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The Freethinker

Vol. LXX III—No. 43

Founded 1881

Editor: F. A. RIDLEY

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A DECADE ago, the greater part of what used to be called "Christendom", lay prostrate under the iron heel of Hitler and his *New Order*. Whatever personal view one may take of that fantastic individual, a Messiah who missed his vocation, if ever there was one, there was actually little that was "new" about the self-styled *New Order*. One could, in fact, apply to this political regime what the Jewish rabbis say about the self-styled *New Testament*: "What is new in it isn't true; and what is true in it isn't new!" Except for the addition of some technical auxiliaries, the fruits of a prostituted science, the Hitler despotism did not differ very much from earlier despotisms. "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." All unchecked and unqualified despotisms qualify sooner or later for the Russian anarchist Herzen's definition of the Modern State: "Jenghis Khan plus the electric telegraph."

—VIEWS and OPINIONS—
The Cross Replaces the Swastika
—By F. A. RIDLEY—

From the Third Reich to the Holy Roman Empire

To-day the self-same forces which put Hitler in power, and then essayed to make a new "Roman Empire" out of Europe for the ultimate benefit of the German "Herrenvolk", are back again in the saddle; the Industrial barons of the Ruhr and the former "goose-stepping" generals of the "S.S."; if this statement appears to be exaggerated we recommend to the sceptics a course of reading of the current Press—of all shades of opinion—in the adjacent lands to the Reich. Here, situated securely, or so we imagine, behind the protecting bulwark afforded by the sea, we tend to ignore what currently transpires on the adjacent continent of Europe until, as after Dunkirk in 1940, it positively forces itself upon our attention. German "rearmament", actual or prospective, is, to-day, again the principal theme of discussion on the continent of Europe. For Adenauer's recent decisive victory in the German elections actually implies that the men who exterminated the Jews and sought to conquer the globe are, once again, in charge of the present and future destinies of the Reich. Only, nowadays, they wear a new emblem: the Cross has superseded the Swastika; the revived "Holy Roman Empire" has replaced the defunct "Third Reich."

The Three German Reichs

Since the original inception of the German Empire and Nation in the age of Charlemagne (A.D. 771-814), three German Reichs have successively occupied the European stage. These were, respectively, the Holy Roman Empire or to give it its full title, "The Holy Roman Empire of the German People", established in A.D. 800 (Christmas Day) by Charlemagne, and which lasted, at least nominally, until Napoleon abolished it in 1806, after his victory over Austria at Austerlitz (1805—see footnote). The second Reich was that established by Bismarck after the Franco-German War of 1870-71, the Reich of the Hohenzollerns, which ended with the defeat of Germany in November, 1918. Whilst the "Third Reich" of

Hitler, still fresh, we presume, in everyone's memory, lasted from Hitler's accession to power in 1933 to the débacle of the Nazi Empire in 1945. Hitler was a "Charlemagne" who left no successors, fortunately!

Whom did the Three Reichs Represent?

Every political institution represents, ultimately, the expression of political and economic interests behind the visible facade of History. All three German Reichs fulfilled and illustrated the above historical "Law." The "First Reich," the "Holy Roman Empire of the German People," which lasted for a millenium, was the creation

of the Papacy and, at Canossa (1077), was subjected to its absolute rule, the high watermark of the supremacy of the Church over the State. Under Charles V and his Hapsburg successors, again the "Holy" Empire was the militant champion of Rome in the religious wars of the Reformation culminating in "The Thirty Years War" (1618-48).

Whilst the "Second" and "Third" Reichs represented in the case of the "Second Reich," the domination of the Prussian junkers (landlords) of the Protestant East, the political leader of whom was Bismarck (1815-98), and the military instrument of whom was the Prussian Army. And in the case of the "Third Reich," under Hitler, of the fusion, under the pressure of military defeat, of the Protestant East and of the Catholic West. Hitler, however, was, at least, politically, an opponent of the Church and as our learned contributor, Arthur Wild, recently demonstrated in our columns, an influential section of the Nazi Party, including, probably, the Fuhrer himself, had abandoned their belief in Christianity in favour of a revived cult of Teutonic Paganism.

The Holy Roman Empire is Reborn

The new "Fourth Reich" which is now incubating within the egg-shell of "Democracy"—with a capital D—is, beyond any reasonable doubt, a (so to speak) political reincarnation of the "First Reich," the "Holy Roman Empire of the German People," rather than of its secular successors, the later empires created, respectively, by Bismarck and Hitler. That pious son of Holy Church, Dr. Adenauer, a former deputy of the clerical "Centre" party, is the modern successor of the pious Charlemagne, who owes both his place in history and his incidental absolution from his numerous sins, to the ardour with which he forced Christianity by fire and sword down the throats of the pagan Saxons. The new Germany that arose from the debris of the Hitler regime is correctly regarded as the creation of Vatican diplomacy; in particular, of that modern successor to the Pope who crowned Charlemagne Pius-Pacelli, who was Papal Legate in Munich and Berlin during the years that witnessed the rise of Hitler. With Protestant Prussia shrouded behind the "Iron Curtain," the Catholic Church has matters all its own way in the new Catholic Germany.

German Imperialism Raises the Banner of the Cross

To-day, the contemporary pattern of the European scene is becoming reasonably clear. German Imperialism is, to-day, resuming its historic mission, only temporarily frustrated in 1918 and, again, in 1945. As in earlier years, it resumes its "drang nach osten" ("pressure towards the East"). Only just now the Reich is in the fortunate position of being able to command the goodwill and active support of both "God and Mammon" of the two great conservative powers of our era, the Roman Catholic Church and the Dollar Republic. Both desire to see the downfall of "godless Russia," if not for quite the same reasons. A rearmed Germany with her hands free in the West might do the trick, as Hitler, though engaged elsewhere, so nearly did in 1941-42. Though, we may relevantly add, if Eisenhower, Dulles and Co. think that a victorious Germany, swollen with victory and with fresh resources acquired in the East, would then respect her treaty obligations and remain a docile instrument of America, we can only assume that European History is not their strong suit! However, from the point of view of the Vatican, the victory of the very Christian Reich of Adenauer and his Catholic successors over "godless Russia" would be pure gain. It will be, accordingly, under the standard of the Christian

Cross, and not of the pagan Swastika, that German Imperialism will take arms to save "Christian civilisation."

A Catholic Munich?

In common political parlance, "Munich" stands for the policy of "appeasement", of surrender to German aggression. However, Munich was also the self-same place where, in 1923, Hitler made his first premature bid to seize power. At that time, a papal Nuncio was resident in Munich, by name, Eugenio Pacelli, now Pope Pius the Twelfth. Pius, and the Catholic Church in general, never fully approved of Hitler; two infallible pontiffs cannot co-exist for long! But the devout Adenauer is entirely *persona grata* at the Vatican. The present Master-Plan of Rome is the recreation of a new "Holy Roman Empire of the German people," as the leader of Europe and as the armed protector of the Church. It is the rebirth of the "Universal" Empire, the political instrument of the "Universal" Church, with which we may expect to be confronted in the coming years.

FOOTNOTE.—Voltaire, as we know, described the "Holy Roman Empire" as "neither Holy, Roman, nor an Empire," adding that, otherwise, it was an excellent description! This witicism, however, was only true of the later stages of the Empire, after its last great ruler, Charles V, 1500-1558.

A Story of the Atom Age

By TOM PRICE

EXCLUSIVE television rights had been obtained by Univision Incorporated for the great battle between God and the Devil. More than 2,000,000,000 people watched it on their sets; another 4,000,000 watched it from the specially-converted Yankee Stadium.

For 3,000 years the churches had given the fight some of the best publicity to be had in the business, and as the hour drew nigh huge posters appeared on hoardings from Dakota to Darkest Africa.

"Jehovah v. the Prince of Darkness," they said. "Don't miss this fearsome fracas!"

In an interview with a Univision reporter, God said that it was to be a benefit performance for the funds of the Chosen People's Aid Society.

The Devil himself was non-committal about his chances. "I have always had the upper hand," he said. "I can't say more."

The contest was due to start at 3 p.m. on Sunday—a day specially chosen by both protagonists. At 2-45 p.m. a great parade composed of Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Scientists, Christadelphians, a few Roman Catholics and an unfrocked vicar, wended its way around the great stadium. Some carried banners—"Do him, Yahweh!" "Blood! Blood!" "Give him a taste of his own fire and brimstone!"—and some blew silver trumpets. The vicar took up the rear with an offertory plate.

It was soon obvious, however, that a large section of the audience was on Satan's side. Within seconds of the start of the parade, indignant space-grams flooded Univision's offices, and an extraordinary meeting of the International Secular Society passed a resolution to the Devil condemning his participation in "such an irrational and irreverent poppy-show."

In a confidential reply the Devil stated: "I am, as you know, a gentleman, and although I have not made any gentleman's agreement as such, such an agreement seems to have been made in the eyes of the people. Remember the motto, 'Not only must God's will be done, it must also

appear to have been done.' Why don't you pagans give me a chance, instead of niggling at me all the time?"

"P.S.—Didn't you know I had interests in Univision?"

On the stroke of three there was a roll of thunder and a blinding flash, and at the gasworks end of the stadium appeared God, accompanied by thousands of archangels, cherubim, seraphim and other lesser species—all armed with the haloes with red hot billhooks and bacteriological bombs.

As the minutes passed the religionist section of the crowd began to howl for the Devil's disqualification for non-appearance. It was at that psychological moment that he entered the stadium—a thin, bent old man with a patched and faded red robe. A flood of emotion swept the arena as he walked unsteadily to the centre of the arena.

"Here, indeed, is a man," said Univision's commentators quietly and reverently. "Hero of a million holy crusades, victim of a million misrepresentations—but the light of battle still shines from those omniscient optics!"

The Devil stood defiantly facing the terrible host of the Lord. Turning his best profile towards the cameras, he addressed the gathering in a firm voice.

"I have been fighting old Jove here for a long time," he said. "I think I can claim that I have always fought fairly, as far as I've been able. The same, I fear, cannot be said of my opponent. When I think of some of his dirty tricks I often wonder whether the Hell of a life I have led has been worth it!"

"And now, at last, we're face to face. I have brought only one weapon with me. If I am to be defeated, you will at least see me fall in honour. . . ."

"What's your weapon then, ludicrous Lucifer?" bellowed God, shaking with mirthful scorn.

The Devil cast an imperious glance over the arena and slyly thumbed his nose at the holy horde.

"Why—REASON, you rogue!" he cried.

"But don't worry!" he shouted at the astonished people. "I shall be back in my own good time—I shall come back!" And he flew off.

"Strike that from the minutes," said the Mayor. "It is only a prophecy. If we ran this town on prophecies nothing would ever get done."

Mind and Matter

By W. H. WOOD

MR. A. YATES gives us a good exposition of the Materialist argument in his article "Mind or Matter," but he does not quite succeed in disproving the opposite case. Of course, he does not know what the "mental stuff" of the cosmos may be. Who does? Anyway, I doubt very much if he can tell me of what the *material* stuff of the cosmos is composed; so that doesn't get us very far! Although no one yet knows anything for certain it is our conjecture that the cosmos is not entirely physical. In using the term "mental" in this connection we mean an intelligent or purposeful operative force—non-personal, non-physical—but able to penetrate, combine and interact with physical matter. Call it Universal Energy, Life-Force or what you will. Because this permeating force has not yet been identified it does not follow that it is non-existent. For some unfathomable reason Materialists refuse to accept as possible anything they cannot understand. A Materialist living back in the Middle Ages would have dismissed as completely irrational any suggestion that a man might one day travel through the upper air in a heavier-than-air machine at a speed faster than sound. Because X-ray, Radar, Radio and Television were then unknown he would have refused to believe that such things could be. Surely then he should be very wary of condemning as nonsense a suggestion that the universe may not be quite so material as he imagines.

We may think we know all about matter but it is quite certain we do not yet know all about mind or consciousness. The hypnotist uses mental suggestion but no one can explain how it works. The process by which a thought or suggestion emanating from one brain is able to influence the mind or body of another person is still a mystery. It seems hardly possible that there can be any physical connection between sender and receiver, but it is not impossible that this connecting link might be some non-physical force capable of acting upon physical matter. We know that the brain and nerve-centres of the spinal cord are physical and that impulses from the nerve-centres are sent to the brain and back again to the sensory organs to produce the sensory perceptions of sight, touch, hearing, taste and smell, but thoughts and suggestions are not just sensory perceptions. In our opinion they emanate from the brain not as physical forces but as non-physical forces. When one man is able to read the thoughts of another, as in mental telepathy, or to receive the suggestions from another mind, as in hypnosis, we do not see how he can do this by any physical means.

The composition of, and the relationship between, mind and matter constitute the whole argument. You cannot know matter except by the perception of mind and you cannot know mind entirely divorced from matter. There is a definite link between them, but what is it? We believe that the common factor is some non-physical force active in both mind and matter. If the Materialist will not accept this we would ask him to tell us the exact nature of the vital force distinguishing organic from inorganic matter. If this force does not exist in lifeless matter how does it ever come into existence at all? From whence does it come and what happens to it when a living body dies? You cannot get rid of a physical force just when you want to because forces are indestructible. To the Materialist there are just two kinds of matter—living and lifeless—but you must not ask him why the former contains life-energy and the latter does not. You must not ask him how living matter became alive in the first place; you must presume that it always has been alive and that

inorganic matter always has been, and always will be, lifeless!

Now let us consider the argument of the poor misguided anti-Materialist. He believes that the cosmos—the essence and origin of all things—is partly non-physical in constitution and that its forces are the direct causation of all matter and of the movement causing the minutest particles of matter to vibrate. We know that there is no such thing as solid and motionless matter—even a stone is a mass of molecules, atoms, electrons, protons, etc., in a continual state of violent agitation. We suggest that it is this non-physical vital force which energises growth and mutation in the natural processes of biological evolution. This vital energy is a directive and progressive force guiding the gradual change of species from primordial slime to *homo sapiens*. If, as Mr. Yates contends, there is no intelligent purpose in Nature then there can be no purpose in evolution. If evolution is merely a blind, unorganised process why do species always evolve towards a higher intelligence and not devolve back to the slime from which we crawled? Surely the fact that the urge is always to climb higher in the scale of life and intelligence is proof of purposeful evolution and that mental rather than physical perfection is the aim and objective. If this were not so we would still be a specie of super-mammoths with giant strength and no intelligence whatever. The fact that we have progressed mentally rather than physically must support the belief that the mental forces are indeed superior to the physical forces operating in Nature.

If the Materialist believes in nothing but the purely physical surely he should be more concerned about physical perfection than with intelligence, mind, or consciousness. But if mind is to him just as physical as matter then several questions arise to which we would welcome his answer. How does he explain hypnosis, mind-projection, clairvoyance, prevision, premonition, mental-telepathy, dual and multiple personality, mental healing and the many examples of extra sensory perception? Does Mr. Yates dismiss as so much balderdash problems which scientists and mind-specialists find worthy of serious study? As yet the final answers to these problems have not been found nor, I think, will they ever be found if we are content to adopt the rather narrow and self-satisfied attitude of the one hundred per cent. Materialist.

THE MIDDLE AGES

"Literature, science, taste, were words little in use during the ages which we are contemplating, or if they occur at any time, eminence in them is ascribed to persons and productions so contemptible, that it appears their true import was little understood. Persons of the highest rank, and in the most eminent stations, could not write. Many of the clergy did not understand the breviary, which they were obliged daily to recite; some of them could scarcely read it."—W. ROBERTSON.

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This Believing World

The charge that some of our clergy were Communists, or at least of a very red pink, made by General Martel in the *Sunday Dispatch* recently, has now been apologised for by that journal. It never wanted its readers to imagine that some special members of the clergy were rank Communists, or were influenced by political ideologies. Poor General Martel! He should stick to military matters, and leave the mixture of politics, ideologies and theology, which sometimes emanates from the true believers in an outworn Oriental faith, severely alone.

Every now and then someone in that delightful and more or less primitive seaside island, Jersey, starts an argument in favour of that equally primitive religion, Christianity. The latest example is a discussion on the "atomic myth"—a wholehearted Christian maintaining atoms to be myths, and what some people call "substance" or "matter," to be merely "spiritual." In other words, the age-old debate between Materialism and Idealism appears to have only just arrived in Jersey, and already the disputants look like tying themselves into knots over the problem. We can only hope that the Idealist who thinks that "substance is wholly spiritual" will not blame his wife if his fish and chips are badly cooked. After all, it would not matter, for if "substance" is "spiritual," fish and chips, well or badly done, must taste the same.

Blackpool is famous for something else besides its illuminations—it has initiated "The World Healing Crusade" headed by Brother Mandus who, suitably adorning it with "healing" texts from Jesus, issues a journal—*The World Healing Crusader*, packed with announcements where you can be Healed Divinely. Its contents seem to be a mixture of the usual "spiritual" exhortations to Christ and his Healing Powers, and the usual testimonies from delighted people that they have been cured of all kinds of incurable ailments both physically and spiritually. The copy we saw with a little change of terminology, could do just as well for a patent medicine, or for Mother Eddy's Christian Science cures—or even for the wonderful cures performed in such enormous numbers by Mr. H. Edwards and his Spirit Guides. Why there are still so many sick people in hospitals is something we cannot understand.

A very religious leading article in the *Daily Mail* calls the Church "the Lamp of Life," and claims that it is "woven into the fabric of the State," that "it has been part of us since the earliest days," and that "the history of our land would be nothing without it"—all of which could be said almost in the same words of what we call "crime." But this leader is particularly distinguished because in a long column it never mentions Jesus Christ! The Divine Message comes from the Church which holds up the Lamp of Life, and not from Christ Jesus!

Of course, it might be argued that the Church got it from Jesus, and it faithfully stands by every word of that Palestinian Deity; but anybody who studies the various pronouncements by the Church will easily discover subtle differences. Jesus telling you to hate your parents is one of the Divine Teachings which is very discreetly glossed over by the Church and it hates referring to the aerial adventures Jesus had with the Devil. To put the matter bluntly, we feel that the *Daily Mail* has probably discovered that the Church has actually civilised the wonderful teachings of Jesus.

One other point. Why does the *Daily Mail* and similar journals, which talk so feelingly about the Church, leave out the doctrine of Hell? As Fr. J. Rickaby so eloquently put it, Hell "arises naturally out of the essential relationship between God and man." And the amiable Father insists that "the fire of Hell is a real fire." This is as it should be. Some of us are more than tired at the way in which so many Christians talk about Hell being a "state" within you. And we are sure that the *Daily Mail's* Church with its "lamp" will agree with Fr. Rickaby—when pressed to explain Hell. And so will the *Daily Mail*.

Theatre

The Rosenbergs, at Unity Theatre, is a dramatised version of this case from the events leading up to the arrest of the Rosenbergs until their execution. The authors, Eric Paice and William Bland, have taken pains to keep to facts and have succeeded in producing a creditable piece of work. At times the dialogue lacks crispness and falls short of theatrical requirements, but this is not surprising when we consider that the trial scene is a verbatim condensation without an added word. This has been skilfully done.

The authors have set out to emphasise the fact that the Rosenbergs and Morton Sobell—who got thirty years—were innocent and denied their guilt to the last, that they were convicted on false evidence, and that they were the victims of atom-spy hysteria whipped up by an unscrupulous American Press. In view of this, and despite the defending counsel giving sound reasons, the Chief Justice of the U.S.A. would not grant a retrial.

The fact that a miscarriage of law can lead to the execution of innocent people makes it all the more necessary to abolish the ancient and barbaric practice of capital punishment. The execution of these people served no other purpose than to satisfy the feelings of those who could not resist the onslaught of the Press, and allowed themselves to be emotionally unbalanced.

Though not a perfect play it is something not to be missed by all who treasure the liberties and human rights of man.

David Abrahams, Bernard Goldman, John Maitland and Rose Hiller gave notably good performances. Hart Hancock's production could be speeded up in places, otherwise it is satisfactory.

RAYMOND DOUGLAS

Sunny Morning

Dull was the day; and then the careless clouds
Fell down the sky to show the merry sun
Throwing good gold upon the begging throng.

The town burst into song.

Canary-coloured, fifty sparrows hopped
About the dustbins; every morning pail
Freckled with gleaming water as each wife
Scrubbed away for dear life.

Suddenly painted gold, the houses blazed
Into proud castles inhabited by kings;

The dust danced gilded from the sweeping brooms
In all the attic rooms.

The cats came out to sleep on window-sills
While unwatched mice nipped to the golden crumbs;
Dogs rolled and put all four feet in the air

Without a canine care.

And through drawn blinds a thousand arrows pierced
To prick the laggards from the drowsy sheets.

The day marched splendid down the burnished skies
With sunshine in its eyes.

JOHN O'HARE

THE FREETHINKER

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To Correspondents

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Lecture Notices should reach the Secretary of the N.S.S. at this Office by Friday morning.

Correspondents are requested to write on one side of the paper only and to make their letters as brief as possible.

Lecture Notices, Etc.

OUTDOOR

J. CLAYTON.—Sunday, October 25, 3-15 p.m., Padiham: A Lecture. Kingston Branch N.S.S. (Castle Street).—Every Sunday, 8 p.m.: Messrs. BARKER and MILLS.

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Deansgate Bomb Site).—Every weekday, 1 p.m.; Messrs. WOODCOCK and BARNES. Every Sunday, 3 p.m., at Platt Fields, a Lecture.

North London Branch (White Stone Pond, Hampstead Heath).—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch N.S.S. (Satis Cafe, 40, Cannon St., off New St.).—October 25, 7 p.m.: F. J. CORINA (Bradford), "World Population and Food."

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Mechanics' Institute).—Sunday, October 25, 6-45 p.m.: J. ARCHER, B.Com., "Religion—Has it been a Progressive Force?"

J. CLAYTON.—Sunday, October 25, 6-30 p.m., King's Hall Cinema, Accrington, "White Magic and Black."

Conway Discussion Circle (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Tuesday, October 27: A. D. HOWELL SMITH, "Psychical Research in Ancient Times."

Junior Discussion Group, South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Friday, October 23, 7-15 p.m.: B. O. WARWICK, "Television is a Menace to Society."

Leicester Secular Society (Humberstone Gate).—Sunday, October 25, 6-30 p.m.: A. HANCOCK, "Ego and Ethics."

Manchester N.S.S., R.P.A., Ethical Union Protest Meeting.—Sunday, October 25, 7 p.m., Chorlton Town Hall, Manchester. Chairman, Ald W. BROTHERTON, J.P. Speakers to include Capt. W. D. GRIFFITHS, M.P., H. LEVER, M.P., L. LEVER, M.P., W. H. OLDFIELD, M.P., the Rev. R. V. HOLT, and COLIN MCCALL (N.S.S.). Subject, "Broadcasting and Religion."

Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society (Technical College, Shakespeare St.).—Sunday, October 25, 2-30 p.m.: THE BISHOP OF WAKEFIELD, "Faith and Morals."

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, October 25, 11 a.m.: A. ROBERTSON, M.A., "Freedom and Necessity."

West London Branch N.S.S. (Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.).—Sunday, October 25, 7-15 p.m.: ALEX CRAIG, "Is there a Revival of Religion?"

Notes and News

Our respected contemporary, *The Manchester Guardian*, has recently published some informative figures on the state of religion in the U.S.A. These figures certainly indicate that "God's own country" has still a long way to go before it ceases to deserve this title. We subjoin the statement of our contemporary:—

"Some remarkable figures in the *Year Book of the American Churches*, show that over 92 million Americans are now members of Christian Churches, an increase of

3,604,000. The percentage of the increase is two and a-half times that of the increase in population. There is one church for every 325 members, but only one minister for every 500 members. The Protestant increase was 3.9 per cent., and the Roman Catholic 3.5 per cent.

"Compared with 1939, the incomes of ministers show a reduction in purchasing power of 12 per cent. In the same period, salaries of employees in manufacturing concerns went up by 42 per cent., and of government employees by 24 per cent.

"Commenting on this situation, Bishop Sherril, presiding Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church, says that 'the awesome power of atomic energy has raised a new interest in religion, especially in the colleges and universities'."

It rather looks as if, even in "God's own country," Mammon is gaining ground at the expense of God. Cannot the Virgin Mary appear in person in the U.S.A. to stop the financial rot? Or more prosaically, what about a whip round Wall Street on behalf of the depressed servants of God? However, the concluding appeal of Bishop Sherril will surprise no one acquainted with the origin and history of religion. Has not fear always been at the bottom of religion? Formerly, it was fear of the God-made lightning, now of the man-made atomic bomb. But fear remains the common and effective denominator. If science is the deadly enemy of religion, the prostitution of science for destruction threatens to become its best friend and to give a fresh lease of life to the moribund supernatural.

My Rational Anthem

By P. VICTOR MORRIS

WHAT to do when present at the playing of the British National Anthem appears to be troubling readers of *The Freethinker*. Which is as it should be. It is evidence that they are concerned to maintain personal integrity by squaring their public actions with their private thoughts. How to do this, however, is not easy to decide.

Of course, whether one is in favour of, tolerant towards or opposed to the institution of the British Crown, an invocation to any deity to preserve a king, queen or anybody else is equally complete nonsense to people like ourselves. We just cannot join in the performance. So far, however, there is not yet unanimity regarding how we ought to behave. Let us consider the alternatives.

To hurry away from the scene before the band strikes up is very common, but it would be the height of optimism for us to assume that this practice indicates a general spreading of either irreligious or republican sentiments. Nor is this at all satisfactory to those disaffected in one way or the other, for it at best merely avoids the problem instead of solving it. Besides, the growth of the habit has led numerous managements of theatrical, musical and sporting enterprises to arrange for the National Anthem to be played at the start of the shows rather than at the end!

A few doughty characters remain seated on such occasions, inviting insults from patriots of the "Three Cheers for the Red, White and Blue" sort. This might be worth while were it not more frequently treated with silent contempt by a majority ignorant of the nature of the scruples prompting it. When sincerity is almost certain to be mistaken for loutishness, and militate against the making of converts to our Cause, it seems to me that it is being displayed in the wrong way. We must look for a better one.

For a good many years, therefore, I have gone to the length of standing up for the playing of the National Anthem, keeping my lips closed and avoiding the stiff military posture that is, curiously, the most frequent response of unregimented Britons to the stimulus of the

opening chord of that work. By rising to my feet with studied slowness in a mildly protesting manner, by shuffling and fidgeting and by looking in every direction other than the orthodox straight-ahead, I have tried to appear an intelligent, informed, broad-minded individual anxious neither to flatter nor offend his fellows. Alas, I have all along had an uneasy suspicion that most people near me on such occasions have taken me for a foreign visitor doing his best to conform to an imperfectly understood rite!

Fortunately all that has now ended. Recent letters and articles in *The Freethinker* have stimulated me to do something about it, namely, to write my own words to go with the admirably impressive and (let us be thankful!) short composition of (it is said without adequate backing), Dr. John Bull. I do not advise anyone to attempt a similar task. The unknown writer or writers of the present anthem, and even Shelley himself, have demonstrated how difficult it is to treat the tune prosodically; and I have had confirmation of this in sleepless nights, headaches and scores of efforts destroyed in disgust before the appended

verse emerged. May my reward be the realisation of satisfaction many times in the future when I sing the following:—

Truth is a gracious thing,
Freedom a noble thing;
These names I hail.
Come, all mankind, unite.
Fear not Oppression's might.
By Truth and Freedom's light
Good shall prevail!

This, then, is the *Rational Anthem* with which I hope to turn to advantage experiences that can prove irritating and embarrassing if one has no means of coping with them adequately. I shall sing it whenever I am present at the playing of the *National Anthem*; not defiantly, but clearly and deliberately. Maybe it will excite a certain amount of interest when heard, which will be grist to our mill. This can, of course, be multiplied, if readers approving the idea also take it up.

The Delusions of Spiritualism—3

By H. CUTNER

LOOKING through Mr. Arthur Findlay's *Where Two Worlds Meet*, which he describes as "Conversations between this world and the next"—it is a big book of 624 pages—the principal thing which struck me was the number of "God bless you's" with which the book is packed. The conversations reported are between Mr. John Sloan, the medium, and a large number of people plying him and his spirits with questions. Mr. Sloan always managed to get a "guide" or relatives of the people from Summerland (or Etheria) to join in the conversations, and all these people appear to have had God Almighty or the Great Master Teacher either on their minds or even present with them. Moreover, all the seances began with a well-known but (to outsiders like myself) a particularly dreary hymn. This was to get the right, reverent atmosphere, so as to enable spirits not merely "to obey the will of those above us," and "to follow in the higher footsteps," but to get the unfortunate earth-bound people to appreciate what a heavenly paradise they were going to eventually.

Speaking for myself, I can only say that after carefully reading the reports of a dozen of these conversations, I marvel that anybody with Mr. Findlay's intelligence could possibly imagine they were anything but a farrago of nonsense.

Mrs. Sloan from Etheria appears to keep on saying, "May the blessing of God the Father be with you all, you dear people," as often as she can get a word in edgewise; and the other people seem to want nothing better to do than to sing "Praise God from Whom all blessings flow," or "Nearer my God to Thee," or they recite the Doxology; and Mr. Findlay adds to his report of the conversations a sort of sermon. I am not clear yet whether he believes that there is a God Almighty—though he constantly refers to a "Great Master Teacher" who is, I think, Jesus of Nazareth, the one Great Master Teacher among a host of Christs. And, of course, like all Spiritualists, Mr. Findlay is a stout opponent of Materialism—he accuses us, for example, of having "an answer for everything." Here again, I am not sure whether he knows what he is talking about; though not for worlds do I want to do him an injustice.

I cannot, in this article, deal with Materialism—but it suffices to say that we Materialists have *not* an answer for everything. All we say is that, as far as it is possible to understand Nature, there appears no sign of any "spirit" or "soul" or a "vital force" anywhere, the creation of a

God. Mr. Findlay thinks differently, and he has every right to think as he pleases. But if he writes about Materialism, he must expect to be criticised.

And he seems to be very angry also that his theory about Etheria has not been taken up by the scientific world, and accepted as Gospel truth. He thinks because he found the medium Sloan so wonderful a person, so should every scientist. But if the specimens of Sloan's erudition of "revelations" given in *Where Two Worlds Meet* prove the existence of Etheria, all I can say is that our scientific men would have been insane to accept such drivel.

Somebody called "Pathfinder" put forward as a spirit by Sloan and accepted as genuine by Mr. Findlay, fills pages of unmitigated rubbish—for example, this comes from him and is what Mr. Findlay calls "poetry":—

O Light of Light, shine on these friends,
Who are so dear to me,
And keep them safely on the road,
Towards Thine eternity.
O Light of Light, shine on these friends,
Help them to do Thy Will,
That they may taste the joys of life,
Until their hearts are full.

Words fail me!

"Pathfinder" constantly reminds his hearers that "the loved ones, who have left this vale of tears, are happy in the Summerland beyond all doubts and fears." And his black girls are, thank heaven, no longer black, they are "not of any particular colour now."

One little black girl was taught, not only English, but "the language of other countries." She spoke "fluently French." Her name was Sophie Sunshine and she called a man present "a very beautiful man." Page upon page is filled with similar lovely thoughts.

For example, Mrs. Sloan "from beyond" tells us about the "lovely walks we have sometimes." The spirits never tire. When they come to "a beautiful lake" they cross in something like a boat, or are just "wafted over," why have any boats at all, if one can get wafted over. Fruits and flowers are in perpetual growth with "no death just a fading." And you are solemnly told that when you "shuffle off this mortal coil and put on immortality" (have I not heard this before?) "you will expand, and go forward to the peace, the beauties of the land, the Summerland of God."

And again—Summerland has any sort of music you want without the expense of buying a piano or a radio set.

and if you have a beautiful voice here, you will have one even better when you "shuffle off this mortal coil." Generally, a hymn suited for the occasion is sung when one of the spirits gets tired, such as "They are winging, they are winging," which probably brightens them up; though, for my part, a little liquor refreshment might have revived a drooping spirit much better.

And here is a specimen of a spirit at his most intelligent. It is Sloan's spirit son saying good-bye: "This is Dougal Sloan speaking to you. Good night Dad. Cheerio, everyone. I will come again and I will meet you on this side again. Be bright, be happy and be joyful." This was, be it noted, cheerily given on the 18th of January, 1945, when London was trying to bear the shock of V1 and V2 rockets.

Open this book anywhere and you will find it packed with such infantile trash as "You are sitting there cross-legged and that is not polite," "I just wish you could be as happy as I am," "I speak ver' good English, I British. British race best part of the world"; "We shall all meet again in God's good time," "I will do all I can to help you," "Did you say I was killed? I am not dead"; "A mother's hands and a mother's arms are very supporting," and "God bless all of you" repeated *ad lib*.

There is, naturally, some attempt on the part of those present to get some intelligible description of Summerland—but, as far as I can understand "Fiery Star" or "Pathfinder" or other Indian "guides," their account of Etheria is that it is exactly like this world but in another "vibration." It proves how very difficult it is to invent a world different from ours. Mr. Findlay does his best to comment on his book in showing that Summerland is simply this world with "evil" bowled out. Everything is lovely. Everybody is kind and good. There is no money question, you can't work and, if you hanker after anything, a cigar, a drink, a TV set, or even the seaside, you can make it yourself by *wishing* for it. It is all as easy as that.

Not a scrap of evidence has been produced in this big book that there is anything in Summerland except the ravings of Mr. John Sloan; but as Mr. Findlay will strongly object to this, I will deal in another article with some of his own comments which he fondly believes do supply the necessary evidence. But I trust that he realises that I am not in the least in sympathy with Spiritualism, and that it is impossible for me, therefore, to accept as evidence the childish chatter of a lot of people invented by the medium, utterly unable to get away from whatever he has learnt—and that is not much—in this world. Sloan was a sort of voluble, male Mrs. Piper, and we know that she ridiculed the idea that she was either possessed by spirits or that spirits spoke through her.

Marriage in Spain

By CARLOS DE ITALICA

Marriage in Spain, a country in which the Church has probably more power over the people than any other, is a serious matter when both parties have to consider that there is no divorce. It is more serious still when one of the contracting parties is not Roman Catholic but Jewish, for the wise men of Rome have to be satisfied that a Roman Catholic girl will remain as she is and that the off-spring will be brought up in the faith.

I recently attended such a marriage between a Jew of pre-inquisition Spanish stock and a Spanish girl. Matters were made easier by the Jew not being orthodox, but even a Dispensation had to be obtained from Rome for which application was made, through the local bishop, two months beforehand. Every assurance was given that

Dispensation would be received in good time. The bridegroom's family from England had gathered in the small town in southern Spain for the occasion, everything was prepared but no Dispensation had come. The bishop was away, but the local vicar promised to act and sent a cable to the Vatican. This brought a reply in a couple of days, so there was then a visit to the vicarage in order that the unbelieving bridegroom could be sworn to observe the demands of Rome. At the vicarage, which included a church and in which a most unholy semi-silence reigned, it was noticeable that the barred windows (without which no Spanish building is complete) were covered with small-mesh wire netting through which attack would be difficult even with a pea-shooter. The gentlemen of the Church take no risks.

A document was read to the bridegroom in Spanish, in which he undertook not to interfere in his wife's religion and to see that the children be brought up in the Roman Catholic faith. The vicar and two priests present witnessed his signature.

The ceremony took place at the bride's house, an altar having been erected at one end of a spacious hall. The vicar, who officiated, abstained from using Latin and confined the proceedings to a brief fifteen minutes, after which he departed and the family once again relaxed and prepared for the wedding breakfast which was held at a local hotel and—but for the food, which was good—was not unlike the same kind of thing in England. The couple returned to the bride's house to change, while the rest of the family went into town to celebrate, so that there was no send-off as we know it in England.

You may wonder how it is that so much importance was attached to the Dispensation from Rome. As far as I could gather it would not be impossible to find a priest to perform the ceremony without Dispensation, but the family would become black-listed and consequently ostracised. To any hardened English atheist this would be a most happy condition, but we must consider the power that the Church has over the family life of the Spanish people. It is essentially a Roman Catholic country, but although you may preach and try to instil dogma into the people you cannot force them to accept it. A family in Spain may well resent the strength of the Church, but they dare not go against it. If you are the father of a sizeable family, you have to rely on your local ecclesiastics to give you recommendations so that your sons can obtain good working positions. If you fall out with them nothing can help you, not even a recommendation from the best connected of the aristocracy. To be ostracised by the Church in Spain is more harmful than the worst forms of colour-bar.

So, with the bride's two brothers protesting in the strongest terms that Spain is ruled from Rome, I could not help feeling some admiration for these people who are so firmly oppressed by the heel of the Vatican. Perhaps from among these people there will emerge one who has the strength to liberate them. Such an event is long overdue.

ASK AT YOUR LIBRARY

"Byzantium into Europe." By Jack Lindsay. Published by the Bodley Head, 28, Little Russell Street, London, W.C. 1. 485 pages, price 37s. 6d.

JACK LINDSAY has made a reputation for himself as a classical scholar and, from every standpoint, this latest work of his is the greatest that he has yet produced.

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The book is well illustrated with half-tone plates and also with line drawings. This volume may be beyond the purses of many of our readers, but it will generally be found that if we ask and keep on asking at the library, and get our friends to do likewise, Libraries Committees will place practically any book on their shelves. That has been my own personal experience.

Being unhampered by any religious shibboleths, Mr. Lindsay examines all the different religions with an open mind.

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This book is not only one to read but also one to study. It cannot be read in a casual manner as one reads a novel. There is so much here that provides food for thought, so much debunking of misrepresentations which many, even apparently intelligent people, have come to accept because they have never been presented with the facts. That excuse will no longer serve. To those of us whose proud motto is that "we seek for Truth," this book will provide us with a valuable key to knowledge.

F. A. HORNIBROOK.

Correspondence

OUR GREATEST ENEMY

SIR,—I have tidings from the Americas. Bible propaganda. The "good book" is the world's best-seller, I'm assured, most of the copies being given away. It should be. But who reads it? As a world-traveller I have seen what happens to a lot of these gift bibles in far-off places. They do duty as waste paper, fire-lighters, etc. Nothing could be more foggy, dull and out-moded reading, even to those who *can* read it. The mob take it to be holy by reason of the Old English of it. Modernise the style and it would be seen as just old legend, myth and folklore. Still, most humans are slow-minded and hypnotised by ancient usages. They have a fixation. What they were first taught *must* be true! That good book is the Freethinker's greatest enemy, the worst brake on progress.—Yours, etc.,
J. F. K.

STATE-MADE KILLERS

SIR,—I was amused at the rather 19th-century self-congratulation in the final paragraph of "This Believing World" (October 9, 1953).

I have no statistics to hand, but I should say that considerably more than a million people were killed in the recent war. It was not due to the activities of the Africans. Nor was it they who put the Jews and Gypsies in the Nazi death camps, nor were they responsible for the dropping of the atom-bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It was not they who were to blame for the murderous attacks on helpless civilians indulged in by the air forces of Allies and Axis alike.

I hold no brief for Chaka. Kings, emperors and dictators are all the same under the skin, whether that skin be white, black or yellow. But they are less to blame than the slavish multitudes who allow them to take power over them. The State is everywhere a murderous institution, in Zululand the same as everywhere else. Let us stop flinging mud at each other, and try and build up a society where it will not exist. It will slay us one and all if we don't.—Yours, etc.,

ARTHUR W. ULOTH.

OUR RIGHT TO PROTEST

SIR,—In replying to the letter of Basil J. Edgcombe (*The Freethinker*, July 17), I must first beg a little space to give your readers an explanation of the form of my former letter to which B.J.E. takes exception. It was written as an article, not as a letter, but a portion only was printed as a letter and, not only the middle but the portion which I considered the most important, was thus omitted. This was an appeal to our movement to put in the very forefront of our activities the contact with and strengthening of our international links, particularly through the W.B.F.T. Some countries that formerly sent representatives having fallen out, I pleaded the vital need of trying to contact the same, while I heartily welcomed the work done by *The Freethinker* in its news and articles by foreign workers. This being so, in the portion published an entirely undue importance is given to my reference to the sentiments expressed by Mr. Edgcombe, who so far from trying to support his previous bellicose opinions, roars like any sucking dove for tolerance and against my sad lack of the same. (I may note in passing that "toleration" seems to be the watchword of all who ask us to compromise with even superstition and evil that our movement was organised to right attention" not only to our own so-called National Anthem, but to that of any other sovereign state in the world on the plea that "anthems represent the peoples of the country." Comment on this is not called for. I respect the peoples of all lands, but know that, for example, God save the monarch does not represent the homeless multitudes who are taxed to provide several whole villages, besides palaces, for one parasitical family. And when we protest against this, we are told by B.J.E. that we are disloyal (to what?), that the Government is benevolent to permit articles and letters to be printed without our having to give "one backward glance over the shoulder or fear of a night knock on the door of our house," and the writer of this stuff has the impertinence to charge myself and those who think like me with "intolerance."—Yours, etc.,
JAMES H. MATSON

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*

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