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VIEWS AND OPINIONS

War and the Future

THE war against German, Italian and Japanese Fascism draws to a close. Merely as words that is a commonplace, since everything from the drone of the preacher to the elaborate commonplaces of the professional politician have their terminal point. To the philosopher, all beginnings and endings are conveniences of man's making. Nature is one everlasting process which we divide into beginnings and endings to clarify our understanding or to suit our purposes. The important question, the answer to which may well determine the character of the civilised world for generations to come, is what kind of a beginning can human ingenuity stage which will mark the initiation of a human society, not merely as an end to *private* war, but the beginning of an era of genuine civilisation? That civilisations are not indestructible is quite clear. History proves that fact over and over again. The great empires of the past—Egyptian, Persian, Roman—have come and gone, leaving traces of their existence, true, but still as entities they are no more. It is curious—more, it is instructive—for those who can see more in the thunder of cannon than an exaggerated squib that, save in the way of a few survivals, it is little Greece, whose greatness was not built up on war, which speaks to us with the greatest cultural force. The philosopher will always outlive the soldier.

What will be the attitude of the Allies—more, what will be the attitude of the *people*—when this war comes to an end? Churchill has told the world, as representing the British Empire, that what we have we shall hold. No one of consequence in this country has dared to challenge that warning to the world. It does, in fact, fairly represent the attitude of the larger figures in the Allied countries, and who will find in Churchill's utterances a lead they will readily follow. Russia has made it plain that she will hold what she has, and may acquire more. The U.S.A. will also live up to the rule of holding what it has; and the smaller nations—small in numbers, for it is in numbers rather than in terms of quality by which nations have measured greatness—will return to the as-you-were position. And it may be taken for granted that each of these "small" nations will have its modicum of armed forces. China, the largest of all in point of numbers, and in character and philosophy not behind the "greatest" of nations, will not—other things equal—disband the army which has fought so heroically against Fascist Japan.

So far it looks as though, and certainly where militarism is concerned, the rule will be "as you were." We *must* have peace for a time—exhaustion will guarantee that—but there will always be the possibility, even the probability, of war. It may indeed be counted as inevitable, for the status of national armies and navies depend upon its likelihood. Treaties of peace between armed nations have never

prevented war in the past, and they will never prevent them in the future. The carrying of firearms, save under special licence, was forbidden to civilians because they were a recognised temptation to shooting by way of settling differences. That principle holds with equal strength of the relations of nations. And—a very important consideration—the nation that maintains large armed forces tends to develop among its people, not a sense of the futility or even the criminality of war, but a pride of strength and courage and ability that might well be expended in other directions. For it should never be forgotten that the statement that war breeds courage and a sense of self-sacrifice, is one of the greatest and most dangerous lies ever coined. Courage, self-sacrifice, love of country, etc., are bred in times of peace, and are squandered in times of war.

What of the Churches? Well, no one who is familiar with the history of the Christian Churches will expect much help from that quarter. Broadly speaking, the function of the Christian Churches has been to find excuses and apologies for war. In ancient Rome, when war came the temples of peace were closed. The Christian Churches keep their doors more invitingly open and its ministers are at one with their condemnations of the enemy and are insistent in their prayers for victory. Of course, in this country our Christians will plead that we have never wanted war. Agreed. We have refrained from going to war whenever we could achieve our ends without it. Certainly we have not delighted in wars, recognising that, except in such cases as the Boer and similar wars, war is a costly and disturbing business. It will be noted that our historians have called the period of the longest lived monarch we have had "Victoria's reign of peace." It is true that there was never a period of ten years when we were not having a war somewhere. But these were "small" wars, and need not be counted—save by our enemies. But small or large, the Churches are always to be found on the side of war, with exceptions so few that their numbers cannot disprove the generalisation.

What Might Be

Russia with a population of about two hundred millions, the U.S.A. with a population of one hundred and fifty millions, China with a population of over four hundred millions, Britain with its vast number of people scattered all over the world—what a combination! And with Germany out of the running, and the smaller peoples of Europe asking for little but to be left alone, and anyway with no great probability of serving as a tool to the "big bosses" mentioned, what an opportunity to create a world peace? But how is that world-peace to be accomplished? Treaties are useless for a long-term peace. So is an increasing of national armaments. Germany was forbidden after the last war to maintain an army

capable of a major war. And it never could have formed one but for the small amount of trust in each other the conquering nations had. When Germany referred to our treaty with Belgium as a scrap of paper, it was doing little more than making an historical generalisation. Nations favour each other only as the self-interest in this or that nation varies. We want some guarantee of peace that shall get higher than what is called national honour, and at the same time provide that national self-interest shall be met with a reasonable degree of satisfaction. How is that to be accomplished?

I think it can come only by one reform, and, so far as I can suggest anything that is both simple and reasonably operative, a reform that will gratify any people other than a potentially Robber-State. There is already in operation a plan of international law, but that is largely ignored in practice. There is therefore nothing startlingly new as to the step that should be taken. It has been suggested by more than one publicist, and I take some pleasure in reflecting that more than fifty years ago it was advocated by me in some of my earliest writings. The great objection to it is that it might disturb many vested interests, some directly, others indirectly. There would be fewer fighting men killed, but their influence would be more decisive and more educational. There would be no looking to the armed forces for a "career," and no greater glamour than that which gathers round a policeman. It would be a plain job, simply and effectively performed.

When this war comes to an end Germany will be once more forbidden to possess an army or a navy. That rule was broken because it suited those who had charge of our national honour to assume they could use Germany as a threat against others. It was quite good for Germany not to have armed forces and, given other conditions, Germany might have acted up to its pledge and have used the penalty greatly to its advantage. It chose other lines to its own ultimate disaster. Peace would have saved Germany. Militarism killed it, or will shortly do so.

When this war comes to an end we shall have yet another opportunity, not to get ready for another war, but to put an end to international wars once and for ever. I am not arguing that if you let the wrong-doer alone he will straightaway become a right-doer. He will not. I am suggesting that we can, if we will, put an end to these periodic wars that are fought to satisfy that very elastic thing "national honour." The nations of the world are becoming close neighbours to each other, nationalism is becoming yearly more flimsy. We have wars, and when the wars are over we are compelled to get together if only in the capacities of judge and offender. We have also learned from this war the utter impossibility of any war being fought between two nations. However a war begins, we all know how it will end. We can none of us make any profit out of it, and in the end we have to help the vanquished, and even open the way for their leading a better life. In other words, war seems to be developing to the point when inventions of all kinds are bringing us to what is largely a common life, even though that common life may have outward forms.

The sum of this is that we are becoming internationalists in spite of ourselves. We live apart and we live together, and it is sometimes difficult to say which is which. Why not, then, decide that the time has come when *private* wars

should be abolished. And as some sort of a police force must be maintained (we cannot dispense with it in "national" life), why not make that force international in form and responsibility? But this police force must be actually international. It must be neither Russian, French, British, nor U.S.A. It must be a real international force, governed by an international court, and decided by an international body of judges. And the decision of these judges must be final, with enough physical power behind the court to enforce its decision. If this can be done, there is some hope for the world. If it cannot be done, the sooner the sham of our being civilised ends the better. To-day we are beginning to lack the courage of being openly and honestly destructive. We run the danger of being neither a courageous savage nor a daring, far-seeing civilised human being. We may hold what we have; we may also have what we deserve.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

THAT HUSSY FROM OXFORD!

THANK God this is a Christian country.

It isn't, you say? Well, perhaps you are right. But at any rate thank God that, even if the masses of the people are not practising Christians, we have a State Church whose officials are. Thank God also, that those who govern us by making laws, and those who keep us in order by administering laws, and some of those who guide our consciences by leading articles in the Press, are influenced by Christian traditions and ideas, though they may not actually be members of the Church.

I repeat, let us thank God for all this. For we have recently had a very narrow escape from one of those social calamities that can only be ascribed to the growth of that terrible scourge, Modern Materialism; and we were saved only by the merciful and divine grace of the spirit of Christianity that still throbs in our legislature and our law courts, and in the brains of newspaper leader writers.

One of the horrid creatures known as "the modern wife," a woman from Oxford, a short time ago actually had the impudence to save up money for herself from lodgers' fees and her housekeeping allowance, putting the money into a Co-operative Society for safety, possibly against a rainy day which she might have foreseen—husbands being what they sometimes are, if you see what I mean.

You don't? Then let me explain. Sometimes husbands and wives don't quite hit it with each other; sometimes husbands leave their wives, sometimes wives leave their husbands. I am not suggesting, of course, that there was any reason why this particular wife should think *her* husband might leave. I don't know. But it seems that she saved up what she could in case, one day, she might have to face the world without a husband to provide for her.

Nothing wrong in that, I hear you say. But isn't there? Can't you see that this sort of thing must not be tolerated in a Christian country? Heavens! it strikes at the very root of Christian marriage to allow a woman to be independent of her husband. Wifely independence is absolutely contrary to the best Christian teaching, which for 2,000 years has insisted upon the chattel relationship of woman to her husband.

But we can, at this point, dismiss this impudent modern hussy from Oxford. She was probably only one of those stupid feminists who believe that a woman is the biological and intellectual equal of man, and she deserved all she got—or all she didn't get, according to how you look at the matter.

Let us turn to the grander aspect of this sordid case, in which a mere female attempted to upset the whole Christian scheme of

things by her grasping materialism. For it is in this grander aspect that we witness the eloquence, the majesty, the supreme morality, and the justice, of Christianity at work, with "The System" behind it.

The outraged husband, discovering the miserly, mean and ignoble conduct of his contemptible wife, righteously dragged her to the County Court, where Christian morality was invoked, and the Christian marriage system was vindicated, with all the power of the Civil Law, by the making of an order to the effect that the money saved by the skinflint wife belonged, in fact and in principle, to the aggrieved husband. God bless our County Courts!

But did this teach the little shrew the lesson she deserved? Not a bit. Some of those other scheming vixens in the feminist movement saw in her a piece of experimental material with which they would try an even bigger challenge to Christianity and its marriage system, and she was wickedly persuaded to appeal against the County Court decision.

But Christianity stands fast in Britain. Nearly 2,000 years of Christian precept and precedent is not to be smashed lightly by a few skirted Susies who fancy themselves as reformers. As though the Christian marriage system needed reforming, anyhow! The impertinence of it all. Blast it, they even had the cheek to use women to fight the case.

But thank God the Lords Justices of Appeal were men—for despite the fact that women are, in the main, more religious than men in practice, there is little doubt that the true strength of Christianity lies in our gallant menfolk. That's natural, of course, as they have always had most of the Christian swag.

For two hours an arrogant gang of feminists tore at the fabric and structure of the Christian marriage system, as applied to monetary questions—but Christian justice triumphed in the end. Two thousand years of noble tradition and custom were honourably vindicated when, through that awesome court, the profound and historic words rang out:—

" . . . you haven't a leg to stand on."

Women never had, of course, and the brazen lady who remarked, "We should have come to court in crinolines," ought to have been committed for contempt.

But a husband's rights have been upheld—by three married men. So let us again thank God; this time because we have no women Judges.

The Court wisely insisted that it would be a dangerous principle to allow the claim of the appellant, because a wife might, in order to save money for herself, leave her husband and family short of food. Quite so; but not one of the Judges suggested, as a matter of equity, that a wife should have an allowance from her husband, as a legal and personal right on her part, in case the husband left her short in his efforts to save up. Perhaps that is explained by Christianity, too; perhaps the moral inspiration of a Christian marriage is sufficient to make the husband provident and painstaking towards his wife, but not the wife towards the husband. That wouldn't be an insult to women, by any chance, would it?

Nobody seemed to notice that the ruling of the Court (which seems to be quite in accordance with law in this Christian country) encourages wifely extravagance and wastefulness. It was also implied that a woman is not capable of being trusted to carry out a contract, such as a husband might make in his business. If the husband undertook to perform certain work for a certain figure, and he did the job satisfactorily with a surplus left over after making a reasonable profit, he would not be expected to hand over the surplus to the client.

But a wife is expected to do so. Naturally. Being a lower creature than man, she could not be trusted to fulfil her duty satisfactorily with the temptation of a bit of "buckshee" dangling in front of her eyes. Why, any woman would neglect

her husband and kids for five bob a week "nobblings." So we all agree that husbands must be protected from this sort of thing.

It is all due to woman's inferiority, of course. No, please do not deny that she is inferior. She must be; for every Christian authority from St. Paul onward has iterated and reiterated the fact.

So, thank God for Christianity!

F. J. CORINA.

DEATH

WHEN—to speak poetically—death comes knocking at your door and robs you of the companionship of one whom you hold dear—your mother, for example—you are bound to feel it keenly, especially if you are yourself of a very loving disposition.

Some there are—the self-centred and selfish—who can look upon the lifeless form of the one who gave them birth and remain, at least to all outward appearances, quite unmoved; but if you are of the emotional type, as most human beings are, and tears well up in your eyes, there is nothing to be ashamed of. Often enough they are a safety valve. Even some of the lower animals—for instance, anthropoid apes—are at times overcome in precisely the same way at the loss by death of one of their family.

The period just before death takes place provides a good insight into the character of both the sick person and those in attendance on her—assuming for the moment it is "mother" who is ill, and that father and the family are there or thereabouts. Father, mother and every member of the family will, in the great majority of such cases, differ enormously in mental make-up and the time is a very trying one for the one—if there is one—who is in any way outstanding either in devotion to the sick, or outlook, or both. If one of the daughters is thus emancipated it is a million chances to one that the burden of nursing will fall largely, if not entirely, on her—the others being content to sit idly by and let her wear herself out, or nearly so, or, after pulling a long face and providing little more than lip-service, go away and leave her to it. . . . That is the price—or part of the price—she has to pay for being different from them—"different," in the minds of the others, meaning a great deal more than the dictionary interpretation of the word.

When the end draws very near the enlightened and devoted daughter will probably be told that "the Reverend So-and-So has been asked to come in and pray for mother," and she will be expected to kneel down with the others at the bedside and be a party to the hypocrisy—hypocrisy because none of them, least of all the one who requested the Reverend So-and-So to do this, ever attended a place of worship since the day he was married, and whose whole conduct, day in and day out, gave the lie to his profession of a faith in God or a hereafter. In his opinion—or rather in his ignorance—this was the thing to do, because it looked well in the eyes of their neighbours, and he did it regardless of the feelings of the devoted nurse.

But when the last breath is drawn it is not the orthodox believers—for such they believe themselves to be—who feel the loss most keenly, but it is she who has now to reflect upon the fact that, notwithstanding her ceaseless vigil and constant care and attention, her mother is no longer here to be her loving companion and confidant. The others may weep and wail, after the manner of their kind, but she, poor soul, suffers far more than they and she must inevitably suffer alone. It is inevitable because she is so different from them, has trodden a different path of life and acquired such knowledge as enables her to look upon the phenomena of birth, life and death through different eyes from theirs; and although her sufferings are far more acute than theirs she is also happy in the knowledge which she has acquired and which stands her in good stead at such a time.

Of such a woman it can be truthfully said: "She is a pearl of great price."

GEO. B. LISSENDEN.

ACID DROPS

"A DISAPPOINTED METHODIST" writes to the "Sheffield Telegraph" complaining that when Stalin "raised the ban of prohibition on worship in the churches of Russia" he expected in England "A Day of Thanksgiving," but was bitterly disappointed. Well, there are two reasons why this was not done: that worship in a church was prohibited at any time was a British religious lie and was used to create ill-will against Russia, which was certainly one of the causes of the present war; secondly, the Churches are sadly worried with the question of what to do with Russia. It will not pay for the Churches to praise Atheist Russia, and yet they cannot be openly against our close relationship with her. But we must expect when the war is over that the Churches will do something, and it is certain to be something underhand and mean.

We are moving on—at least the Churches are. The Government is hastening to get the clergy re-established in the schools, because if it waits for an election—as other things of pressing importance have to wait—the vote would be against any such thing. And having got so much promised, there is the first sign of its influence on Scotland. The Moderator of the Synod of Perth proposes that there shall be a chaplain appointed in every school. There is certainly something to be said for this move. It would next plant a policeman in every school to see that the teachers toed the mark, and that a twist would be given to the mind of every child that it would not easily straighten out.

We presume, unintentionally, Lord Winterton, M.P., rather gives away the game that is being played by the Government and the Churches. In a letter to the "Sussex Daily News" (November 1) he begs the Catholic Church to join with the other Churches in supporting the Government's proposals on education—proposals that we suspect belonged to the Church before they were voiced by the Government. He says that a division of strength among the Churches "will help Secularists, who are more numerous in the educational world than some Church leaders care to admit."

We have been saying this much for so many years that we are almost tired of repeating it. If those in favour of keeping the schools free from sectarian religious teaching, and there is no other, their number would warn the Government that their plan is dangerous. But so long as parents, either because they lack the intellectual courage to stand against religious prejudice or because it may mean a loss in other directions, continue to send their children to school to have religion forced upon them, the injustice of teaching children religion will continue. Even if the children escape the taint of religion they grow up without any real regard for the greatest quality of all—that of respect for intellectual sincerity.

The curious situation before us at present is that parents will calmly see their sons going off to war, with the prospect of a loss of life or opportunity to "get on in the world"—one would not have it otherwise in any real national emergency—but where intellectual honesty is concerned they profess to shrink at what the child may lose if he is not—in religion, apparently—like others. The Government Bill is the answer to that.

Once more we suggest that all those who are opposed to the clerical control of the schools should withdraw their children from religious instruction. If this were done it might shatter the plot to pieces. If we really want better schools the clergy must be kept off the doorstep. Their interest is a professional one. Our interest should be that of securing a better education and one that makes for social sanity and fair play.

We wonder what would have been said if in Russia before the war hundreds of people had died daily in the streets from sheer starvation as has been the case in India? It would have been used by pulpit politicians and parsons to warn us of having anything to do with Atheistic Russia. And even now no vote of censure is passed on the Government for this catastrophe.

The writer of the "Radio" column in the "Sunday Times" asks: "Why not cut some of the little homilies and man-to-man talks and let us hear instead, on successive Sundays, the complete story of David, or Elijah, or Esther?" We would endorse the suggestion if it could be carried out honestly. But what might happen would be something like the scandalous proceedings of the smooth-tongued individual who supplies doses of religion for the children's hour. Nothing more disgraceful is either written or spoken. Even in a church he would not dare to say what he says to, theoretically, children, and in circumstances that should make decent men and women blush—that is, they have not an extra dose of Christian teaching.

As representing the people of the U.S.A., President Roosevelt gave God hearty thanks for his bringing us "world-wide liberty." How much the President believes in God's help we cannot say, since so many able men have failed to throw off the stupidities of their earlier life. But it is a dangerous method of expressing one's self, unless it is that Roosevelt wishes to suggest to others the question: "If God can restore to the world its freedom, why in the name of all that is sensible did he not interfere earlier and prevent the murder of millions and the agonised memories left for the living?" What the President is doing in his artful way is inducing people to reconsider their religious beliefs.

We daresay that Roosevelt always has in mind Lincoln's famous dictum that while you can fool some people all the time and all the people some of the time, you can't fool *all* the people all the time. Still, religiously, the President is doing his best.

Several times of late Hitler has emphasised the fact that he is a religious man. He is, of course, a Roman Catholic. We should not be surprised if when his end is nearer—provided he is not shot by the military leaders—that he enters a monastery. And what then would become of the Allied promise to deal with him as a common criminal?

There is a Church Council for the defence of Church principles. Sounds curious, because one would imagine that would be God's business to defend the principles of his Church. Anyway, we make a sporting offer. We will give the Church Council space in "The Freethinker" which will lead them to the heart of the people who do not believe in Church principles—real Church principles, not scraps of odds and ends that really have nothing to do with Christianity.

Quite a number of Roman Catholics appear to be uneasy as to why the Papacy does not denounce the brutalities of the Nazis in set terms and with particular applications, instead of in general terms that may mean anything. The reply given by one of the Roman Catholic journals is that the Pope can only do so after judicial inquiry into the facts. That, of course, is rubbish. Particular offences are known and have been published with the names and ranks of the offenders. As usual, the Papacy is sitting on the fence, waiting to see which is the most profitable course to pursue. Besides, the offending Nazis might retort "And you, too, Brutus," and then the fat would be in the fire.

The Vicar of St. Phillip's, Nottingham, is a very curious individual, although we take him to be a quite sincere person. He says there is no happier or more natural thing than for the schools and the Churches to work hand-in-hand. We see nothing particularly happy in the combination, but it is certainly pleasing to the Churches. For what is meant by it is that the teacher is to forget all he may happen to know about real Christianity and ethics and give the Churches full play. There is nothing happier to a card-sharper than to get hold of a "mug" on a railway journey.

In passing we may note that Mr. Duff Cooper is to have a new post under the Government. What a wonderful man he is! He seems fitted for almost any post that is vacant. And reaches the same degree of excellence in each. Pity he has given some of them up—or was he *advised* to do so?

"THE FREETHINKER"

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TO CORRESPONDENTS

M. BARRET (Smethwick).—Many thanks for papers; they will be used to the best advantage.

G. SELKNER (Cheltenham).—Sorry, but all available bound volumes of this year's "Freethinker" have been ordered in advance.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2-3, Furnival Street, London, E.C.4, and not to the Editor.

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

The FREETHINKER will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad): One year, 17s.; half-year, 8s. 6d.; three months, 4s. 4d.

Lecture notices must reach 2 and 3, Furnival Street, Holborn, London, E.C.4, by the first post on Monday, or they will not be inserted.

SUGAR PLUMS

TODAY Mr. Cohen lectures at the Cosmo Cinema, Rose Street, Glasgow. His subject is "The Coming of the Gods." Doors open at 2-30 p.m. The chair will be taken at 3 o'clock.

The conditions under which "The Freethinker" is now printed prevent our dealing with topical matters as promptly as we could in pre-war times. But there is one aspect of the release of Mosley from "prison"—the official name given to his occupancy of a suite of rooms, with every reasonable comfort—which recalls the difference of treatment when the charge was not a genuine one of danger to the country, but the purely fictitious but Christian-made "crime" of blasphemy.

The case was that of J. W. Gott for "blasphemy," at the Central Criminal Court. Naturally, he was found guilty. What other result could one expect when a Christian jury has to decide the question and a Christian judge presides? Now, Gott was really ill, suffering from a serious complaint, there was a medical certificate ready to prove the fact. But the judge declined to consider the matter, and merely gave the reply that he would receive excellent medical treatment in prison. Maybe he did, the fact is that he died a few months after he had served his sentence.

Apart from the above incident which the Mosley case recalls, the only other comment that need be made is that the imprisonment of any man, without trial, no matter what is the nature of the alleged offence, is an outrage on, and a cancellation of, a democracy. There may be conditions where the trial could not be a public one, but a trial there should be, and a bench of selected judges should decide whether the case for the defence is made out. To give to a mere public minister the power to imprison a man without explanation is to rob a citizen of his chief instrument of self-protection. It is Mosley's turn to-day, it may be another man's case to-morrow.

Our continuous difficulty lies in getting published all we would wish of books and pamphlets. If any of our readers are in touch with printers who are in a position to undertake such productions, we should be pleased to hear from them.

A few weeks back we called attention to an edition of Heine's Prose Works. We then described the book—we had not seen it—as though it gave a complete collection of his prose. That was wrong, although the mistake was not ours. It was the fault of a reviewer. We now find it is really a selection of Heine's prose writings. We have not seen the volume, but the publishers are Messrs. Secker and Warburg. The price is 15s.

We are asked to announce that a meeting will be held at the Alliance Hall, Palmer Street, S.W.1, on December 4, at 7 p.m., for the discussion of "Vatican Politics in War and Peace." The principal speakers are Miss Edith Moore and Mr. Charles Duff.

A lady speaker will occupy the Birmingham Branch N.S.S. platform to-day (November 28), when Colonel Ingersoll's "Liberty of Man, Woman and Child" will be read by Mrs. B. Millington, and a discussion will follow. The meeting will be held in the Key Book Shop, 115, Dale End, at 3-30 p.m. The local branch is aiming at variety in its syllabus, and to-day's effort promises to be a very successful one. All who wish can join the usual tea party afterwards.

It is announced that the B.B.C. has so far lifted the ban on everything that should appear contrary to its avowed policy of working in the line of the "Christian tradition," to the extent of arranging a broadcast on December 1, by Julian Huxley, on "Scientific Humanism." It is high time that some kind of retort was given to the string of stupid pleas for religion that we get week after week. We hope for the best. We also hope that the speech, which will be a very rare one, if its non-religious character is made plain, will be reprinted in "The Listener." At any rate, there is in the concession an indication that the agitation for a free radio has had an influence for the better. And we can also pride ourselves on having played some part in shaming even the B.B.C. But we must not crow too loudly or too soon.

There seems to have been a quite unwarranted amount of concern as to who bombed Vatican City. The Germans blame the British, the British blame the Germans. It seems a quite unnecessary amount of repudiation when destruction has been carried out on a colossal scale. Ancient buildings, churches, works of art, have been destroyed everywhere, and we have all taken it as one of the inevitable consequences of modern scientific warfare. And now that war is openly declared to be what it always was—even though on a small scale—a war on civilians, there seems something bordering on hypocrisy at professing horror when the Vatican City is bombed. Nor must it be forgotten that the Papacy got on very well with Fascist Italy, and even profited financially from its existence.

We think that the real cause of this—more or less—fear of being identified with the bombing of Vatican City lies in the fact that Vatican City is the headquarters of the Papacy, and its followers are found in considerable numbers in Britain, Germany and the United States of America. In this country the Roman Church is well represented in the Press and also is the number of positions held. And while we are not suggesting that all of these would place religion before country, it is certain that a considerable number would place the interests of their Church first, and a larger number would lean towards the interests of their Church. In brief, among Roman Catholics here and in the U.S.A. there is a divided loyalty that makes both Governments pause when dealing with positions that threaten the well-being of the Papacy. This is the only adequate explanation why both the Nazis and the Allies are fearful of the bombing of Vatican City being put down to them.

Many of our readers have experienced difficulty in getting their copies of this journal. We should be obliged if they would, in such cases, communicate with us. We will do what we can to better things, but we have not yet overcome the paper shortage.

THE BIBLE AND EXCAVATION

JUST before the war, there had been vast activity in Palestine and neighbouring countries by many famous archaeologists intent on digging up ancient sites, not merely because rare finds would prove of great historical interest, but because something had to be done to silence those people who maintained that a good part of the Bible was pure myth or fiction.

It was shrewdly surmised that if the Old Testament was not true, if the Israelites were not God's Chosen Race, and if the recitals in the Old Book did not actually lead to their fulfilment in Christ, then Christianity was in a very bad way. By hook or by crook, the integrity and the authenticity of the Old Testament had to be maintained.

It is good to note that the results of many excavations have been published, and we can, if we like to take the trouble, sit back, weigh the evidence, and assess exactly how much of the Bible has been saved.

First of all, has anything been discovered about Adam and Eve? As I write, I note that the priestly adviser to the "Universe" (November 5) insists that "it has not been proved to be fiction that God made Adam and Eve"—so that he, at least, if not the whole of the Roman Catholic Church, is forced to admit that Adam and Eve were historical personages created exactly as described in Genesis. This is not surprising, as if a Christian once gives up Adam, he has no basis for the "Fall of Man," and if there was no "Fall of Man" there was no necessity to be "saved"—and that means exit Christ the Saviour. Adam and Eve dare not be given up by the Christian Church, so that it would prove very interesting if excavations round about the Garden of Eden, wherever it is supposed to be, brings up relics of the first human pair created in this world.

Now Sir Charles Marston, F.S.A., an excavator himself, has undertaken the part of historian to this branch of work, and in "The Bible is True" and "The Bible Comes Alive" we get a very useful summary of what has been accomplished in the years preceding the war, and all the more so as he is a Fundamentalist of Fundamentalists—plus *royale quo le roi*, in fact—so that we, who still look upon the Bible as mostly a collection of fairy tales, will not be accused of taking no notice of the evidence from excavation if we go to him. And what does he say in the "Bible Comes Alive" about Adam and Eve? Just nothing at all. Evidently excavations have utterly failed to bring to light any belongings of the famous pair; and it is just the same with Cain and Abel. Not a trace even of the famous bludgeon which killed poor Abel has been discovered.

But Sir Charles had to start somewhere proving that the Bible is true, so he asserts that "Archaeological evidence, as will be seen, has established the reality of the Flood." Note the capital F—this means the real Flood, Noah's Flood, the Flood of the Bible, not a twopence-halfpenny local flood which all Fundamentalists sneer at. Noah's Flood was, claims Sir Charles, "an historical event"; it "must have been so," and now, "since Sir Leonard Woolley discovered the Flood deposits at Ur of the Chaldees in the winter of 1928-9, it is no longer possible to treat the incident as a myth." That is pretty clear. Sir L. Woolley discovered Flood deposits 15 years ago, and who are you or any blatant infidel to say him no?

Unfortunately for Sir Charles Marston, he was unable to stop there. Knowing his very religious readers, he should have banked on the fact that few of them would ever read Woolley for themselves and he might have got away with it. For he knew perfectly well that what Woolley found were not traces of the Flood, but of a flood—quite a different thing. So very angrily Sir Charles says: "Sir Leonard, and other authorities, appear to regard the Flood as though it were a local inundation, confined to the Euphrates delta." That is, after citing Woolley as a great excavator who settled the question once for all that the Flood

was not a myth, Sir Charles later has to admit that some of the "authorities" he gives did not believe a line about the Flood, the Biblical Flood, the Universal Flood with its childish Noah's Ark, and its even more childish recitals of collecting pairs of animals and birds to fill it with. In other words Noah's Flood is still a myth—and I am certainly not going to waste any more time about a paltry local flood without a Noah's Ark.

The way Sir Charles proves the historical existence of Abraham is just as telling. The first thing is to give a date for Abraham, and though many Christians are always ready to throw overboard Ussher's Biblical chronology when it is a question of saving something out of the Biblical holocaust, yet they never give it up if they can possibly help it. For Sir Charles, Bible dates are as sacrosanct as Jesus, and he constantly trots them out as if they were indisputable even though he is often completely mystified as to why the Septuagint and the Samaritan versions differ often from the Bible by hundreds of years.

However, the Ras Shamra tablets (about which I wrote some years ago) mention a Terah or Terach as a Moon God (1400-1350 B.C.), and as Abraham's father was called Terah, here you have astounding proof that Abraham had a real father. Such evidence is, according to Sir Charles, simply staggering. But there is more to come. It appears that about the time of Abraham, the famous Babylonian king, Hammurabi, was reigning, and both archaeology and astronomy have definitely proved that he reigned from 2067 to 2025 B.C. All you need do then is to write two columns side by side—which Sir Charles does. You put in one that Hammurabi began to reign on 2067 B.C. In the other quoting Genesis, that Abraham entered Canaan in 2085 B.C., that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed in 2061 B.C., that Isaac was born in 2060 B.C., and that Abraham died in 1985 B.C. You then add to the other column that Hammurabi died in 2025 B.C. and—hey presto, you have proved the complete existence of Abraham, that he lived and died exactly as described in the Old Testament, and that once again infidelity has been extirpated. If, however, you are foolish enough to demur that perhaps Abraham's age at death—175 years—is just a wee bit too much, Sir Charles triumphantly produces two people who died in A.D. 1621 and 1668 respectively. One was 156 years old and the other 177. The proof is the "Register of Llanmaes." And that settles it. The Register is telling Gospel Truth and, of course, so is the Bible. Sir Charles puts the remarkable longevity of Abraham to his living in tents—though strangely enough, he never mentions either Adam or Methuselah. Adam was 930 years old and Methuselah 969 years old when they died. But perhaps here silence is the better part of valour.

Further to strengthen the case for Abraham, Sir Charles tells us that the Cave of Machpelah which was bought by Abraham for a family tomb, and where Sarah and Isaac and Jacob and their wives are buried, "has been covered by a Mahometan mosque for centuries." However, when Allenby entered Jerusalem in the last war "one of his officers, Colonel Meinertzhagen, entered the cave and sat on one of the tombs." If any infidel now does not believe every word of the Genesis story he should be consigned to the Christian hell for double eternity.

The truth is that not a scrap of evidence has been produced in any shape for the actual existence of Abraham; and the same can be said for Isaac, Jacob and all his sons. So far, the enormous pains and care taken by the archaeologists and excavators in Palestine have produced nothing whatever in the way of confirming the truth of the stories in the Pentateuch—except naturally that there were cities, and kings, and priests, and wars there, just as we have them to this day.

Just one other word. Sir Charles Marston constantly points out that the Bible must be true because it deals with God's Chosen People, and he always talks as if there were a Jewish race now. There is no more a Jewish race than there is a Christian one. There are a number of peoples living in many parts of the world

who are white, brown, black and yellow, who believe in what may be called, roughly, Judaism, just as there are many peoples like them who believe in Roman Catholicism. The Algerian-Jew is no more like the modern English Jew than an Algerian Muslim is like an English one—but it is useless to point this out to our Sir Charles Marston. The Bible is true because there is a Jewish race, and there is a Jewish race because the Bible is true. Only it is not excavation which supports this nonsense.

H. CUTNER.

MARK TWAIN AND POPYERY

MARK TWAIN had a great contempt for popery and papists. He had many digs at them. For example, in "Innocents Abroad," he speaks of Italy thus:—

"We were in the heart and home of priestcraft—of a happy, contented ignorance, superstition, degradation, poverty, indolence and everlasting unambitious worthlessness. And we said fervently, it suits these people precisely; let them enjoy it along with the other animals and heaven forbid that they be molested . . . perfectly unaware that the world turns round. And perfectly indifferent, too, as to whether it turns round or stands still. They have nothing to do but eat and sleep and toil a little when they can get a friend to stand by to keep them awake. How can men, calling themselves men, consent to be so degraded?"

He makes fun about the "relics" which are such obvious

lakes. "In a marble chest, they told us, were the ashes of St. John, and around it was a chain which, they said, had confined him when in prison. We did not desire to disbelieve these statements, and yet we could not feel certain they were correct—partly because we could have broken that chain and so could St. John, and partly because we had seen St. John's ashes in another church. We could not bring ourselves to think he had two sets of ashes. They also showed us a painting of the Madonna by St. Luke, and it did not look half as old and smoky as some of the pictures by Rubens. We could not help admiring Luke's modesty in never once mentioning in his writings that he could paint. But isn't this relic business a little overdone? We find a piece of the true cross in every old church we go into and some of the nails that held it together. I think we have seen as much as a keg of these nails. . . ."

As regards pictures: "Our researches among painted monks have not been wholly in vain. When we see a monk going about with a lion and looking tranquilly up to heaven, we know that is St. Mark. When we see a monk with a book and a pen, looking tranquilly up to heaven, trying to think of a word, we know that is St. Matthew. When we see a monk sitting on a rock, looking tranquilly up to heaven, with a human skull beside him, and without other baggage, we know that is St. Jerome. When we see other monks looking tranquilly up to heaven, but having no trade mark we always ask who these parties are. We have seen 13,000 St. Jeromes, 22,000 St. Marks, 16,000 St. Matthews, 60,000 St. Sebastians and 4,000,000 of assorted monks, undesignated. . . . If the great Titian had skipped a martyr and gone over to England and painted a portrait of Shakespeare, the world down to the latest generations would have forgiven him the lost martyr."

Mark says: "I state as my simple deduction from the things I have seen and heard that the Holy Personages rank thus in Rome: First, 'the Mother of God,' otherwise the Virgin Mary; second, the Deity; third, Peter; fourth, some twelve or fifteen canonised popes and martyrs; fifth, Jesus—but always as an infant in arms. I will mention something that seems curious to me. There are no 'Christ's Churches' in Rome and no 'Churches

(Continued on next page)

CORRESPONDENCE

THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB.

SIR,—One pleasant summer's evening I chanced to pass a sandwich-man who was wending his way near Oxford Street. His boards bore the bright red-lettered appeal, "Be washed in the Blood of the Lamb," and I was, and still am, at something of a loss as to its precise meaning.

To the man in the street it would seem, on reflection, that a lamb-like attitude is ill-advised at any time, human nature being what it is. Nor is the expression "blood" a happy choice, seeing how religious history is sullied by its repellent stain.

It may be, indeed, that the appeal is of a mysterious nature similar to references to the "Mercy Seat" and to "Eternal Life," taking these two examples at random. Quite obviously the Churches still seek to educate by means of false values, holding up abundant dogma, fiction and its like as facts. Let the world therefore be grateful to Atheism for breaking through this deceptive pretence, and verbal fog, and disclosing the several home truths which lead to a reasonably healthy, useful and cheerful life. A life, it may be added, which is unhampered by "mysteries" and by religious follies like "Masses for the Dead."—Yours, etc.,

J. EDWARDS.

IT REALLY IS TOO BAD!

SIR,—To the profound annoyance of Canterbury and Rome, and for the first time in history, God emerges in a professedly Atheist country as a disciple of Karl Marx, himself an Atheist. The Russian Government no doubt appreciates the joke, and deems it most excellent politics to permit millions of more or less uneducated Russians to believe that God is their friend, philosopher and guide, and a Communist at heart. It should strengthen the Soviets. At the same time both Canterbury and Rome are placed in an awkward predicament. A democratic God is not to their liking. In fact, it is unheard of. How can an educated Divinity compete with the spectre of their own Fascist, ultra-Conservative makeshift?—Yours, etc.,

G. E. O. KNIGHT.

[Other letters are held over till next week.—EDITOR.]

WANTED.—F. J. Gould's "Children's Book of Moral Lessons." Please state condition and price to Box 18, c/o THE FREETHINKER, 2/3, Farnival Street, London, E.C.4.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

LONDON—OUTDOOR

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): Sunday, 12 noon, Mr. L. EBURY.

LONDON—INDOOR

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, 11 a.m. Professor J. C. FLUGEL, D.Sc.: "Anti-Semitism."

COUNTRY—INDOOR

Birmingham Branch N.S.S. (The Key Bookshop, 115, Dale End, Birmingham).—Discussion opened by Mrs. B. MILLINGTON reading "The Liberty of Man, Woman and Child," at 3-30 p.m.

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Science Room, Mechanic's Institute, Bradford).—Sunday, 6-30 p.m. Mr. R. DAY: "The Conflict Between Religion and Philosophy."

Glasgow Secular Society (Cosmo Cinema, Rose Street, Glasgow).—Sunday, 3 p.m. Mr. CHAPMAN COHEN: "The Coming of the Gods."

Kingston-on-Thames Branch N.S.S. (Trades and Labour Club, Grange Road, Kingston-on-Thames).—Sunday 7 p.m. Mr. K. CAMNER: "Atheism v. Christianity."

Leicester Secular Society (75, Humberstone Gate).—Mr. CHARLES ASHLEIGH: "A Journalist in the Soviet Union." 7 p.m.

MARK TWAIN AND POPERY

(Continued from previous page)

of the Holy Ghost." There are some 400 churches; about a fourth seem to be named for the Madonna and St. Peter. The Saviour seems to be of little importance anywhere in Rome."

"In the city of Naples they believe in and support one of the wretchedest of all the religious impostures one can find in Italy—the miraculous liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius. Twice a year the priests assemble the people at the Cathedral and get out this phial of clotted blood and let them see it slowly dissolve and become liquid—and every day for eight days this dismal farce is repeated while the priests go among the crowd and collect money for the exhibition. The first day the blood liquefies in 47 minutes—the church is full then and time must be allowed for the collectors to get round. After that it liquefies a little quicker each day as the houses grow smaller, till on the eighth day, with only a few dozens present, it liquefies in four minutes.

"Here also they used to have a grand procession of priests, citizens, soldiers, sailors and the high dignitaries of the city government, once a year to shave the head of a made-up Madonna—a stuffed and painted image—whose hair miraculously grew and restored itself every twelve months. They still kept up this shaving procession as late as four or five years ago. It was a source of great profit to the church that possessed the effigy, and the ceremony of public barbering of her was always carried out with the greatest eclat and display—the more the better, because the more excitement there was about it the larger the crowds and the heavier the revenue. But at last a day came when the Pope and his servants were unpopular, and the city government stopped the Madonna's annual show.

"There we have two specimens of these Neapolitans—two of the silliest possible frauds. I think the whole population believed in those poor, cheap miracles; a people who want two cents every time they bow to you, and who abuse a woman, are capable of it, I think."

C. R. B. F.

THE HOUSE OF THE FUTURE

MOST people will have noticed the development in recent years of a new type of material. For the most part this has been used to construct various comparatively handy "gadgets" for the home. Such things as ash-trays, telephone instruments, and beakers for the holding of tooth-brushes have lately taken on a new brilliancy or colour and of shape.

This material may vary in colour and in chemical constitution, but all the varieties are produced in a similar way. They are one of the real triumphs of modern chemistry, and are popularly known under the name of plastics. Under the stress of war new developments have taken place, and, while for reasons of security these cannot at present be disclosed in any detail, there can be no doubt that they will be very widely applied in the days after the war.

It is not easy to explain the peculiar properties of plastics briefly and without the use of technical terms; but, in short, they may be described as synthetic compositions which can be readily moulded under high temperature and pressure (under which conditions they are very plastic—hence the generic name), and which, having once taken up any particular shape, become rigid and firm. They are thus very suitable for the manufacture of small articles such as those which I have just mentioned.

A recent development is the production of laminated materials of one sort and another. Sheets of thin wood, linen, or even paper, are impregnated with a plastic composition and then baked, so that the whole sets into a solid board which is harder than most wood, and yet can be easily cut to fit any given

position. This has been applied in the manufacture of aeroplanes, and there can be little doubt that these materials will, in future, be applied to the building and decoration of the home.

Let us take a glimpse of the house of the future—the house where plastics are increasingly used.

As we approach the house we shall be conscious of a new brightness and cheerfulness of the doors and window-frames. They will be so bright as to appear to have been recently painted, but no paint will have been applied. They will be moulded out of some casein plastic, reinforced by iron filings to give them special strength. The windows themselves will be made of cellulose acetate, unsplinterable and more transparent than the finest glass, and less resistant to the health-giving ultra-violet rays.

The interior of the house will be equally bright. The walls will be panelled in a smooth, bright material which is laminated wood. All doors will be made of a similar stuff, and will be dead smooth, with no cracks or crevices to harbour dust. The bath-room will be entirely smooth throughout, with the result that its walls can be washed down in a few moments. In the kitchen will be similar tiles of plastic material which will prevent the accumulation of grease from cooking.

Taps and pipes will be made of a heat-resisting plastic which can be easily repaired without all the clumsiness of the plumber's blow-lamp and solder, while the heat-expansion of the material will make damage by frost almost a relic of the forgotten past.

Not merely things of utilitarian value will be made of plastic materials, however. Lamp-shades and electroliers, screens and chairs, will be made of reinforced plastic. Transparent, translucent, or opaque—it matters not what kind of material is needed; the plastic chemist can produce something for every imaginable use.

Only when metal is necessary to produce a sharp cutting edge or when electrical conductivity is necessary will metals be used. And even then (in a razor, say) only the actual part which is to do the cutting will be made of metal. The framework in which the metal is placed will be moulded skilfully from a plastic material.

To some readers this will appear impossibly visionary, and yet much of it is already within the realm of possibility, and, under the stimulus of war, scientific research is producing more and more of the materials needed for this kind of house.

Whether the pre-fabrication of the house itself will ever be achieved is not yet certain; but it appears quite possible that, one of these days, man will be surrounded by plastics from the day when the nurse puts him in his plastic cot to the day when the undertaker measures him for his plastic coffin.

S. H.

Wherever I have made a rash statement I shall be happy to be corrected; wherever I have argued wrongly I shall be happy to be set right. But I am less amenable to appeals on the ground of "taste." They are almost invariably made by those who wish failure to one's propaganda. A fair controversialist will refrain from personalities. I have done this, and I will do no more.—G. W. FOOTE.

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