaven.

Mr. Basil de Selincourt tells us that "Even when poetry means what it says, it means much more than it appears to say." No doubt. In this respect, however, poetry would seem to be rather different from Holy Writ as interpreted by the Modernist theologian. He gives the impression of saying that, even when the Bible does not mean what it says, it means much more than it appears to say. And no doubt the latter is true even when it appears not to say anything intelligible, nor mean anything at all. After this, there should be no difficulty in appreciating how valuable is Holy Writ for human guidance.

Rev. K. G. Budd, at Norbury Church, preached on a very warm subject, Hell. He once "tried to make a list of all the plays, books and films in which the word Hell appeared," but gave it up; it was too tremendous a list. He was aware that "Leaders and saints of the Church, throughout the ages had taught that Hell meant all we always thought it meant." But Mr. Budd knows exactly what "Our Lord" really meant. It was a "tragedy that the Church had taken figurative language literally." Christ "was using the thought categories of His own day." Does that mean that Mr. Budd doesn't believe in Hell? Not a bit of it. He teaches that "we have no reason to suppose there is not a certain degree of suffering" still reserved for us in the Hell we are bound for. We admit the "degree" may make a substantial difference. A Hell of 70 degrees Fahr. is all right. But Hell at Boiling-point would be a hell of a climate.

Bishop Burroughs (of Ripon) says "If God is Love, and if man is really made in God's image"—all sorts of nice things ought to happen. But as it will take at least two eternities ("and then some," as the films say) before anybody can demonstrate those two postulates, suppose we try Peace first. If we could convert mankind to wiser international relations we might then go into the subject of perpetual motion, or even separate all questions which are totally unconnected with peace propaganda. Try again, Bishop.

A missionary explains that the young India Church is not being "Europeanized." "Our missionaries are not afraid to adapt old Indian customs if they promise to help in the extension and development of their work." We are willing to believe it. The Christian missionary, as befits a gentleman sent abroad for his country's good, is an excellent opportunist.

At St. Luke's, Norwood, the "Special Missioner," Rev. Dr. Oscar Hardman, makes the daring statement that "The Church of England did not regard the Bible as infallible." As to the alleged "Second Coming," he declared that this promise "was not to be taken in a literal sense." All it means is that "Our Lord came again and again in the course of our lives." He said nothing about "clouds of glory," and "judgment-day." Surely these don't come every day too?

A book has just been issued by Messrs. Wishart, under the title of *Jews without Jehovah*. There is nothing unusual or distressing in Jews existing without Jehovah; the serious situation arises when Jehovah finds himself without Jews.

Dr. H. I. Goudge, Regius Professor of Divinity in the university of Oxford, must have more faith than any grain of mustard-seed. To his prodigious faith, the belief of the average Christian seems inadequate. "Even faith in Jesus as the Christ" is not enough for him. "There are further stages of faith." But he absolutely despairs of propaganda. "The kingdom of God will come, not by universal conversion," he says, "but by the final overthrow of evil." A Christian Revolution apparently. Dr. Goudge must have been reading Hitler's *Meine Kampf*.

Dr. Goudge is not easily satisfied. He despises mere moral ethics, of course, but "no mere benevolent Creator," he says, "not even the Ten Commandments will suffice," and "certainly not the Sermon on the Mount." There is a bit of cynical humour in Dr. Goudge's remark that "only wholly sincere Christians could afford to be Pacifists; England could not." It looks as if the Rev. Doctor wanted the State to fight again, with the clergy "contracting out" as before. It reminds us of Spurgeon's Sabbath carriage-riding—justified because the coachman was a Jew, and the horses Arabs!

The old question of how many sermons a week can a congregation endure, is again raised in the *Methodist Recorder*. The answers range from Mr. Arthur Rank's queer optimism of "every evening from 6 to 10 p.m.," to Mr. Weatherhead's "One sermon a week." It is only fair to say that Mr. Rank wants to "harness the cinema" and make a "film attraction for the Kingdom of God." Unless a real film of God and the other bigwigs of the alleged "Kingdom" appear "in person," the audiences would prefer "You're Telling Me," or Miss Mae West's latest.

Wholesale or retail truth? Prof. J. A. Findlay says that the Sermon on the Mount is only "meant for the individual." It is "perverting the original purpose of Jesus to apply His words wholesale." This seems in accord with business principles. There is often a very big discount when wholesale transactions are done. But fancy the Professor knowing all about the "original" purpose!

Fifty Years Ago

In truth, many of the clergy are to be sincerely pitied. They have, by fond but foolish parents, been urged to a career in which their manhood is lost, and having had no experience of honest labour find other avenues closed to them. They have to make the best of a bad situation, and some do try to make the best of their office by leaving on one side the dogmas they are pledged to defend, and to earn their salaries by ministering charity and kindly advice to their flocks. Even with these, their professional caste keeps them aloof from outsiders to their creed. They have made up their minds as to the truth of Christianity before having studied the question, and the tendency of their theological studies has of course been to mould the mind in but one direction. They must know that Christianity is but one of many faiths that have occupied the minds of men, yet they are not called upon to study the truths which have given vitality to other religions. They are not like medical men, brought in contact with the facts of nature and of man. When the results of science and rational criticism come before them they come as a shock, and to accept them means to give up their means of livelihood. What are they likely to do but accept the immoral advice of the *Christian World* and, "by the exercise of tact lead their congregations to their own conclusions," sandwich in a thin layer of freethought among the fossil sawdust heretofore given out as the bread of life!

The "Freethinker," May 18, 1884.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL:

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

B. A. WILTER.—We are obliged for cuttings, always welcome.

S. GLADING (Auckland N.Z.).—A great deal of the matter to which you refer is just posing. The hunt for paradoxes has a curious effect on some minds.

J. MASON.—See our reply in "To Correspondents" column in our issue for May 6. You did well in ventilating the subject.

ATHOS ZENO.—We are already in touch with the body you mention.

F.G.W.—Thanks. Shall appear.

S. KAMON.—We like to do such things with a certain amount of leisure before us, but that seems harder to get than ever. However, may manage publication some time about the autumn.

N. WILSON.—Part of your letter is simply impertinence, and if made publicly, and worth while, slanderous. Your further assumption that the working-man is so distinctively unintelligent that one must write for him as if for a child of ten, is not uncommon with those who publicly proclaim themselves as his friends. There is as much intelligence, and as much stupidity in the "upper" class as in the working class. And we really are not aiming at converting numbers of men and women into unintelligent shouters of catchwords, the meaning of which they are ignorant. The Freethought movement has been built up by appealing to the intelligence of people, and so far as we are concerned the work will continue along that line.

J. B. ATKINSON.—Your letter is quite a good one, but standing alone would be out of place in the *Freethinker*, and without reasons for printing here a letter addressed to the parson concerned would lack "reality."

J. W. POYNTER.—You overlook the vital point that the good things, with which religion has been associated are not of the essence of religion. It is like the incantation that used to accompany many a perfectly good medicinal substance. The task of science has always been to cast off the unessential and retain the essential only. The persistence of religion has nothing whatever to do with the question of its value or of its truth.

B. C. CHINNERY.—Thanks for your high opinion of the *Freethinker*, and the efforts you are making to secure new readers. A new reader is the best kind of help that can be given.

J. H. SHAW.—Next week.

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

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

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to "The Pioneer Press," and crossed "Midland Bank, Ltd., Clerkenwell Branch."

Sugar Plums

To-day (May 20) the National Secular Society holds its Annual Conference at Bolton. The morning and afternoon sessions, at 10.30 and 2.30, will be held in the Swan Hotel, Bradshawgate. Admission to the business meetings will be by member's ticket. Anyone who is without this year's membership card should send in his name to the Secretary. In the evening, at seven o'clock, there will be a public demonstration in Spinner's Hall, St. George's Road. There will be a number of reserved seats at sixpence and one shilling each. A list of speakers will be found on our back page. The President will take the chair at all meetings.

A luncheon will be provided for delegates and members in the Swan Hotel, at one o'clock, at a charge of 3s. On Saturday evening, May 19, there will be a reception at the Swan Hotel at 7.30. The President, Secretary and others of the Society's officials will be present, and a good muster of friends is expected.

On Monday, Bank Holiday, there will be an excursion to Southport with lunch and tea at an inclusive charge of 8s. 6d. from Bolton, 9s. from Manchester. Train with reserved saloon compartments will leave Victoria Station, Manchester, at 8.50 a.m. The train calls at Bolton at 9.17. The return train will leave Southport at 7.0, but there are earlier trains for those who wish to leave before seven, and have to make connexions for a return home. Liverpool friends who are joining the party for Southport may travel direct to Southport and meet the rest of the party at Chapel Street Station at 10.8. Tickets will be available at the Conference meetings on Saturday and Sunday.

We have received a very lengthy letter from Mr. E. W. Flint, of Dunedin (N.Z.), complaining of the lack of support he has received from non-believers in his attempts to organize a movement against the restrictions on the freedom of the press in New Zealand. He complains that "the fights waged, involving loss of health, money and position, by Bradlaugh, Foote and other pioneers seems to have left our local Rationalists cold, and quite as indifferent as heretofore." We sympathize with Mr. Flint, but the phenomenon is not confined to New Zealand. In this country there are very many thousands, one might make the figure more definitely larger, who do little to deserve the freedom that has been won for them, and nothing at all to preserve it. Their main aim appears to avoid giving offence, as though anything was ever accomplished by that type! It is so cheap to express admiration for the man who gives himself to the Freethought fight against tremendous odds. It is neither cheap nor easy to take an active part in the conflict.

In substance the phenomenon is not new. It has always existed. In Bradlaugh's time the same class of luke-warm unbelievers was in existence, although as time passes we are apt to centre attention on the bolder type whose courage has at least earned them that degree of immortality. So we advise friend Flint not to worry. The man who fights for Freethought, must always be a comparatively lonely fighter—content to take things as they come, never flinching before odds, never disheartened because some who ought to do much do little, and never discouraged because the enemies of freedom appear to be regaining some of their lost ground. One cannot expect the coward to enjoy the pleasure of a fine clean fight, or the timid to appreciate the pleasure of an adventure.

Colonel Seton Hutchinson says that he has evidence to prove that King Albert of Belgium, did not die through falling from a rock, he was murdered. Belgian authorities are scandalized by the statement, and a high Belgian official says that if Colonel Hutchinson will repeat the statement before him he will give him a "good punch on the jaw." That seems quite conclusive, and proves the Colonel to be a liar. It is in strict accordance with the ethics of Fascism, of Hitler, Mussolini, of

the duel and of militarists everywhere. That is, of course, if the Colonel does not reply by cracking the Belgian official's skull. Then, of course, the Colonel has demonstrated that he is completely truthful.

It takes years, and years, and more years to kill a misstatement, and the story that Bradlaugh refused to take the oath, but afterwards gave way and offered to do so, is a yarn that is hard to kill. Of course, the subject of setting this story going was to hide the fact that Bradlaugh had beaten the bigots, and to set up the impression that he had been forced to give way. So we are pleased to see a lengthy and capital letter from our friend, Mr. H. R. Clifton, in the *Croydon Advertiser*, correcting the usual misstatement by Mr. H. G. Williams, M.P., on the question of Bradlaugh and the oath. We are quite aware that a Member of Parliament need not have either knowledge or understanding, but at least Members might try to make themselves acquainted with easily accessible facts concerning recent Parliamentary history.

Mr. J. T. Brighton reports a number of very promising open-air meetings on new ground in the Durham area. During the summer, Messrs. G. Whitehead, J. Clayton, and J. T. Brighton will be carrying on out-door propaganda, for which the Executive of the N.S.S. will be responsible. Many parts of Lancashire, Durham, and Northumberland, are receiving regular attention in the way of Freethought meetings, and the area can be extended if local saints will undertake to give a hand. Offers of such help can be sent to the General Secretary, 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

An article by Mr. James Douglas on "The Great God Blah," appears in a recent issue of the *Daily Express*. Mr. Douglas was, as is to be expected, full of his subject.

An Agnostic Psychologist's Position

(Concluded from page 300.)

It has been found that such claims of supernatural mystical experiences have been the common property of all religions. Here comes a difference of valuation and interpretation, as the essential difference between them. If the mystic does not interpret his mystical experience in the orthodox Christian theology and aid its priests thereby, then it was not a divine mystical experience at all, but is declared to be some crude imitation thereof. Sometimes this is alleged to have been invented by the devil in order to mislead those who lack faith and intelligence. Others accept the mystical experience of non-Christian mystics as being of equal validity with that of the Christian Saints. The difference in theological interpretation is explained by such persons as due to difference in education and tradition. Thus one may reject all orthodox theology and priesthoods, and still claim to be a Christian. For such persons, who are usually mystics themselves, the one essential evidence of God's existence is the mystical experience. Its theological interpretation concerns only God's characteristics, and is unimportant because we finite mortals cannot know which is the true description of Him, since we have no capacity for judging the infinite. Others say that we must therefore submit to some infallible church, and choose the correct one at our peril. This attitude often leads to the conclusion that some particular mystical theology is the ultimate goal of all religious evolution. Still others make one exception to this theory of the fallibility and the unimportance of the theological interpretations of mystical experience. They claim that some church—their own particular church and priesthood, of course, has been

given divine authority and power to decide which is the only true, infallible, unchangeable, and irreformable interpretation of the mystical experience. Again the common man must decide at his own risk, and according to an admitted incapacity for experiencing or understanding divinity.

Now we ask: What is the Agnostic's attitude toward these claims of the mystics who concede so much to Agnosticism, and yet claim to overthrow unanswerably the Agnostic's essential position? Like many Christians who claim only a natural foundation for their faith, the Agnostic rejects the testimony of the Saints and mystics. But he also rejects the Christianity of those who base their religious convictions on natural reasoning instead of supernatural experiences. The Agnostic insists that our limitations, our incapacity to know any infinite God, is always operative, and therefore cannot be overcome either by logic or by a mystical ecstatic trance. These human limitations have not really been transcended by the mystics, except in their delusions. Therefore most Agnostics feel it to be a waste of time even to think about God, or to argue about His existence, His alleged character, or the truth of His many alleged revelations. He is content to study and argue about His existence, His alleged character, or the truth of His many alleged revelations. He is content to study and argue only about that which is within his comprehension. If he is scientifically inclined, then his curiosity will be limited to discovering more about *how* nature behaves, and what are the more important or more obvious conditions which control that behaviour.

If, now, the Agnostic happens to be one who is in general attitude of Agnostic scientists to the religionist's claim of having experienced God; or having been merged in God, or in the Absolute called by any other name.

The mystics of all faiths agree that an inquiry into the validity, meaning and value of the mystical experience is beyond the understanding of the mere humans who have never experienced the "exalted and exalting" mystical thrill. Apparently the only basis for such a claim is the mystic's lack of psychologic self-understanding, and the assumption that no one can know more about his psychology than he does.

The Agnostic psychologists freely admit their inability to give *affirmative* proof of the falsity of mystical theism or of any other ultimate mystical metaphysics. While they will not attempt to prove the falsity of any mystical theology, the genetic psychologists claim a capacity superior to the mystics themselves, for making a critical analysis of the subconscious intellectual methods by which the mystics arrive at their theological explanation, and the supernatural valuation of the experience called "mystical." In fact, a number of such specialists in psychology find nothing very mysterious about this so-called mystical experience of God.

The Agnostic psychologists cannot admit that they are eternally incompetent to appraise or reinterpret the mystic's experience merely because the experience is not their own. The psychologist might answer that he is not disqualified from judging the validity of an alleged insane hallucination, merely because he (the psychologist) has not himself been insane. Indeed, he would approach the experiences of the mystic with exactly the same attitude of mind and apply exactly the same tests, as he would use in any other mental examination.

We know that in and long before the Middle Ages, nearly all unusual mental phenomena were claimed

to be of supernatural origin, and beyond the capacity of anyone to understand, except the priest and magicians. Their explanation was final within their particular group of followers. What is now regarded as insanity was then explained in terms of possession by the devil. Accordingly the only remedy for that behaviour which we now recognize as evidence of mental disease, was thought to be a priestly exorcism by which the devil was supposed to be expelled from the mentally sick one. Sometimes these priestly suggestions induced a change of symptoms, and that was thought a cure. Faith-healers and some doctors still make some mistakes.

Now we cure them, and the psychiatrist accomplished this without having been crazy, or possessed by the devil. It may be that the mental hygienist will yet make the mystical experience impossible, and impair the evidence of the mystics of the past. At least the Agnostic psychologist hopes and expects to find a natural cause and explanation, as well as a preventive, of mysticism, which is regarded as a symptom of emotional or nervous disorders.

The person of scientific temperament and those of religious temperament approach the problem of supernatural mysticism with very different urges. Those of thoroughly scientific temperament, by that fact alone, are free from any emotional need for supernatural affiliations. Consequently they busy themselves with only the search for a natural explanation for anything. A temporary incapacity for furnishing a natural explanation gives no force to a supernatural explanation. One of thoroughly religious temperament will act, even in his scientific research, as if it were necessary for him to find in nature some proof of the existence of the supernatural. Perhaps each will find in his scientific work whatever is necessary to his temperament. He seems to demand that the naturalist shall prove the absence of a supernatural, the non-existence of God. From him the Agnostic's admission of incapacity to do that serves as a confession of defeat. Perhaps, also, it is only the evolutionary psychologist who can make a reasonable claim for ability to classify the respective intellectual methods, religionist's and the Agnostic's, so as to determine whose claim of truth is the nearest to the unattainable absolute truth. Of course, most people cannot be classified as being clearly of either scientific or of religious temperament. They drift rudderless somewhere in the open sea between the harbour of delusion and that of uncertain knowledge.

THEODORE SCHROEDER.

The Land Monopoly in Brazil

This article, which I have Englished from the Esperanto, was in the *Sennacieca Revuo* for January. It explains itself. Only one comment shall I make. This article proves that in Brazil, as in Russia, Mexico, Spain, etc., the bitter feeling against the Christian Church is not so much because of creed or beliefs: it is chiefly on economic, social, or political grounds.

BRAZIL is one of the largest countries on this globe, much greater than U.S.A., because U.S.A. contains 7,800,000 sq. kilometres, and Brazil has 8,525,000 sq. kilometres. So, the excess of Brazil compared with U.S.A. represents territory much greater than France or Germany. Nevertheless, the population of Brazil is only a quarter that of U.S.A.

The Brazilian population is grouped close to the sea, from lack of rapid and cheap transport from the distant regions of the great land. During the first century after the discovery of Brazil, the only way to the centre was by the great rivers. The distant land zones are without value because of the great cost, or

even impossibility, of transport; therefore they have remained until now, either quite uninhabited or with a very scant population.

Our European friends will certainly be interested to know how the land Monopoly came about in this New World; therefore I give them a resumé of Brazilian history, on this subject.

Brazil was discovered by the Portuguese Admiral, Petro Alvares Cabral, on the 22nd April, 1500. The discoverer solemnly appropriated the new land for his King. So, Brazil became a Portuguese Colony; and it remained so till 7th September, 1822.

At the time of discovery, the land was inhabited by brown people, very similar to Indians; and, because of this similarity, they were named "Indios," and we still so call them.

These primitive inhabitants were brave warriors, but they did not have such efficient weapons as the Portuguese. So, they were—bit by bit—conquered by the Europeans and enslaved. As slaves, they were sold at a low price; because they were less inclined to labour than the black slaves from Africa. In the enslavement of the Brazilian Indians, great service was done by the Catholic priests—chiefly the Jesuits—who first Christianized the Indians, and only afterwards sold them. Because the Indian slaves only found buyers at a low price, that increased the import of African negroes, the Slave-traders in whom travelled through a great part of the land offering their "goods" to the land-owners. Three centuries after the discovery of the land, the enslavement of Indians was forbidden by law; but the importing of negroes continued even after the Independence of Brazil. Only on 13th May, 1888, was it prohibited by law, and all slaves were finally freed. The Freeing of the slaves is so new in my land, that many of my still-living friends were once slave-owners. The slave-freeing law is younger than the language, Esperanto, for the spread of which we work.

I often read in old journals, advertisements about run-away slaves, about auction-sales of slaves, etc. These advertisements, to-day, make me shake with anger; yet to my parents they were self-evident things, they explained themselves; because the previous generation had, in its mind, pre-conceptions as to the necessity of slavery, about the inability of the slaves to manage their own lives, etc. Perhaps my grandsons, after a few decades, will read with indignation our present-day advertisements of "situations wanted," telegrams about Unemployment, etc.

Your Christian civilization came to Brazil, then, murdering a large part of the people, and enslaving those left alive, to appropriate to themselves the land and to compel—under the whip-lash—the previously free people to labour till death to enrich those same men who had taken by force their women, daughters, and land. The Holy Roman Catholic Mother Church not only tacitly approved of everything done by its sons, but even took part actively in that criminal conduct.

The Portuguese King disposed of the discovered land to various eminent Captains of his Kingdom. Each of those parts, ruled by a Captain, received the name of "Captain-land" (*capitania*) and were, in turn, subdivided and distributed to faithful subjects, on condition—of course—that the products of the land paid the imposed taxes to the Portuguese King (to the Crown) and to the Church.

Of course, only a small part of the Captain-lands was cultivated. Till now, the greater part of Brazilian territory remains without private owners, and those regions are called "uninhabited lands" (*terras devolutas*). The right to appropriate to one's self these lands belongs—according to legal theory—to anyone; but in practice, it depends upon capital be-

cause there are very costly legal formalities, such as the official surveying of the land, the possession taxes, etc. So, these 'uninhabited lands' are little developed; because they are far from railways, harbours, or other means of transport for the export of timber and agricultural products. They can be appropriated only by Capitalist Concerns sufficiently wealthy to construct for themselves great roads. Thus, there is not any danger that these lands will fall into the hands of the common people.

Here is, then—European Friends—in a rapid study, the service which the exploiters have done to this land since 433 years ago. It still continues, by the ceaseless arrival of Dutch, Italian, French and German priests, who penetrate to the interior of the land and return rich—the Holy Men! Their glorious Orders own—in humble quietude—almost every house in the central part of our Capital City, and piously receive gigantic rents **" ad majorem Dei gloriam."*

Ismael Games Braga.

* * *

This interesting article illustrates the fact that Dr. Dollfuss, the Christian Church, and the Austrian Christian Social Party, have done—and are doing—nothing new in Austria—"The Holy Men!" Whenever and wherever Christianity has had—or has—the chance, its deeds are much the same. It is a horrible Creed—with a horrible record.

The article also proves the great utility of The International Language—Esperanto—to the Common People of the World. Most of them have had little education; and have—perhaps—less aptitude for the acquisition of foreign languages. In Esperanto we have a simple, easy, powerful, AND established means of universal world communication by tongue and pen.

It is the language of the Citizens of the World, amongst whom Freethinkers—with a Rational Atheist Philosophy—ought to be "easily first."

La Vereco devigas. La Verité oblige.

ATHOSO ZENOO.

(From "*La Termonopolo en Brazilio.*")

* A motto of the Jesuits, significantly translated, "To the greater glory of God."

Half a Century Ago

It was not until I was "too old at forty," that I thought of relating in *Johnny Jones Guttersnipe*, my memories of early childhood. Looking back, I am now convinced that I left out many "test" reminiscences. In spite of newspaper reviews commending the balance and right placing of accents in that unpretentious little romance I feel that I was not revealing enough. Children are always both anxious and afraid. Such attitudes of mind submerge, inside the inhabited area of the consciousness, all the more dreadful impressions of infancy. To have the memory jogged in maturity (by the unexpected sight of something familiar to these childhood years; by the sudden perfume of an unmemoried flower; by the hearing of a forgotten song; or by the abrupt utterance of a long unfamiliar phrase) is like a stab to the heart. One literally gasps with amazement.

The avoiding of the cracks in a flagged pavement by little lonely feet; the touching of garden—or park—rails by tremulous little hands in passing; the closing of baby eyes to shut in the vision of a field of dancing yellow daffodils; the moistening of little lips to hold back a threatened sob at the ecstasy of a nightingale heard through the silence of a night in June . . . all these are our common childhood memories, we sons of Adam, and we daughters of Eve!

There are other memories that either amusedly startle, or ogreishly appal. The first time we saw a woman pin on her hat and gasped in the conviction that the long

thin piece of steel must have passed right through her head; the first occasion that we heard a revoltingly shameful word, a word that in all the intervening decades we have never once either written or spoken, because it still stands as the limit in verbal tabu; the sight of a bloody nose; the smell of putrescence, or the touch of moleskin or corduroy—these latter things reveal to childhood-minds a brutality and depravity that seems to slay innocence at a breath.

In Jubilee year (1887) I was only six years old: yet how full of colourful pictures is that summer! The crowds, the abandonment to gaiety, the ceaseless blaring of brass bands, the street dancing . . . how could I fail to marvel, even while I had so little appreciation of the significance of all that I saw and heard!

It must have been during 1887 or the preceding year, that my baby brother Robert died. I couldn't recall his name without much probing; yet I have a fearful memory of waking in the night, sobbing out my heart at the vision of his tiny coffin in a corner of our cramped communal bedroom.

Only once do I remember my indefatigable little mother being ill. She did not give in until on the verge of complete collapse from exhaustion, remaining in the steamy cellar into the small hours of each night, scrubbing, pegging, wringing, mangling, starching; or in the meagrely-heated kitchen, with festoons of drying garments suspended from the ceiling, ironing and folding the interminable "family wash" of her dozen or more patrons.

During that illness (and how she fought for a rapid recovery, in fear of even more penurious days), Maggie and I were sent to Openshaw, where Auntie Minnie—herself only poor, and the mother of two children—was to give us free bread and board.

The impression of those days away from school is vivid in my memory. My uncle rented a larger cottage than our own "one up and one down" tenement, and I enjoyed the new sensation of having a bed to myself. The street was very quiet. It was summer weather, with big white clouds of cumuli in a deep blue sky, and the green, green fields not far away. Toddler as I was, I used to roam away, to lie among the buttercups, and to wonder vaguely how the cattle liked the notion of lying on their food—telling myself with precocious whimsey that little boys like myself would object to sleeping on a slice of bread and butter as big as a blanket, and nibbling off a corner whenever hungry. Those fields seemed vast as a wilderness to me. A small and shallow brook babbled its way through grassy banks, whereon I loved to lie and dream. I do not seem to recall that either Maggie or my two girl cousins ever came with me—simply I see a little pale-faced guttersnipe, taking strange joy from unfamiliar spaces and unexpected leisure.

At night, Aunt Minnie and Uncle Steve would sit on either side the fire with us children playing on the drugget between them; myself generally busy and intent upon a picture-book, while the others played *Naughts and Crosses* with slate and pencil. There was one glorious occasion when my gipsy-dark Aunt let down her mane of hair, singing to herself the while she combed out its thick coils. I cuddled into her lap, happily watching the glowing embers from behind that magical and sweet-smelling screen. To be petted and "mothered" was so new an experience that my baby-heart swelled with love and gratitude to my mother's younger sister. And how cheery it was of a morning to be wakened by a kiss and a big warm hug. That illness of my mother's appears to-day as fateful an event in my spiritual development as any in my experience. It marked the awakening of an innocent sex-knowledge that can hold no equal in a more crowded maturity; for I found myself adoring Aunt Minnie because of all that is sweetest and best in blooming womanhood: *aptus amandem et arbiter igne interdictus.*

Not until I was nearly out of the school-room did I re-achieve that exquisite touch with Nature, and become aware of elfin-like contact with verdure, cloud, and stream. At adolescence spring and summer called me imperiously to the country: to fields of sunlit grass, long aisles of trees—sturdy oaks, graceful beeches,

mighty elms. There I discovered those "long shadows on the grass" (flowers, grasses, weeds, all tented and patterned into a faery delicacy!), between which "the little truant waves of sunlight" would pass; and then at sunset I would note "the twilight glooms apart," where the same "tall trees would whisper, whisper heart to heart!" How long seemed the days and how swoon-like! How enviously care-free! While writing *Johnny Jones, Guttersnipe* I tried to convey to my readers these new and strange vistas of thought, sometimes calm and tranquil, sometimes wild and passionate, sometimes full of an intangible menace, revealed to a sensitive child when "the sap first begins to rise." In the summer woods the scent of the earth became heady as alcohol. If sex prematurely asserted itself *au rebours* who can blame that lonely boy? A precocious slum-waif of thirteen does not realize that the throbbing filaments linking spine and skull, prematurely awakened, prematurely utilized, may ultimately revolt, and that the soothing sweetness will turn at last to gall and worm-wood!

Oh, those jading, depressing, asphalted streets of murky Manchester! While the craving for beauty was becoming a daily torture, yet aching feet in clumsy clogs, and a far more aching heart remained bitterly conscious of the actuality of life. To stand, stripped to the waist, beneath a dripping downspout in our slum made a poor substitute for bending, mother-naked, under a tiny rock-broken cascade in some secret little corner of Birch Fields. . . .

Time and time again, between the ages of twenty and fifty-and-a-bittock, I have revisited those glimpses of the moon; and Johnny's pale, pinched face, lit by gaunt black eyes, and his mop of rebellious red-brown hair added to his eager jerky voice, have returned to me as tangibly as if I had torn him from the tomb—that Johnny who was me!

Egotism? Yes, and of the most revolting kind! But I can affirm in mitigation that if ever I see a fellow-human in rags, I am actually aware of my own warmer garments. In all agitations to help the unemployed and the underpaid, I have (unobtrusively) played my part. Rebel I was born! Rebel I will die! That deep-seated and illogical yearning for Utopia is always there in my heart—but I trust it has become a little more practicable each year, by reason of contact with my better-brained fellows, and my own expanding consciousness. To serve the community is not incompatible with a steady leaning toward individualism: since, undeniably the world's shifting patterns tend ever toward a more universal division of Life's Good Things.

Ere I pass to other subjects, a word or two about my religious convictions. A God, self-create, disappeared from my childhood horizon when I heard (in one of his Ancoats lectures) Joseph McCabe demand, "And who made God; and who the God who made that God; and who the God . . . ?"

Tremendous day! I was fourteen or fifteen; and I saw, as it were, the downfall of an infamous Jireh-cum-Moloch-cum-Argus-cum-Satan-cum-Briareus: his hundred eyes and hundred arms, his ogre-like lust for blood, and his calculated cruelty, at last annihilated by Reason. Suddenly I realized that I had not *feared* this God, "whose ghost in arch and aisle still haunts his temple and his tomb; but follows in a little while, Odin and Zeus to equal doom—a God of kindred seed and line, *Man's Giant Shadow* hailed Divine!" so much as I had hated and *despised* him. At last I knew a nobler God—man's own questing, questioning, implacably bold and high endeavour—"the desire of the moon for the star"—the omnipresent "Thought" to which the whole universe is thrusting:—

The God I know of I shall ne'er
Know though he dwells exceeding nigh—
"Raise thou the stone, and find me there,
Cleave thou the wood, and there am I!"
—Yea, in my flesh, His Spirit doth flow,
Too near, too far, for me to know!

That night I prayed as the Oriental might pray—for the sake of identifying myself with the universe. Death had lost all its terrors. I cared for neither Heaven nor

Hell. Three times I whispered, "Jehovah-Jireh, I renounce you! I renounce you! I renounce you!"

In my bed (Maggie by this time was dead, so I was alone) I felt a sudden anguish.

(Dear little long-haired, long-legged Maggie! One of my last memories of her dates to the autumn she took finally to bed with galloping consumption. In spite of the ravages of that dire disease she retained her loveliness to the last. The perfection of youthful hairdressing in 'ninety-three or 'ninety-four was for the forehead to be bared, and each recalcitrant curl to be caught backward beneath a curved celluloid comb, generally encrusted with imitation gems.

Maggie obstinately refused submission to this disfigurement; and her tawny cascade of hair remained loose, with many little golden tendrils softening brow and temples. For the last school concert she was ever to attend, Mother had patiently fashioned a white lace dress, with a pale blue silken sash. On each shoulder clung an appropriate little bow. About her hair was tied a narrow fillet of the same pale blue colour. My lovely sister, with her worn, white face, a single spot of red on each sunken cheek, beneath the over-bright eyes, attesting her approaching dissolution. Piteable! She liked always to wear shoes with high heels, and that year I had myself bought a pot of gilt paint, and she went forth golden-shod. A neighbour who peddled flowers had brought her a branch of lilies. Doomed fourteen-year-old Maggie, little Dolorosa of a Manchester mean street, as she passed so gaily with me into the night. For Fate had ordained that she would never: after coming home: cross that threshold again, save in her coffin.

I have always been affected by smells—the penetrating scent of lilies, the sensuous sweetness of moss in rose-clad lanes, the bitter sweet tang of a wind from the sea. But the deathly suggestion of arum lilies since that night makes me physically ill).

A revenir a nos moutons—alone in bed, after repudiating Jehovah-Jireh. If the thunderbolt were indeed to fall! Suppose I should suddenly be torn like a flower from its sheath, and carried before the renounced White Throne—thence to be condemned to a rejected Hell! My skin was damp with unimaginable dismay! Yet nothing happened—exactly nothing!

Relief came then to me in a flood of scalding tears. I was free, free, free! From that moment's horror, followed by a rain-like cleansing of mind and soul, I evolved one of my finest sonnets:—

FAITH

With languid limbs relaxed I lie at ease,
Awaiting sleep, but brooding all the while
On tasks undone, which at the morrow's smile
I fain must combat. Do whate'er I please
To court repose, these haunting fancies tease
And tease again, nor can my will beguile
Forgetfulness, and Mem'ry reconcile—
Would God that I stern Duty might appease.

That gift ungracious! That light jest foregone!
That song unuttered! That lukewarm regret!
But sudden to my brain a Light is shown,
As slumber onward creeps with opiate ban:
Dream of Man's shame; but never once forget
Though God be great, how greater still is Man!

The noblest dream of man is a just and generous God! Yet—let me be honest—when I stepped into the workaday world on the following morning, the complete boy-sceptic, I walked under no ladders lest paint-pots fall; and I avoided the sunbaked clay of the waste-land beyond Ardwick Green, lest one of those innumerable cracks should suddenly yawn—and engulf me in the Hell in which I had so dispassionately refused to believe.

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

Onitsha, Nigeria.

SOMETHING TO BE SAID ON BOTH SIDES.

There is something to be said on both sides of a dispute; and especially on the wrong side; for the most words are always needed where there is less substance.

Correspondence

WAR AND POLICE

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—You will note that in defence of his analogy Sir Edward Grigg now substitutes the term "aggressive war" for his original term "war." My argument was based upon the term he originally used, not upon the one he now introduces.

Secondly, Sir Edward declares that I condemn as a false analogy an argument which largely follows my own. Naturally I do nothing of the sort. The three points in his letter lead straight to *my own* conclusion, not to *his*. For he concludes by arguing in favour of an "organized force to support international law." What could such a force be other than an *international force* as opposed to *separate national forces*?

Thirdly, Sir Edward would like national armies, navies, etc., to be used only for the purpose of defending international law. So would I. But what we would like to happen is not what actually does happen. That one small army, situated in the midst of larger ones, has not been used to start an aggressive war, does not alter my argument that whereas police are organized to *prevent* crime, armies, navies, etc., are organized to *make* war. If this were not so, then presumably Sir Edward will maintain that, just as the abolition of police would render it easier to commit crime, so would the abolition of armies, navies, etc., render it easier to make war!

C. S. FRASER.

CAN RELIGION CAUSE INSANITY?

SIR,—I would remind Mr. Orton that he accused me of having ascribed to him *statements which he did not make*. He did not accuse me of *omitting words or statements which he did make*. Failing to substantiate his first accusation, he now falls back on a different one. He maintains that my omissions constitute a misrepresentation of his own views. I repudiate this accusation as strongly as the other.

(1) Mr. Orton declared that I *seemed* not to have noticed something. How can I misrepresent *his* view if I base *my* argument on what he *seems* to think? (2) Mr. Orton said that something *tends* to cure. How am I misrepresenting his view if I assume that the tendency is to *cure* and not merely to *ameliorate*? By *cure* I have always understood *complete recovery*. (3) I agree that 2 and $2=4$. But if the first 2 is hypothetical, am I required to mention the second 2 in order to show that the whole sum is hypothetical?

C. S. FRASER.

RELIGION IN SOUTH AFRICA

SIR,—I enclose a review of a "Survey of Religion in South Africa," by the National Sunday School Association, in the Johannesburg *Star* of April 4. Coming from where they do, it will be admitted that "the facts" are not marshalled so as to present Christianity in an unfavourable light. The nations are bewildered by the multiplicity and discordance of rival showmen at the booths of Truth and Salvation, and in the words of the Survey, "such multiplicity of organizations frequently means overlapping and undesirable competition, which can be detrimental to the common cause." Further, "it is not without significance that with all these religious organizations such a large percentage of the population professes to have 'no religion.'" I think most impartial observers, resident in South Africa, would change the "large percentage" of the pious Association to "overwhelming percentage." There is a significant absence of reference to the numbers of native converts, and it must be remembered that the estimated Bantu population for 1929 was 5,357,843. The European population for the same year was estimated at 1,767,719. Our Association gives the numbers of adherents of the larger Christian Churches at present as follows: Dutch Churches (all sects), 921,961; Anglican, 311,281; Methodist, 105,217; Presbyterian, 79,516. It will be observed that the toughest nut for Freethought to crack is the religious section of the Afrikaner people, and any move-

ment to be effective will have to embrace propaganda in the Afrikaner tongue by Afrikaners. Fortunately for the future and for enlightenment there are many such if only they will organize.

The survey gives close on 5,000 Europeans as having "no religion," "while the religion of another 5,000 is not known, and that of a further 2,000 is indefinite."

As hinted above, allowance must be made for a certain degree of bias in the collection of these figures, but even if they are accepted as literally accurate the majority of unbelievers in Christianity is surely strong enough to entitle them to a voice in the affairs of the country.

"M."

Obituary.

GEORGE HOLLAMBY.

THE remains of George Hollamby were interred in the picturesque cemetery at Nunhead, on Saturday, May 12. Death followed an operation for hernia, and took place in St. Olave's Hospital, Rotherhithe, on May 8. He had been a sufferer for a long period, and bedridden for about five years. Although in his eighty-fourth year, he took a keen interest in Freethought and the N.S.S. Mr. A. B. Moss, himself a veteran in the Freethought movement, was a constant visitor to the hospital and kept him well informed on Freethought affairs. A number of relatives and friends, including Mr. A. B. Moss, were at the graveside, when in accordance with his wish, a Secular Address was delivered by Mr. R. H. Rosetti.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, May 20, Mr. C. Tuson. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Sunday, May 20, Mr. C. Tuson. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, May 21, Mr. C. Tuson.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH (Brockwell Park): 7.0, Sunday, May 20, Mr. L. Ebury. Rushcroft Road, near Brixton Town Hall, 8.0, Tuesday, May 22, Mr. C. Tuson. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Wednesday, May 23, Mr. G. F. Green. Aliwall Road, Clapham Junction, 8.0, Friday, May 25, Mr. C. Tuson.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Sunday, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. 3.30, Platform No. 1, Messrs. Collins and Wood. Platform No. 2, Messrs. Le Maine and Tuson. 6.30, Messrs. Hyatt, Bryant and others. Monday, 3.30 and 6.30. Various Speakers. Wednesday, 7.0, Messrs. Collins and W. P. Campbell Everden. Thursday, 7.30, Messrs. Wood and Saphin.

WOOLWICH (Beresford Square): 8.0, Sunday, May 20, Messrs. F. W. Smith and S. Burke. "The Ship," Plumstead Common: 8.0, Tuesday, May 22, Messrs. F. W. Smith and S. Burke. "The Ship," Plumstead Common: 8.0, Thursday, May 24, Messrs. F. W. Smith and S. Burke.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

ASHINGTON (Grand Corner): 7.0, Friday, May 25, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. (Blackburn Market): 7.0, Messrs. Maughan and Fagan (Bolton)—"Youth's Revolt Against the Church."

BLACKBURN MARKET: 7.30, Thursday, May 24, Mr. J. Clayton.

BLYTHE (Market Place): 7.0, Tuesday, May 22, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

COLNE (Spring Lane): 7.30, Tuesday, May 22, Mr. J. Clayton.

CROOK (Market Place): 7.0, Wednesday, May 23, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Dunn Square, Paisley): 7.30, Saturday, May 19, Jack Quinn—"Religion in Politics." Muriel Whitefield—"A Plea for Tolerance." Brunswick Street, 7.30, Sunday, May 20, Muriel Whitefield—"Race Culture." John More—A Lecture. Albion Street, 7.30, Wednesday, May 23, Robert Buntin—"Primitive Belief." Muriel Whitefield—"Modern Attitudes to Primitive Belief." Literature on sale at all meetings.

SUNDERLAND (Gill Bridge Avenue): 7.0, Mr. Robson (Darlington)—A Lecture.

TRAWDEN: 7.45, Friday, May 18, Mr. J. Clayton.

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