

The Freethinker

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Editor: F. A. RIDLEY

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THE religious world has recently been shaken by the appearance of a booklet* published by *The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K.)*, which sharply criticises the Roman Catholic Church from the point of view of the Anglican "Church of England." People, nowadays, do not appear to be much interested in technical theological controversy: it is part of the intellectual make-up of our age, which is one of intense ecclesiastical intrigue but, notwithstanding this, is an age of intellectual indifference to religion as such. However, His Grace the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, fresh from his spectacular rôle in the Coronation ceremonies, evidently feels that the time has now arrived when a stand must be made against the growing power of his Roman rival. So, accordingly, an opportune reference to the S.P.C.K. booklet by His Grace made it, overnight, a "best seller," and the subject one of national controversy.

—VIEWS and OPINIONS—

Infallible Fallacies

—By F. A. RIDLEY—

The Worm Turns!

That the Anglican Church should make, eventually, some kind of a stand against the growing arrogance and power of Roman Catholicism is, after all, hardly surprising: even a worm is said to turn at times; though we must confess that, in the sphere of biology, we have never actually observed this evolutionary permutation! In the ecclesiastical sphere, the "Church of England by law Established" has had a good deal to put up with from the growing pretensions of her Roman rival and would-be supplanter. For the past half-century the Church of Rome, once scornfully denounced by one of Dr. Fisher's predecessors as "The Italian mission," has been gaining ground steadily, at the expense of the "Church of England" in particular. The figures of church attendance actually compiled over the past half-century by Messrs. Rowntree and Lavers in their work on *English Life and Leisure*, recently reviewed in these columns, indicate this growth statistically. Whilst, socially, the Catholic processions which may, nowadays, be observed parading publicly up and down our streets, would have provoked riots in the good old Protestant days of that staunch "Defender of the (Protestant) Faith," Queen Victoria. Then "The Church of England" had some claim to its self-assumed title: to-day, "The Church of England" actually appears to be the Church of only a minority, and a rapidly shrinking minority, of the English people.

The Irish Mission

The Archbishops of Canterbury, unlike their more pretentious—shall we say?—stepbrothers of Rome, do not profess that their public utterances are necessarily infallible. Nor are they so in actual fact. For example, the famous description of the Church of Rome by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Frederick Temple, as "The Italian mission," was historically inaccurate: actually, the words

used should have been, "The *Irish* mission." For, as we have indicated previously in this column, the modern revival of Roman Catholicism in Britain owes far more to Irish than to Italian immigration: shortage of potatoes in the Ireland of "The Hungry Forties" played a much bigger part in building up the Church of Rome in England and Scotland than was accomplished by either the fulminations of the Vatican or the subtle dissertations of Cardinal Newman, Manning, and their former colleagues in "The Oxford Movement." If his biographers are to be believed, St. Patrick originally emigrated from Britain to Erin: in modern times, his Irish converts have repaid the spiritual debt!

The Anglican Church has, to-day, every reason to be alarmed at the present Irish-Roman revival: for it cannot be denied that Anglicanism has fallen on evil days.

"A House Divided"

Socially, the traditional Church of the squirearchy, of, *par excellence*, the English "gentry," finds itself reduced to the support of a vanishing class: super-tax and death-duties have played havoc with "the squire and his relations," with "the rich man in his castle," for whom prayers were so religiously offered up in the parish churches of England during the heyday of Anglicanism. For if ever there was a class-Church, "The Church of England" was that Church. To-day, that Church is socially undermined and theologically divided, and we have the highest possible Christian authority for the statement that "a House divided against itself cannot stand"! The English Church of to-day, which includes *The Church Times* and Dr. Barnes, is in no position to oppose a united front against either the present Vatican counter-offensive or the more subtle but, ultimately, even more destructive, ravages of scepticism.

"Kaput"

Theologically speaking, the old Anglican theology of "The Middle Way" has largely broken down: the facing-both-ways theology, the classic formulation of which is to be found in the Thirty-nine Articles—each of which has something like thirty-nine meanings!—has now broken down. The old Bible-banging Protestant evangelical school, which dominated English religion in the era of Paine and Bradlaugh, and against the bibliolatry of which *The Age of Reason* was originally written, has now been relegated to the ecclesiastical wings. The dominant ecclesiastical school in the present-day Anglican Church, the Anglo-Catholics, only requires a more intelligent policy on the part of the Vatican to go over *en bloc* to Rome. If Rome would only permit the Anglo-Catholic clergy to keep their wives—as in the Roman Catholic "Uniate" churches in the East—and to celebrate Mass in English, the exodus would begin at once! And, without the Anglo-Catholics, the one school of thought in the Anglican

* *Infallible Fallacies*.

Church which has both some inherent vitality and some popular backing, Dr. Fisher's Church would be, to use an expressive European phrase, "Kaput"!

"God is Totalitarian"

Dr. Fisher's outspoken attack on the Roman Catholic Church has led to a vigorous controversy even in the popular Press, which only becomes interested in theological arguments when an emergency arises. In the course of numerous letters written by agitated supporters of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the topical term, "Totalitarian," was frequently applied to the Church of Rome. However, is this a very serious accusation from the religious standpoint? For, as a Jesuit preacher relevantly observed in reply, "God is Totalitarian." Obviously, this

must be so if one accepts the elementary logic of religion. What else can he possibly be? It is because the Church of Rome recognises and consistently acts up to this underlying assumption that we rank its "survival value" as higher than that of the Protestant Churches, including that theological hybrid, the Church of England. We assume that Charles Bradlaugh reasoned according to a similar logic when he made the historic affirmation that the final struggle would be between Rome and Reason. A century ago, when the Founder of the National Secular Society went on record with this then seemingly improbable forecast, the immediate future did not appear likely to go in Bradlaugh's way. To-day, it is becoming increasingly clear what a far-sighted prophet was the most famous English Atheist.

An American Looks at Europe

By IRA D. CARDIFF

WE hear much these days about saving Europe. The meaning of this idea is a hazy one, like most popular thinking. "Saving Europe," to the business man and the economist refers to our European trade; our militarist thinks of Europe as a region for the exercise of his strategic activities and adventures; the good Catholic has visions of the recovery of the lost dominions of the Church and the combat of atheism; the social uplifter visualises a bottle of milk each day for the under-nourished babies; while to the unthinking, propagandised public generally, it means saving this region from Communism, of which many people have the most hazy and variegated conceptions. One and all, they forget that Europe has always been full of starving babies, large numbers of communists and atheists, and that its trade with America will probably never again be what it was during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Have we ever stopped to ask ourselves whether Europe is worth "saving"? Is she worth the price we must pay to "save" her? *Furthermore, will she stay saved?* Europe has, in the past, made certain contributions to human betterment, chiefly in science, technology, literature and art. However, she has also been a great handicap to the race in many ways. In these days of hysteria, propaganda, pressure groups and fuzzy thinking, few stop to analyse or evaluate the feasibility of our aims, our efforts or our motives.

Let us have a look at this small corner of the earth known as Europe—and let us exclude Russia from the Europe we wish to appraise, since no effort is being made by the Western Powers to save Russia. Europe thus considered has a land area of approximately 1,824,000 square miles. The thirty independent nations comprising this area have a total population of 377,000,000. Thus Europe embraces but 3 per cent. of the land area of the globe and contains only 16 per cent. of the world's population. (Bear these figures in mind. They are based upon the last census reports available just previous to world War II.) Though this very small corner of the world may appear insignificant in many respects, it stands out in bold relief in at least one particular. It definitely holds first place in all the world and in all time in the number and magnitude of its wars. Its populations or its nations hold the palm for quarrelsomeness. Every nation in Europe has quarrelled and fought with every other nation at some time or other, and some of them many, many times.

A careful check of the historical records of this small section of humanity reveals the fact that it has had a war almost every year for the past thousand years. To be exact, an examination of the record from the organisation

of the Holy Roman Empire in the years 962 to 1862, a period of 900 years, reveals that Europe had 782 wars—in other words, an average of a war every fourteen months. More correctly, she has been continuously at war for near a millenium. Many, in fact most, of these wars were extensive, sanguinary conflicts of considerable duration. It has been no uncommon thing for Europe to have more than one war going at one time, and sometimes three or four of them. While a portion of these wars were conducted upon a "civilised" basis (if any war can be called civilised), most of them were savage in the extreme. Especially was this true when religious issues were involved. In the latter case, the atrocities indulged in would put to shame the most savage American Apache.

It should be noted that in listing these 728 wars, there have not been included the various and sundry religious persecutions of the period, unless they were accompanied by organised warfare. Throughout this entire period there has existed in almost all European countries from time to time, serious persecution of the Jews. This has varied in intensity from residential restrictions and excessive taxation to extreme torture and wholesale murder, comparable in intensity to the persecutions which the Jews themselves earlier perpetrated upon *their* neighbours (Numbers xxxi. 17 and 18, 2 Samuel xii. 31). Likewise, although the persecutions of the Calvinists in Scotland and Switzerland, and of Mohammedans in the south-east, were horrible, all of these together were tame in comparison with the atrocities of the Holy Inquisition which hung like a pall over Europe for many centuries. This hideous institution burned at the stake hundreds of thousands of the best people of the country, persons whose only crime was independent thinking. These atrocities are without parallel elsewhere in the world. Nor is there included in this count the eight or ten Crusades which were, in effect, devastating wars.

Having formed the habit of quarrelling and fighting with their neighbours for a thousand years, can we expect these Europeans will reform in a generation? Having indulged in several times more wars in the past thousand years than have all of the remaining 85 per cent. of the world's population in all its existence, these belligerent Europeans have formed a fixed habit of hate and hostility. Further, is the remainder of the world to be drawn into their maelstrom of murder every few years? Here we have 16 per cent. of the world's population, occupying but 3 per cent. of its area, keeping the world in a constant turmoil with its insane brawls. That 16 per cent. of the human race should be permitted to involve the remaining 84 per cent. in a perpetual turmoil is absurd. (To be concluded.)

A Case for Suspended Judgment

By P. VICTOR MORRIS

THE suspension of the Constitution of British Guiana is something upon which hardly anybody in this country is really well informed. We all know that the British Government has taken action against the elected Ministers of the People's Progressive Party and has issued a White Paper which has been the subject of a parliamentary debate.

As a Secularist I found the accusations against the six P.P.P. Ministers, as set out in the White Paper, a very mixed bag. That they had removed the ban on the entry of West Indian Communists into their country, that they had introduced a Bill to repeal the Undesirable Publications Ordinance, and that they had formulated a plan to secularise the schools seemed to me wise and progressive measures against repressive and totalitarian legacies from the previous regime. Perhaps this partiality for the freedom of people to hear all sides of a question, and the right of children to be safeguarded from religious indoctrination, made me over-critical of the White Paper, but, whatever the reason, I came to the conclusion, after reading it, that it was very largely made up of very special pleading, in which any stick would do to belabour Dr. Jagan and his associates.

That same evening I worked somewhat later than usual at the office and had the good fortune to notice, as I was on my way towards Holborn, that a meeting was being held at the Holborn Hall. I saw two police officers entering, so followed them. On the way up the stairs I asked what the meeting was about, and was informed that Dr. Jagan and Mr. Burnham would be addressing it on the subject of British Guiana. As I entered the hall I heard one of the police officers tell the coloured steward at the door that he had a notice to serve on the organiser of the meeting.

The meeting was a packed one, and a large crowd outside was unable to gain admittance. For a time the latter heard the proceedings by loudspeaker, but the police later ordered the relaying of the speeches to be discontinued. What I wish to report is that I heard various Guianese speakers, including the Leader of the House of Assembly (Dr. C. B. Jagan) and the Minister for Education (Mr. L. F. S. Burnham) give their version of the events leading up to the sending of troops to Georgetown and the suspension of the Constitution. It was a recital of long-existing grievances of the workers of British Guiana, accusations of nepotism against British officials, and a point-by-point refutation by Dr. Jagan of many of the charges brought against him and his colleagues in the White Paper. He was followed by Mr. Burnham, who dealt with the reforms of his country's educational system proposed by the P.P.P.

The speakers struck me, a political "independent," as truthful men sincerely concerned to free their country from a white domination that is not as progressive as circumstances require. The next day, after reading newspaper reports of the debate in the House of Commons, I remained unconvinced that the action of our Government was justified; nor was I at all impressed by the condemnation of the Guianese Ministers that formed part of the Labour Party's amendment to the Government motion.

I understand that the case of the P.P.P. is to be stated at public meetings all over the country, and I hope that Secularists will endeavour to attend them and compare what they hear with the official pronouncements of the Colonial Office. If we allow freedom of speech and publication and a movement towards secular education to become crimes in the Colonies, how long before they become the same here?

The Late F. C. C. Watts

For over 100 years, the Watts family have been intimately connected with Freethought; and the sad death of Fred Watts (as he was affectionately known to a large circle of friends) has removed the last of its male members—all of whom have left their names high on the list of soldiers in the best of causes. The eldest of the family was John Watts, a brilliant writer, who died all too young in 1866. His brother Charles made a great reputation as a lecturer and a formidable debater, edited Secular journals, and wrote innumerable pamphlets which can still do service. Charles Watts died in 1906, but by then his son, Charles A. Watts, had not only helped to found the Rationalist Press Association, but was rapidly beginning to be known as the enterprising and audacious publisher of cheap reprints of the most famous Rationalist works of his generation—by Darwin, Haeckel, Huxley, Clifford, Grant Allen, Herbert Spencer and many other world-famous writers. These carried the creed of Rationalism all over the world and inflicted a heavy blow on all religions.

Born in 1896, educated at Highgate School, Fred Watts joined his father after World War I and soon was engrossed in the business of publishing Rationalist and other liberal works. Both Charles A. Watts and Fred Watts had a flare for choosing the right books—and authors—and the "Thinker's Library," launched in 1928, gave the public a magnificent series of first-class works, beautifully bound and printed, for the sum of 1s. each. It was a triumph, both for publishing and Rationalism.

In the meantime, on the retirement of Charles A. Watts, his son took over the Editorship of both the *Literary Guide* and the *Rationalist Annual*, putting in an enormous amount of work which was only increased with the advent of World War II. After the death of his father in 1946, Fred Watts bravely carried on as chairman of the R.P.A. and managing director of Watts & Co., under the added strain of ill-health, and on October 21 last died of thrombosis. One might well add, he died "in harness" and, like his father and grandfather, was a brave soldier for the cause of Rationalism.

The death of his daughter Doreen in 1948 was a tragic blow; and to his widow, ever his devoted companion, and his surviving daughter, all of us who knew Fred Watts personally (and, we are sure, the readers of this journal also) tender our sincerest sympathies. H. C.

Modern and Christian?

"WE read of all these modern discoveries about the Bible and Jesus Christ, Captain. Don't they make you feel unhappy?"

"Not a bit. I read all the modern books I can myself. I even read *The Freethinker* sometimes. I can quite honestly say this, that modern discoveries and translations have done nothing to upset people's faith in a personal God, and a personal Saviour. If anyone is prepared to read those books, etc., with an open mind, he will see that the only explanation of life is God; the only salvation for fallen humanity is Jesus Christ."

"Has nothing changed then?"

"Yes, a good deal has changed, we are bound to admit that. Some false gods and beliefs have been knocked on the head. Even the opponents of Christianity keep changing their view point. The true Christian has nothing to fear from science, atheism, free thinking, or modern criticism of the Bible and the Early Church."—From *The Church Army Gazette*, October 24, 1953.

WHAT IS RELIGION? By Colonel R. G. Ingersoll. Price 2d.; postage 1½d.

This Believing World

The Archbishop of Canterbury, one of whose well-paid jobs is to boost the Bible, is very sick at the almost complete ignorance nearly everybody shows of God's Precious Word. He recently rightly pointed out that last century most people really knew their Bible and read it regularly, and he wants us all to go back to those dear old days when the parson—or at least a bishop—was somebody in the land. What are they now? Alas, they are for the most part ignored. And with them is the almost complete indifference people show when Obadiah or Malachi or even Matthew is quoted.

The Churches are doing their utmost to bring their sheep back to the Bible which is being freshly translated whenever someone thinks he can do it—as if any translation can make this mixture of Oriental legend and myth anything but a mass of hopeless credulity. And at last, even the sheep are beginning to see how they have been fooled by the Bible. The grand old days of Bible-reading have gone for ever.

It is also most amusing to note that the Home Secretary, at his wit's end to cope with what is called "juvenile delinquency", claims that only more religious teaching and belief can in the ultimate eliminate it. There are, he was obliged to admit, other causes than the lack of religion, but that was the principal cause. But how does he explain the fact that very nearly all prisoners, young and old, insist that they *are* religious, and that therefore they must have a Prison Chaplain; while there are so few—if any—unbelievers in prison, that the Home Office rigidly refuses to appoint any "Secular" Chaplain? In other words, it is the very religious and not the unbelievers who commit crimes and go to prison. Will the Home Secretary explain why?

Ghosts, whether with bloody heads tucked under their arms, or with only screaming skulls visible, are always news and our sensational journals appear ever ready to rake up the old, old stories or print details of new ones. We are, therefore, not surprised to find the *Sunday Pictorial* filling pages with lurid lush about them, especially as these stories are sponsored by the Society for Psychical Research. They are guaranteed by Mr. G. N. M. Tyrrell who is described "as one of Britain's foremost researchers into the supernatural" with an "acutely original mind" and one who has "probably penetrated more deeply into the spectral world than any scientifically trained investigators" since *Phantasms of the Living* was published in 1886.

It is thus that legends are created and perpetuated for the truth really is that Tyrrell was about the most hopelessly credulous member the S.P.R. ever encountered. He was ready to believe the silliest stories, particularly of "poltergeists"; but, in any case, his whole attitude towards psychic phenomena was that of an out-and-out believer in spooks. Nothing was too silly for him to believe—and this is the great authority put forward by the *Sunday Pictorial* to influence readers in the "supernatural." There are plenty of explanations of "ghosts", but not one can prove the reality of anything supernatural and they prove only the extreme credulity of most people—like Tyrrell himself.

The one significant characteristic of Christianity is its ability to favour "disunity" rather than "unity" among its followers. The latest example is the "holy" row over a Protestant pamphlet against the Roman Church just published. During the nineteenth century hundreds of attacks on Rome regularly appeared, some very violent, and most very contemptuous of Popish claims. But they

are forgotten—much to the joy of Rome, and our British Catholics were hoping that it would not be very long before God's Own Church would oust all rivals. And now comes a bombshell just like one of those horrid nineteenth century attacks, and lots and lots of people were reading it! What a pity that such blasphemy can no longer be suppressed, that the Smithfield fires can never again be lighted, and that there are still people who believe it necessary "to crush the infamous" without the "infamous" being able to do anything about it. "Unity" in the Church of Christ—don't make us laugh!

Theatre

Wish You Were Here, at the London Casino, is a new musical comedy from America.

Most of us are aware of certain customs and colloquialisms through which it is possible to recognise survival of paganism, and much can be read into this show which—intentionally or not—reflects the old religion. The story centres round a girl engaged to an elderly man. She manages, by some flimsy excuse about her health, to spend a holiday without him at a holiday camp and right away is persuaded to discard her engagement ring which might be regarded as a denial of a Christian bond. Then there follows an orgy of light-hearted but aimless amusement in which sex plays a prominent part, and in which the rather licentious contacts between big boy and little girl cannot be far removed from the obscene practices in pagan ritual. In actual fact it may be regarded as the authors' and producer's idea of an American holiday camp to-day, but instead of taking us a step forward it seems to have regressed a few centuries.

The music is pleasant, but only one or two melodies are outstanding. The show lacks any form of sustained dancing, and the two most prominent characters—Shanti Wallis and Dickie Henderson—are given slender opportunities of showing their versatility. The play is by Arthur Kober and Joshua Logan, with music and lyrics by Harold Rome.

Volpone, by Ben Jonson, at the King's Theatre. Hammer-smith, is produced by Donald Wolfitt, and in it he plays the leading part. His is a splendid performance of a remarkable play which satirises the society of Jonson's time, and in which we are appalled by the daring and cunning hoaxes of Volpone—with the help of Mosca, his servant—to extract handsome gifts from others. But he is not allowed to get away with it, and in a court scene which is in keeping with the rest of the satire he is fully dispossessed of his wealth.

Rosalind Iden fulfils the part of the greatly wronged Celia most adequately, and one cannot easily imagine a better Mosca than John Wynyard.

The next play in this repertory will be **A New Way to Pay Old Debts**, by Philip Massinger.

Vienna Ballet at the Princes Theatre is notable for having only female dancers. Into "The Star Gazer" we could read a form of pagan worship, and likewise there is something folklorical in "Fairy Tale." Also in "The Wine Presser Dance" we are shown something of an ancient pagan dance in which sacrifice to the gods of wine is made.

These dancers are light and their form is good, but their various turns lack variety in style.

RAYMOND DOUGLAS.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CHURCH. By Colonel Ingersoll. Price 2d.; postage 1d.

THE FREETHINKER

41, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1.
Telephone: Holborn 2601.

To Correspondents

THE FREETHINKER will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad): One year, £1 4s. (in U.S.A., \$3.50); half-year, 12s.; three months, 6s. Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 41, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1, and not to the Editor.

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

Blackburn Branch N.S.S. (Market Place).—Every Sunday, 7 p.m.: FRANK ROTHWELL.

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

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Mechanics' Institute).—Sunday, November 8, 6-45 p.m.: COLIN MCCALL (Manchester), "Modern Materialism—a Scientific Philosophy."

Conway Discussion Circle (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Tuesday, November 10: Mr. E. BURCHETT, "Toys and Fairy Tales in Education."

Leicester Secular Society (Humberstone Gate).—Sunday, November 8, 6-30 p.m.: JACK JOHNSON, M.A., "Materialism To-day."

Manchester Humanist Fellowship (Cross Street Chapel).—Saturday, November 7, 3 p.m.: ALISTAIR LINDSAY, M.A., "The Woman I Want."

Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society (Technical College, Shakespeare Street).—Sunday, November 8, 2-30 p.m.: Prof. F. A. THOMPSON, "A Visit to the New China."

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, November 8, 11 a.m.: S. K. RATCLIFFE, "The Literary Horizon."

West London Branch N.S.S. (Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.).—Sunday, November 8, 7-15 p.m.: F. A. RIDLEY, "The Cato Street Conspiracy." Readers who would like to visit Horniman's Museum are asked to meet the guide, Mr. J. M. Alexander, on Saturday, November 7, Charing Cross Underground, at 11 a.m.

NOTES AND NEWS

Mr. William Kent, who for many years has been a contributor to *The Freethinker*, has prepared a new list of books and of lectures. He is prepared to lecture to any branch of the N.S.S. or kindred society *without fee*. He does not mind travelling any distance provided that in addition to the fare, where necessary, bed and breakfast are provided. He does not have suppers. His address is 71, Union Road, London, S.W.4. (MAC 2007).

Some correspondence which has reached this office in recent months appears to indicate a certain confusion on the part of some of our correspondents with regard to the nature of Freethought in general and to the function of a Freethinking journal such as ours. Thus, we have been taken to task for publishing letters from Roman Catholic clerics and other opponents of Freethinking, as well as for publishing articles that are critical of materialist philosophy. With regard to the first of these criticisms, it has always been the custom of *The Freethinker* to publish any relevant comments that our opponents may have to make:

such conduct is, in our submission, of the essence of *Freethought*.

In continuing this practice, the present editor is only carrying on the time-honoured tradition of his distinguished predecessors, Mr. Foote and Mr. Cohen. To employ a somewhat hackneyed phrase: ours is not a coward's castle. It is only a weak case that has reason to fear opposition.

With reference to the second criticism: we note a regrettable disposition on the part of some of our correspondents to regard Freethought as a sort of Church, with fixed dogmas which are apparently sacrosanct and above criticism. Apart from the somewhat paradoxical conception of a philosophy based on evolution claiming, or so it would appear, finality, we dissent altogether from such a conception of Freethought. Ideas are fluid, and scientific concepts are usually only provisional in character. We have no desire to equate our Rationalist philosophy with concepts which in, say, 2053, may be as antiquated as the indivisibility of the atom and other provisional hypotheses of science in bygone ages! In any case, criticism is always useful and prevents us from degenerating into a "mutual admiration society," the only connection of which with Freethought is that it is free *from* thought.

Our National Anthem has come in for a good deal of criticism in our correspondence column in recent months. To view this famous song in a correct perspective, one must remember the actual circumstances of its origin. *God Save the King* was, it appears, first published during the Jacobite rebellion of 1745, when the Stuart claimant to the throne was marching on London, and when the Bank of England was paying out in sixpences to afford a financial crash. *God Save the King* was a rallying song for the partisans of the threatened House of Hanover. This is clearly indicated by the final verse in the original version, now discarded for obvious reasons. This ran as follows:—

"Lord, grant that Marshal Wade
May by Thy mighty aid,
Deliverance bring.
May he rebellion crush
And like a torrent rush,
Rebellious Scots to crush;
God Save the King."

One can, perhaps, comment that, if this verse was now sung, republicanism might be stronger north of the Tweed!

[Marshal Wade was then the Hanoverian commander-in-chief, at the start of the rebellion.]

The West London Branch, N.S.S., has long been noted for its varied and comprehensive lectures held during the winter at "The Laurie Arms," Edgware Road, W., on Sunday evenings at 7-15 p.m. Next Sunday they are destined to break fresh ground with a subject that has not, we think, ever been dealt with on an N.S.S. platform before. For, as announced elsewhere in this issue, the editor of *The Freethinker*, Mr. F. A. Ridley, will lecture on the Cato Street conspiracy of 1820. This conspiracy to murder the Cabinet of the day is not less dramatic, though much less known, than the Guy Fawkes attempt to "reform" Parliament, which we celebrate this week also. Cato Street is actually just round the corner from "The Laurie Arms," and the house is still standing where Thistlewood and Co. were run to earth. Mr. Ridley can, we think, be relied on to do justice to this little-known episode in our national history.

The Woking Muslims have asked Mr. H. Cutner to speak on "Why I am an Atheist" next Saturday, at 18, Eccleston Square, S.W.1, at 4-30 p.m. This should provide a vigorous discussion, as all Muslims are Theists. We hope there will be a good audience.

American Christianity and Evolution

By LEON SPAIN

IT is a matter of common knowledge to many avowed Freethinkers that the discoveries and investigations of scientists have been vastly instrumental in exposing the fallacies of Christian Supernaturalism. This has been particularly exemplified in the years between the presentation of the Heliocentric theory of our planetary system, as presented by Copernicus, and the publication of Charles Darwin's monumental works, "The Origin of Species" and "The Descent of Man," which permanently dispelled the notions that organic species were created by separate divine acts and that man, especially, was made in the image and likeness of the "universal creator." It has been with the greatest reluctance that the Christian and Hebrew conceptions of creation have given way to the scientific, and the venom of the pulpiteers played no small part in deterring the expression of scientific discovery. However, despite the venom and resistance which the clergy displayed to early scientific innovations, it seems that the most outstanding of the modern clergy tacitly, if not openly, admit, that the Genesiac account of creation is untenable.

The above is revealed in an article entitled: "Most U.S. Churchmen Come to Terms with Darwin's Idea," which appeared in the Friday, August 14, 1953, issue of *The Evening Bulletin*, Philadelphia, Pa., U.S.A. The article was written by George W. Cornell, a featured Associated Press writer, who reviewed the utterances and attitudes of various leading American Churchmen, with reference to Darwin's theory of organic evolution and, in particular, human evolution. According to Cornell, the leading American clerics see no inconsistency between evolution and the idea of a divinity, and that only "fundamentalist Protestants, some Catholics and some Orthodox Jews strongly oppose evolution." The Clerical vituperation of Darwinism is obscured and hardly mentioned, if ever, and an uninformed reader of the article is led to believe that organic evolution, as he understands it, has always had clerical consent, and that no discrepancy exists between evolution and "divine creation."

Modern theologians have come to the realization that what they cannot abolish, they can at least attempt to modify, or interpret to their own advantage. And it seems that organic evolution has fallen into that category. However, no amount of casuistry and theological sophistry can reconcile the innumerable discrepancies and absurdities which inhere if a controlling intelligence is postulated as directing organic developments.

Among some quotations, which should be of interest to readers of *The Freethinker*, are the following, which have been attributed to prominent American theologians: Robert T. Handy, professor of Church History at Union Theological Seminary, states that "nearly all ministers have come to see that there is no conflict between evolution and divine creation. They recognise that any real contribution to knowledge or to understanding of life is an addition to the truths of God." Handy, a Baptist, also adds that "even many conservatives who adhere to a liberal interpretation of the Bible now see no direct conflict between it and evolution. They note the remarkable parallels." The parallels are, according to Handy, "the same chronology of events in both science and Genesis—the earth without form—the herbs and grass—the sea monsters and fishes—the fowl and land creatures—and finally man." Of course, to the student of organic evolution the strained analogies between science and Genesis are of the flimsiest intellectual texture. T. H. Huxley proved, convincingly and beyond doubt, in his intellectual jousts with Wm.

Gladstone that, in no wise, is evolution consistent with Genesis.

The following quotation, by the Rev. Roger G. Franklin, of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Seminary, Yonkers, N.Y., shows the compromise which his Church has been compelled to reach with the evolutionary concept of organic development: "The Church has an open mind on the subject. The teaching of the Church does not forbid investigation of the question (evolution) in regard to the human body, but insists that the soul is created immediately by God. In such discussions, Biblical texts are to be given their due authority with anthropological evidence." If may, in this connection, be commented that Rev. Franklin's Church was conspicuous in denouncing and defaming the early pronouncements of Charles Darwin, and has given distorted interpretations of this theory to coincide with its groundless theology.

Still another version is given, of evolution vs. Genesis, by Rabbi Dr. John Tepfer, of Hebrew Upjohn College—Jewish Institute of Religion. Dr. Tepfer is quoted as follows: "There is no contradiction as we see it. Evolution itself may be part of God's indirect revelation. It doesn't detract from the Bible as an inspired ethical document, whose every utterance of wisdom and thought was revealed by the Deity." In passing, it may be commented upon Dr. Tepfer's statement that his rhetoric cannot obscure the contradictions which his remark contains, and that the Bible is an "inspired ethical document" has no foundation in fact. Also, the "inspired ethic" of the Bible is questionable by the best in human standards of conduct and decency.

The article, captioned "Most U.S. Churchmen Come to Terms With Darwin's Idea," contains a pertinent comment by its writer, George W. Cornell: "The general amity which has evolved between the two fields is in sharp contrast to the controversy that erupted into the famous 1925 trial of John Thomas Scopes for violating Tennessee law by teaching the Darwin theory. In the ensuing years, through the depression and World War II, anti-evolution laws like the ones in Tennessee, Florida, and Mississippi quietly died." However, Mr. Cornell should have added that it was with the greatest reluctance, and with the bitterest opposition, that the American Bible Belt, in particular, and the American clergy, to a great extent, have admitted the teaching and open advocacy of evolution.

Accepting the doctrine of evolution, as the method of divine purpose or infinite intelligence, is only an attempt by the various clergies to give the God-idea a renewed lease on life. The evolutionary aspect, which the theologians are now seeking to promote, in trying to salvage their divinity, is replete with more absurdities and contradictions than the views of the Creationists. The clerics and their blind followers should reflect that the blind interplay of the natural forces and elements manifest themselves without regard to the human element, and, in many instances, quite destructively upon human and animal populations, who have been in their paths. That the human element plays no more unique part in the economy of nature than other living phenomena, and that only human vanity explains the universe and its changes in terms of human experience and human attributes. Infinite intelligence and omnipotence, if such is postulated, should have accomplished his designs with an economy of time, effort, and pain to his creatures, despite the mystery which is attributed to his methods and ends.

The B.B.C. and Religious Broadcasting

By COLIN McCALL

[Mr. C. McCall sends us this report of the recent protest meeting held in Chorlton Town Hall, Manchester, on Sunday October 25.—EDITOR.]

I THOUGHT that I had better send you a report on the meeting held last night in protest against the B.B.C.'s refusal to allow religious controversy on its services.

Once again we have been let down by our politicians . . . not one of them turned up! Mr. Bradlaugh Bonner had to make a hurried journey from London to fill the gap. I can't help feeling that it was a very poor show by the M.P.s. They should have made a definite effort to be there after agreeing to come. Mr. Bonner had to dash back to London after the meeting in order to officiate at the cremation of Mr. Watts.

The only speakers, then, apart from the chairman (Ald. Brotherton), were Mr. Bonner, proposing the motion; Rev. R. V. Holt (Unitarian), seconding, and myself supporting.

Mr. Bonner gave an historical survey of religious broadcasting in this country, the development of the B.B.C., its promises to increase the controversial treatment of the subject, and its failure (except in a very limited and temporary way) to do so. He gave details of the depositions of the Parliamentary Committee for Freedom of Religious Controversy to the B.B.C., and also of allowances for anti-religious expression in other countries.

The Rev. Holt followed with a plea for freedom of expression over the air and drew a parallel with Milton's great plea for freedom of expression in the written word. As a Christian, Mr. Holt considered that Christianity had nothing to fear from free controversy.

In supporting the motion I made reference to the increased time now devoted to religious broadcasting compared with 1948-49, and the statement of Sir William Haley in November, 1948, that "the B.B.C. bases its policy on a positive attitude towards Christian values. It seeks to safeguard those values and to foster acceptances of them. The whole preponderant weight of its programmes is directed to this end." This, despite the fact that he had said in July, 1945: "We are determined to increase the amount of controversial broadcasting." I pointed out that religious broadcasts are not popular.

People with an elementary education place them eighth of 17 subjects, those with a secondary education place them 12th or 13th, and those with a university education place them 11th or 12th. The only religious broadcast that is at all popular is the "Sunday Half-Hour" of community hymn-singing on the Light Programme, which is a special case involving additional psychological factors . . .

the rousing elemental rhythms of our childhood have an appeal apart from religion, as does the communal singing. This very evening (i.e., last night) the programme commenced with "Onward, Christian Soldiers"—no doubt an expression of the Christian values Sir William Haley was noted above.

In contrast to the increased amount of religious broadcasting, I instanced the scarcity of anti-Christian expressions of view and recalled a few odd examples. Mr. Fred Boyle's final broadcast on "The Nature of the Universe," parodied by Prof. J. B. S. Haldane and Dr. Alex Comfort, and Mr. H. J. Blackham's arguments on Humanism with a Jesuit, a Protestant professor and a person who defied designation—a sort of go-between. The latter discussion, though admirable in some ways and argued quietly and

effectively by Mr. Blackham, was rather too genteel. And why?

If a person believes that Christianity is a fantastic fraud, why should he not be allowed to say so? And the utilisation of satire and ridicule is as legitimate in the sphere of religion as it is in politics, where there have been several examples of its use recently. Why should absurdities be taken seriously and treated with reverence? After all, the number of churchgoing Christians in this country is approximately equalled by the number of people who are hostile to religion.

The B.B.C. is, in fact, a coward's castle for a minority opinion which already has another in the pulpit and wields influential power in education and in the Press. In a democratic country such a state of affairs is preposterous. We should get rid of the ghost of Lord Reith from Portland Place as we have got rid of many other ghosts in modern times. I called upon the audience to support the Committee now and to follow it up with a campaign on its behalf by letters, etc.

After a short discussion the motion was agreed to, with two dissentients.

Mr. Bonner will be able to give you a fuller and better report than this rather hasty one. He will also supply details of the motion. I have concentrated upon what I said, simply because I was the N.S.S. representative and feel that you should know how I acted on your behalf.

Thanks are due to a number of people. To Mr. Bonner, for his hurried trip to Manchester; to the chairman, to Mr. Holt, to the organisers and, not least, to two members of the N.S.S. who travelled from Liverpool to support the meeting. They were Mr. Walter Parry and, I think, Mr. White.

The audience was estimated at just over 100.

In conclusion, let me say how glad I am that the "Bible Handbook" is selling well.

The Vatican under the Southern Cross

Non-Catholics Debarred from Union Office

SUCH is the progress that Vatican influence has made in Australian labour circles, that every non-Catholic member of the Queensland Branch of the Clerks' Union is to be debarred from election to any office within that body. The rule designed to bring about that disqualification will not operate at the forthcoming elections in January because it has not yet been registered.

Mr. Martin, who had been branch president for seven years, did not nominate for the position again. He explained that apart from his health, there were other reasons for his retirement. In recent years, under the pretence of fighting Communism, sectarian cells had developed within the organisation and had become very active. The so-called Australian Labour Party and other industrial groupers, he stated, had turned out to be merely "troopers" busily engaged in organising religious sectarianism. As a result, the management council of the branch had been an ancillary to the Roman Catholic Church. Mr. Martin added that members would be able this year to vote for five non-Catholic members out of a field of 29 candidates.

The Clerks' Union is the biggest union in the northern State, and it has considerable funds. These events are in line with the information published in *The Freethinker* on August 7 last.—(Sent in by an Australian reader.)

Correspondence

LETTER TO A HUMANIST

The Editor, *The Humanist*, U.S.A.

SIR,—You send me a copy of that inspiring publication, *The Humanist*, and I thank you. With it, a little form asking me whether I should (a) like to be a Humanist, or (b) like to think the thing over awhile. There seems to be no other alternative and I will opt for the latter.

I am replying in an English publication because my reply would not be published in America. You Americans are, except in one case, free people. You are free, with one exception, to say what you like. In America a man may put his hands in his pocket, his cap on the back of his head and look the whole world in the face. Except that in one direction he must not look. He must scowl. But over here we do not scowl so easily. Not, at least, to order.

Humanism believes (I take it, though you don't say so) in Humanity. It takes from Christianity its sole virtue—good-neighbourliness. It believes that Man is of more importance than the State, and that Science exists for the furtherance of Man's moral and physical well-being—not his destruction. It is for birth control and against racial discrimination.

And so, except that I think man exists for humanity rather than the converse, am I. The adolescent idealism of our overgrown but warm-hearted stepchild is contagious, if not convincing. But not so contagious as to get Humanism's final principle across, which is that in order to entertain these lovely notions it is necessary to be anti-Communist.

It is understandable that anti-Communism is a useful thing to believe in in America. It is possible that if you are not anti-Communist you are not allowed to believe in anything. You are not allowed to be there. The inclusion of the doctrine within the Humanist creed at least illustrates that perfect fear casteth out love.

In this country, however, we are allowed to think about Communism, even if it is made unprofitable to embrace it. I myself have thought about it often, even if I have never thought much of it. But this has occurred to me.

Communism, like God and All Gaul, is compounded of three parts. First, there is a political creed propelled by Marx and Engels. It believes that with time all wealth will congregate in the hands of a small clique who will own it without earning it. As this clique (the Bosses, Capitalists or Bloody Bourgeoisie) gets smaller and smaller, the rest of the world (have-nots, workers or exploited proletariat) will get, obviously, bigger and bigger. That is nearly all there is to it and if it were all it would be not politics but science, and poor science at that, since it is not going to happen. But Engels (I think it may have been someone else dressed up) had another thought and wondered whether the process could not be expedited with a discreet push here and there. This made the whole thing positive, political and reprehensible to many people.

Man considers himself at the head of the vertebrates and this is odd because vertebrate means "with a backbone" and of all creatures man is the most backboneless. He will stand robbery, exploitation, murder and all manner of direction and interference by religious, statutory and other organised bodies without demur. But like another invertebrate creature he will turn eventually and when that happens there is a revolution. He then gets rid of his oppressors and, being so made that he is unable to keep his hands out of his fellows' pockets unless someone stands over him with a stick, promptly hands over his destiny to another lot. Now it is essential that the new set of extortioners shall appear unlike, and unlikely to get like, the previous lot, wherefore they have recourse to a creed or doctrine. This is usually the creed of the moment, but so long as it makes the new gangsters look as much like angels as possible it doesn't matter really what it is. In England it was Puritanism, in France egalitarianism. The Russians happened on the beautiful word "Communism."

This brings us to the third type of Communism, and this is simply a label. Human thinking is comprised almost entirely of "word-labels," i.e., words that you apply to things so that you can remember whether you have to like them or not. Socialist, Atheist, Freethinker, Catholic and other words are often used, irresponsibly, in the same way.

The Russians found the word a useful label to tie to their military dictatorship. The Americans found another use for it. After twice saving democracy at bargain rates they found themselves in possession of most of the known world, all the rest of it being held by Soviet Russia. The Americans didn't like this or the Russians; in fact they disliked them so much that they promoted the word "Communist" to be their Chief Communitary Adjective.

It is understandable that American Humanists would not like the word, even though they might find it applied to themselves by their very credulous religious fellow-countrymen. They may even believe that it is impossible to love humanity, respect Negroes and commend birth control without hating it as they do. But whilst the matter is sub-judice, I am going to do my best.—Yours, etc.,

BISSETT LOVELOCK.

BLASPHEMY

SIR,—The following extract from Stone's *Justices' Manual*, 1950, should be of interest to Freethinkers, and in particular those who attended the opening meeting of the West London Branch of the N.S.S. at the "Laurie Arms" on October 4:—

THE LAW ON BLASPHEMY

General rules.—"Serious arguments" (observes Paley) "are fair on all sides. Christianity is but ill defended by refusing audience or toleration to the objections of unbelievers. But whilst we would have freedom of inquiry restrained by no laws but those of decency, we are entitled to demand on behalf of a religion which holds forth to mankind assurances of immortality, that its credit be assailed by no other weapons than those of sober discussion and legitimate reasoning." Our law has adopted this as the rule: sober argument you may answer, but indecent reviling you cannot, and therefore the law steps in and punishes it (per Lord Erskine). Assuming the correctness of this proposition, it may be laid down that no prosecution could be sustained at the present day for calmly and dispassionately discussing, or even calling in question, the truth of Christianity; and that the offence of blasphemy consists in attacking it by ribaldry, profanity, or indecency, and not in endeavouring by legitimate argument to prove its falsity. Further quotations in the Manual describe blasphemy as "profane scoffing," "licentious and contemptuous abuse," "widespread misrepresentations," "artful sophistry," all calculated to mislead the ignorant and unwary. Probably this is the reason why Freethinkers are never taken up by the law these days, their clear and sober views being openly published for all the world to see in a weekly paper. Let us hope when the time comes for general enlightenment on a national scale our opponents will be reasoned in their own criticisms.—Yours, etc.,

V. T. VICKEY.

"GENTLE JESUS"

SIR,—In your issue for October 9 you quote Matthew 23 relative to Scribes and Pharisees. The skit is that Jesus is not gentle about it. Here the matter has nothing to do with religion, politics or belief or unbelief.

The Pharisees were upright men! They kept all the laws from their youth up! They paid all their taxes! And they made long prayers in the market-place! This was a sham, and as such was not pleasing to any honest man. But they even went further than that! They went to the extreme of proceeding against others for doing things that they themselves were doing! And they did this in matters upon which they had no right whatever to make themselves judges! It is quite clear that the Pharisees were wolves in sheep's clothing. They did, apparently, extort money out of the widow—lawfully no doubt! Outside they seemed all right, but inside they were hypocritical incarnate fiends!

No honest man, believer or unbeliever, is going to stand for this. And if the "Sergeant Major" is going to be gentle about such matters, then people will for ever be victimised or driven to take the law into their own hands, and injustice and barbarism will continue. No man, Pharisee or not, has any right to force a law on others that he is not willing to obey himself, or that is not absolutely necessary. Myth is myth, is fully agreed. But some things are not myth: "Cursed is he that lieth with his neighbour's wife." (Not applicable to separated or divorced people.) "Cursed is he that removeth his neighbour's land-mark." "Cursed is he that leadeth the blind out of their way." And, I would not say, "Cursed is he that steals the love—the little ewe-lamb" from another.

The Pharisees did these things—secretly, no doubt. They proceeded against others just for doing the very things they themselves! Thus did they hide in secret their own really very criminal nature!

Is it right, or even possible, to be gentle about such things?—Yours, etc.,

RUPERT I. HUMPHREYS.

MORTGAGES: Larger mortgages arranged, existing ones paid off; also second mortgages on houses, shops, flats, business premises, cinemas, factories, hotels, farms, etc.—Ashley's (Dept. 67, Cambridge Road, London, N.W. 6.