

The Freethinker

Vol. LXXIV—No. 15

Founded 1881

Editor: F. A. RIDLEY

Price Fourpence

EVER since the "opening-up" of the world in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Christian Churches have made a persistent effort to attract converts amongst the adherents of rival religions, as well as amongst primitive races, where "the heathen in his blindness still bowed down to wood and stone," as a well-known missionary hymn phrased it. The methods used in and by missionary circles varied, physical terrorism, economic, bribery, and medical missions, all being widely employed. Despite a great deal of publicity and occasional spectacular successes this now five-century-old propaganda drive has not, on the whole, been very successful. Christian propaganda has made little impression on the major religions, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism, which represent the major obstacles to Christian propaganda. Whether Christianity to-day can continue to maintain itself against the secular movements which, at present, threaten its ascendancy amongst the white races is, also, at present, a highly speculative question.

An Asiatic Historian of Christian Missions

A great deal has, hitherto, been written about Christian missions, both *pro* and *contra*. This literature, however, is compiled by *Europeans* themselves, Christians or ex-Christians. It is, accordingly, very instructive to find an account of Christian missions written by a member of one of the races and religions whom Christians have for centuries been trying to convert. This is the more so when it comes from a man steeped in European culture, and himself a scientific historian. Such an account, one of much penetration and of absorbing interest, is to be found in a recently published book, *Asia Under Western Dominance*, by K. M. Pannikar. Mr. Pannikar is a distinguished Indian diplomat who has been successively Indian ambassador in China during the Communist Revolution, and in Egypt in recent months. He is a scientific historian and a former Oxford student where the present writer knew him personally. In his new book the distinguished author describes the activities of Christian missions in India and the Far East to which an entire section of this important book is devoted.

The Last Crusade

As Mr. Pannikar indicates with convincing detail, the European "Voyages of Discovery" which "opened up" America and the Far East to European penetration and conquest in the age of Columbus and Vasco da Gama, were animated primarily by religious motives. From the point of view of the Spanish and Portuguese explorers, they were engaged in an anti-Muslim crusade, the continuation of that "Eight Hundred Years War" which the Christian Spanish Powers had waged against their Arab and Moorish conquerors from the Muhammedan East. Mr. Pannikar quotes an early Portuguese viceroy who exhorted his men to the assault of Malacca by reminding

them that their destruction of the spice trade in the Indian Ocean would deal a death blow to the *political* power of the Muslim world, the great enemy of Christianity. As readers of Prescott will recall, the contemporary Spanish conquest of the New World was, largely motivated by religious objectives also.

Until the end of the 18th century, foreign missions were a Catholic monopoly. It was only in the closing years of the 19th century that the Protestant Churches also took to systematic missionary work. In the Far East the Church of Rome employed both organised violence and organised "propaganda." The last-named word,

indeed, owes its existence to this period of Catholic missionary activity. For in the early 17th century Rome established a new organisation for promoting and coordinating the new missionary activity amongst non-Christian peoples. This was the famous congregation "De Propaganda Fide," for "The Propagation of the Faith," which is still in existence, the model and prototype of so much later "propaganda"! The Church also used force when it set up the Holy Inquisition in Goa (Portuguese India), when it pursued its usual murderous activities. Technically, however, the Inquisition only had jurisdiction over baptised persons and did not deal directly with the heathen who were outside the pale of salvation. Hence it was no use burning their bodies in order to save their souls—which, in theory, was the sole motive of the Inquisition in burning and torturing heretics!

The Jesuits in China, India and Japan

The lead in Christian missions in the Far East was taken by the newly-founded Jesuit order which, as we have indicated elsewhere, was originally founded by Ignatius Loyola as part of the current anti-Muslim "crusade." Loyola's chief lieutenant, Francis Xavier, now a canonised saint of the Roman Church, took the lead in both India and Japan, dying, eventually, off the Chinese coast. Another Jesuit, Fr. De Nobile, made the then highly original experiment of studying Hinduism and trying to present Catholicism to the Brahmins in the traditional terminology of Hindu philosophy. The experiment proved an immediate failure, but has been revived by Catholic missions in modern times. In Japan the Jesuit missions met with initial success, but the political intrigues of the Holy Fathers eventually brought down savage and successful persecution on the heads of their unfortunate converts. The famous "Decree of Exclusion" against Europeans which converted Japan into a "Hermit Kingdom" for two centuries was originally motivated by fear of foreign conquest prepared by the missionaries, such as had befallen the American empires of Mexico and Peru. An even more ambitious effort of the Jesuits eventually failed in the greatest Asiatic power, China.

—VIEWS and OPINIONS—

Christian Missions through Asiatic Eyes

—By F. A. RIDLEY—

"Christianity without the Cross"

In China, the Jesuits attained for a time a position of great influence at the court of Peking. They acquired this pre-eminence by their ability as astronomers and scientists, adding a "Jesuitical" faculty for the manufacture of artillery! In the 18th century the holy fathers became involved in the famous "Rites Controversy" which eventually led to their downfall in the Celestial Empire. Briefly, the worldly-wise Jesuits soon saw that Christianity, to be successful in China, would have to be radically transformed in order to appeal to the Chinese. Accordingly, they declared that it was "lawful" for their Christian converts to continue to indulge in ancestor-worship immemorial in China, on the ground that it was merely a "civil rite." They also played down certain Christian dogmas, notably the Crucifixion, which was offensive to Chinese sentiment, and endeavoured to combine Confucian teachings with Christianity. The result was such an outcry against them that they were formally disowned by Rome. Their Dominican critics denounced their teaching as "Christianity without Christ"! It was the end of an ambitious experiment.

Catholic and Protestant Policy to Missions

In general, there was a broad distinction between Catholic and Protestant governmental policy towards missions. Catholic governments have usually encouraged missions as part of their imperialist policy. (The present French empire in Indo-China was acquired this way.) Even modern anti-clerical governments in France have supported Catholic missions *abroad*! We recall the famous phrase of the anti-clerical M. Gambetta, "Anti-clericalism is not for export"! Protestant governments have usually been more cautious. The Dutch in Indonesia, and the British in India, gave little official encouragement to missions. They feared religious uprisings. In the Muhammedan East, with which our author does not deal, Muslim intolerance usually inhibited Christian missionary activity. In China, however, as Mr. Pannikkar shows in much detail, *all* European governments encouraged missions as part of their imperialist activity.

Protestant Missions

The Protestant Churches only took up missionary activity largely as a result of the Wesleyan "revival" in the closing years of the 18th century. Throughout the 19th century Protestant missionaries were active, particularly in India and China. In India their propaganda was often extremely crude: our author quotes a comment by an intelligent Viceroy of India, Lord Minto, who described the current missionary preaching as "miserable stuff," adding that their principal argument seemed to be "hell fire." The native Indian Church in Malabar, traditionally founded by St. Thomas the Apostle, has existed, according to Mr. Pannikkar, since the second century, and was represented at the Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325). It is now "Indianised" to the extent even of accepting the caste system! The author claims that the current revival of Hinduism has checkmated the advance of Christian missions, but we would like the opinion of our Indian Rationalist colleagues on this dictum of our Hindu historian.

In China, Protestant missionaries, charges our author, established themselves under the protection of foreign warships and incurred the hatred of Chinese Nationalists, such as the famous "Boxers," who described their Chinese Christian converts as "secondary barbarians." Incidentally, the British Consul-General who was instrumental in forcing the hated opium trade down the throats of the Chinese was Sir John Bowring, author of the hymn, "How

sweet the name of Jesus sounds"—though not, apparently, to the Chinese!

"A Tale that is Told"

The learned author summarises the period of Christian missionary activity in Asia as an ultimate failure. With the withdrawal of European rule, the European religion loses its last chance. Our author is, by no means, anti everything the white race has done in Asia, but amongst its undoubted benefits he does *not* include the Christian gospel! Indeed, the churches will not relish his accusation that it was precisely the Christian missions who, by undermining the traditional Chinese society, effectively prepared the way for the present Communist régime. Christianity in the Far East, declares our author, is "a tale that is told" and "signifies nothing" any more.

Ask at your Library

Mr. Pannikkar has written a brilliant, immensely learned and, in parts, highly controversial account of the rise and decline of "Western dominance" in Asia. His chapters on Christian missions are comprehensive, objective and masterly. All students of religion, and, in particular, all its Rationalist critics, ought to ask at their local library for this important book.

[*Asia and Western Dominance*, by K. M. Pannikkar: George Allen and Unwin; 30s.]

The Tale of the Shirt

AT my home town in Tipperary, at the tender age of 12, the Sisters of Mercy prepared me for the Pupil Teachers' exam. Among other things, I had to know how to cut out and tack up a man's shirt. Rev. Mother herself would teach me that, so sister told me, as she didn't consider it a fit subject for a young nun. But Rev. Mother remained secluded in her convent and time ran on. It wasn't till the day before the exam, that she sent for me. I arrived at the convent in fear and trembling, as I had never before entered the sacred precinct. Rev. Mother thrust her head out of a door, grabbed me inside and whispered mysteriously in my ear: "There is one thing I can tell you about a man's shirt—it is shorter at the front than at the back. There is no time for any more. Go, dear child, and may God protect you." Next day, father drove me to Limerick, 20 miles away, to stand for the exam. I went all confident in spite of my scant information about the man's shirt. All was easy till it came to the sewing test. I looked in despair at the trestle table on which the paper, needle, scissors, etc., had been placed. But hadn't we all prayed to God to let me pass and He didn't desert me. The examiner walked down by the tables to see how we were getting on. He knocked against a table which fell and knocked down some more tables. Seeing my opportunity, I grabbed up a lovely shirt, complete with band, gusset and seam and brazenly laid it out on my table. As I gazed at it, I thought well, Rev. Mother is right, a man's shirt is shorter at the front than at the back. I passed in flying colours but didn't get the job of Pupil Teacher at £8 per year—the priest put in a friend's daughter who had failed the exam.

NAN FLANAGAN.

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Chime of Bells or the Franco Madness

By "HISPANICUS"

THE history of my loved Spain has, on its pages, chains and fetters which make very slow and painful travel of my Spanish brothers and sisters. Chains and fetters which have been put on our bodies by soulless Spaniards who have sold my country to the most rabid enemy of mankind. Never in our history we, the true Spaniards, have seen completed a so great treason as that which Franco has finished at 1953. Less than a month has been sufficient for the Franco régime to accumulate on Spanish destinies the most dark, large threatening clouds. Never the Spaniard's destiny has been so threatened as it is to-day. Never our slavery has been so oppressing as it is at present. Never the Vatican has been with my Spain so despotic and merciless as it is now. It seems as if the Catholic Church revenges in Spain the justice which peoples of free countries have been making on her. It is necessary to return to PHILIP II's days if we wish to know how Pius XII works to-day in Spain. It is necessary to read the history of days which came after MONTANA BLANCA (WHITE MOUNTAIN: battle of November 8, 1620) when the world was on the brink of its total downfall.

Never as at present, in Spain, have the bells of the Catholic Church chimed with similar joy. The parson of Spain, the most unlearned and fanatic all over the world, in his stupid loftiness, dominates all people everywhere. And the bells chime.

Why—ask the peoples—this chime of bells? Why—ask we—this chime of bells? Why—ask the Freethinkers all over the world—this Spanish chime of bells? The answer is not very difficult. The reason is this:—

On August 27, 1953, Mr. Martin Artajo and Mr. Castiella, on behalf of Franco-Spain, signed the new Concordat. Chime of bells! Chime of bells all in Spain! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Pius XII had won the most solemn struggle of his pontificate, the most absolute victory after 1938. And his great doctrine, CATHOLIC DOMINATION IMPLIES TOTAL ELIMINATION OF WHATEVER IS NOT CATHOLIC, began to produce its ripe fruits.

Who has not read the history of Pavelic's own special militia? Who has not read the inquisitions and murders of the Spanish Acción Católica, the most loved instrument of the Vatican all over the world? Where are the two millions of Spaniards murdered by the Acción Católica? Why the Spaniards, at present, to-day, if they wish to work in a national post, must obtain, previously, a parson's certification? Why, at present, to-day, if a Spaniard wishes to work in a national or private school must he attend Sunday mass, and this with his pupils? Why, in my loved and sequestered Spain to-day, fathers have not the right to educate their sons according to their beliefs? And so on. . . .

Now we know why the bells of Spain chimed and chimed. Why Pius XII calls Franco "his most beloved son." Why Pius XII has decorated his loved son with the most rich Vatican's decoration. Pius XII has signed a very profitable contract or bargain and sale. By one part, Pius XII blesses every day the Spanish people and prays for the prosperity of his loved son. That is all. And by the other part, Franco gives to the Vatican my loved Spain, chained by order to the Catholic Church, checks all progress, all hopes, all will of liberty, all Freethinkers. . . . To make a Catholic State, as Croatia.

But what Pius XII does not know—we believe—is the true history of mankind. The history of mankind is the

history of progress, the history of man's liberation. Liberation from all dogmas. Liberation of all tyrannies. And the first tyranny is the religious tyranny. By this reason, when peoples conquer their liberties, they must inevitably eliminate the Vatican's powers. If they make not so, then their liberties will be continually in danger. The history of our twentieth century is a great lesson to us. If the Spanish Republic of 1931 had worked according to this doctrine to-day, the Spanish race were free and in my Spain the Vatican's chains were not; if peoples' democracies from the first days of its liberations had treated the Vatican with a heavy hand as its most rabid enemy, then the posterior battle and propaganda would not exist. Because, at last, democratic people, if they wished to survive, will extirpate radically the Vatican's instruments. If not, the Vatican will murder the peoples' democracies. Why? Freethinkers all over the world know that the Vatican is the cancer of democracy. If democracy extirpates not timely its cancer, this will kill the democracy. And we know that the therapeutics of cancer is a therapeutic of precocious diagnostic. That is all past. In Spain this diagnostic was too late, and we know the painful history of a country submitted to the Vatican's dictates.

Now Pius XII is writing a new page. But the chapter of this new page is American history. McCarthy is the standard-bearer in this battle which the Vatican hopes to obtain in the U.S.A. To this end Pius XII has worked also, and the date of September 26 is the other day in which the bells chimed. A new chime of bells in my native country, sold by twelve pieces. The new Judases have stained their dirty hands, but this stain will be cleaned by the Spanish people when the day of liberty will come with the banner of liberation at daybreak which all peoples hope.

What mean to the Spanish people these two dates, August 27 and September 26? In the Spanish history these two dates will be the most tragic. Spain, the true Spain, never will admit this double sale of its liberty. The Vatican and Wall Street will know, when the day comes, their mistakes.

The Vatican knows already its mistakes in Poland, in Yugoslavia, in Czechoslovakia, in Germany, in Russia, in Rumania. The Vatican, we can be very sure, will know also promptly the mistakes of the New Concordat, because a country cannot be endlessly slavish, and less so, if this people is the Spanish people. The Catholic Church is now over a barrel of powder, and the New Concordat . . . is the burning wick. We hope that the Spanish Acción Católica and the Spanish parsons will have arranged the affairs of their souls with their almighty God, when the daybreak of new liberties, at the daybreak of Spain's liberation.

And what about Wall Street? Wall Street, doubtless, has been deceived by Cardinal Spellman. Wall Street believes that the Spanish people are Catholic, and that they will go to war without resistance. Spanish people love liberty and peace. Spanish people hate war. They hate also all people who help the Franco régime, because Franco and the Vatican, the cronies of the great plot against progressive peoples, have exchanged oaths in order to maintain us in endless slavery.

Wall Street knows also where goes a policy of force and fraud. Wall Street knows to-day, at Caracas, the mistakes of its policy. Wall Street will know, doubtless, where goes its policy of the purchase of my loved Spain. We Spaniards, to-morrow as yesterday, shall tell how Spain is a country which cannot be purchased.

This Believing World

With the aid of Film-star Roy Rogers and his very religious wife, the Rev. B. Graham managed to get over Christ Jesus to 40,000 children. How can children resist a hard-riding "Western" hero when he tells them how he found religion? Mr. Rogers is a "Christian cowboy," he told them, and if that does not prove the truth of the Christian religion with its Miracles, its Devils, its Hell, its Heaven, and its Angels—surely nothing else can. Each child at this religious circus was presented with a copy of the Gospel of St. John—the most easily understood of all the Gospels, of course. We wonder how Mr. Rogers would expound it?

One thing, however, Mr. Rogers did tell his audience of "fans." It was that God Almighty intended him "to be in the picture game." There is no doubt of that. When Peter asked God, as the name of Roy Rogers came up, what profession he had to be, God answered immediately "a hero of the films." Perhaps Mr. Rogers thinks that the Lord has a special cinema himself with which he can wile away the tedious hours in Heaven watching the triumphs of Christian virtue over infidel villainy. And all the children present were finally expected to believe that "Jesus loved them enough to die on the cross." Could even that notorious Christian liar, the late Dr. Torrey, beat that?

The final broadcast on science and religion for children was not given by a scientist—even a Christian scientist feels a few qualms when he has to talk about miracles, devils, and such like accessories to true Christianity. It was given by a layman who could be trusted to point out that the Bible was literally historical in every particular way, everybody in it really lived, and God revealed himself once for all in Jesus Christ; all good children must believe every word and every comma in the Holy Book to have been revealed by Almighty God. That's the stuff to give 'em. What with such broadcasts—much the same is doled out to adults—and the terrific success of Revivalism with its hundreds of thousands of believers lustily singing for Jesus, and the way Christians have entrenched themselves in key positions all over the country, some of us may well wonder why so many of our reverent Rationalists have so coyly retreated from all "aggressive" action, and now prefer the inoffensive beauties of literature?

Crime experts, together with Temperance cranks, have hitherto blamed excessive drinking for crime ingeneral; they are now rather suprised that criminals prefer the more innocent snack and milk bars to hatch their plots, and rarely now are they caught drunk. This is rather curious—for it is a fact that perhaps the greatest criminal in history, Adolf Hitler, was not only a non-drinker, but a non-smoker and a vegetarian to boot. One must not forget in this connection true Bible teaching. It was not Abel who slaughtered lambs for God's sake who was the murderer, but Cain who offered "the fruit of the ground" to the Lord who contemptuously rejected it. Christian vegetarians just hate the story of Cain and Abel.

The B.B.C. have been staging a series of talks on various World Religions by profound believers in them, and most amusing examples of superstition and credulity they were. Needless to say, the advocate of Judaism still believes that the Jewish "race" are God's Chosen People, while the Christian Champion, though he did not wish to say anything against other religions, was obliged to point out that after all God revealed himself for all time in Jesus Christ—and that was more than could be said of any of the other religions. We wonder whether the B.B.C. really

feel that Mr. Christmas Humphreys, the great believer in Zen Buddhism, made any converts, or that the Jewish speaker caused Christians to become Jews forthwith. One thing is fairly certain. No advocate of the Myth of Christ Jesus would be allowed to proclaim on the radio the "Saviour" as mythical as Aladdin or Adonis. What a yell of horror it could cause if they did.

Review

The Plain View. (Spring Number.) Subscription for one year 4s. 6d. post free. Single number. 1s. 4a, Inverness Place, Queensway, London, W.2.

Edited by H. J. Blackham, with an Advisory Board consisting of Gilbert Murray, O.M., Bertrand Russell, O.M., F.R.S., Lord Chorley, and Barbara Wootton, this magazine could hardly fail to be interesting, and this Spring number has many excellent articles and important reviews. In the opening "Commentary," we are told that "the rationalist attack on religion runs no risks nowadays and can proceed as merrily as shying at Aunt Sally at the fair. . . . Traditional religion is losing round, perhaps dying out. Or suppose it does. . . . Would rationalism itself turn into religion if it succeeded, if it had dead on its hands the age-old religious tradition, with not a quiver of contemporary effectiveness left in it?" A very pertinent question, and some of the articles following ought to give the reader some very interesting "food for thought."

The mass hysteria of modern Revivalism proves how strong is "traditional religion" even if the writer of "Commentary" does not know it, and sometimes I wonder if he ever listens to religious broadcasts on the radio and on TV. He asks us to ponder on the words of Prof. H. L. Friess, the writer of the first article, "Our Religious Past To-day"—"The assumption of entire adequacy by any party, whether secular or religious, together with an unashamed condemnation of others is ridiculous, and its effect upon candid souls is to produce disgust and distrust." One wonders whether this challenge will produce any reply from either side?

Actually, Prof. Friess is an advocate of Ethical Humanism—"Nothing human is alien"—and he poses many problems answering them with sympathy and understanding. It would be quite impossible to summarise what he says, and the same difficulty prevents more than a passing notice to L. L. Whyte's "Humanism and the Challenge of the Century." From Mr. J. B. Coates comes "The Interim Task of Humanism," packed with references to Wells, Toynbee, Aldous Huxley, Koestler, Orwell and many relevant modern works; and from Dr. M. Roshwald an article on "Humanism and the Basis of World Co-operation."

Among some very fine reviews is Dr. J. H. Oldham's review of *The Humanist Tradition* by H. J. Blackham—a review no modern Humanist should miss reading. Marxists will not like Mr. Blackham's book, and Dr. Oldham appears to wish to retain a God of some kind—even, perhaps, the God of Christianity who may be better than no God at all. And he questions whether Humanists have a better way of dealing with modern human problems than Christians. Mr. Blackham reviews W. T. Stace's *Religion and the Modern Mind*, calling his article "The Conflict of Science and Religion"—which well indicates what he has to say. And there are plenty of other reviews with some of which it is possible to join issue and even completely disagree. For those readers who want to be made to think for themselves I can heartily recommend this number of *The Plain View*.

H. C.

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

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Bradford N.S.S. (Broadway Car Park).--Every Sunday at 7 p.m.: HAROLD DAY and others.

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).--Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

West London Branch N.S.S. (Marble Arch). -- Every Sunday, 3 and 6 p.m.: L. EBURY, W. J. O'NEILL and other speakers.

INDOOR

Junior Discussion Group (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1). --Friday, April 9, 7-15 p.m. General Discussion.

Leicester Secular Society (Humberstone Gate). -- Sunday, April 11, 6-30 p.m.: H. CUTNER, "Materialism and Dialectical Materialism."

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., W.C. 1). --Sunday, April 11, 11 a.m.: Dr. W. E. SWINTON, "Alfred Russel Wallace."

NOTES AND NEWS

One of the "aims and objects" of the N.S.S. bans the pursuit of "blood sports," in which unnecessary suffering and death are inflicted on helpless animals merely for the sadistic enjoyment of the hunter or the spectator. In the above category of "blood sports" we think that we may now include the annual "over the sticks" racing classic, "The Grand National" run at Aintree on March 27. In this race four of the racehorses concerned were either killed outright, or so severely injured that they had to be destroyed. We think it high time that a halt was called to these proceedings, and the course in question submitted to government inspection and amelioration. "Sport" is not, inevitably, sadism or slaughter! The British people have, on the whole deservedly, a reputation for kindness to animals to keep up. We trust that this will now be extended to the Aintree racecourse, and that such abominations as fox-hunting, stag-hunting, and, worst of all "blood sports," hare-coursing, will soon be merely relics of the barbaric past of our "Island Story"?

Here's a pretty kettle of fish! The controversy over the existence of Hell, which was decided here about a century ago by the famous judgment of Lord Chancellor Westbury in the Privy Council, who "dismissed Hell with costs," has

now broken out in Norway. The bishops and clergy of the Lutheran State-Church are fiercely disputing over the belief in a literal hell. Must Lutheran clergy believe in Eternal Punishment? In the age of the Hydrogen Bomb, the whole controversy might seem a little outmoded, but theologians are, as we know, conservatively-minded people! On the whole, we should say that in Norway as elsewhere, Hell is probably on the way out? As far as Norway is concerned, students of Comparative Religion and of geography will recall two interesting features. Amongst the ancient pagan Norsemen Hela, or Hell, was *cold*: the dwellers near the Arctic Circle knew only too well the horrors of *cold*, but those of *heat* were unfamiliar to them! Further, there is actually in present-day Norway, a place called "Hell," near Frandjhem. The present writer has actually *seen* a ticket to Hell, the Norwegian "Hell," and it was a *return* ticket. Most unorthodox! The Norwegian authorities ought to look into it. For all theologians know that *return* tickets are not issued to Hell, the infernal one. *That* Hell is a one-way traffic, and no *return* tickets are issued!

The *Freethinker* has not infrequently found it necessary to criticise the B.B.C. for its intolerant exclusion of minority opinions on religious questions. We must, however, congratulate the *Dear Sir* correspondence column of the B.B.C., and its conductor, Adrian Thomas, on the remarkably unbiased way in which *that* particular programme is conducted: a wide variety of questions are discussed, often of a most controversial nature, and full expression always seems to be given to the unpopular minority point of view. Let Mr. Thomas's colleagues learn from his excellent example!

[*Dear Sir* is on *The Light Programme* at 8 p.m. on Thursday.]

Most people know the Latin proverb, "De mortuis nihil nisi bonum" ("Speak no evil of the dead"). Perhaps we recall Samuel Butler's witty paraphrase, "De mortuis nihil nisi *bunkum*"! We must confess that we were forcibly reminded of this when we heard of the death of Mr. "Misery" Martin, one-time secretary of "The Lord's Day Observance Society." His no doubt well-meaning life only proves, yet again, the old axiom that "the floor of Hell is paved with good intentions." He was a sad example of what religious bigotry can do to a man. Let his epitaph be: Misery!

Mr. F. A. Ridley, president of the N.S.S., has had a busy time recently on the public platform. On March 21 he spoke at "The Laurie Arms," London, W., to the West London Branch of the N.S.S. His subject was "The Problems of International Freethought." On the following Sunday, March 28, Mr. Ridley addressed the Birmingham Branch, N.S.S., on "The Idea of Progress." Both lectures were listened to with rapt attention by good audiences.

Whilst the meetings organised during the winter months by the N.S.S. do not equal in *quantity* the attendance at, say, the "revivalist" meetings of Mr. Billy Graham, we think that we may still claim superiority in *quality*!

On April 4 the West London Branch concluded a varied and successful winter indoor session with a most interesting lecture by Mr. Gordon Schaffer, until recently Foreign Editor of our contemporary, *Reynolds News*. Mr. Schaffer's factually instructive lecture was logical, concise and exactly documented, and he left his audience *au fait* with the burning current issue of German rearmament. Mr. F. A. Hornibrook presided.

Religion and Crime

By C. H. NORMAN

IN considering the relationship between religious superstitions and human society, one must be struck by the fact that certain superstitions have serious criminal consequences in individual cases. The belief in the immortality of the soul and that persons leaving this world will rejoin other persons in some other world is a considerable source of crime. Numbers of people enter into suicide pacts in the belief that a joint departure from this world of disappointment and sorrow will be followed by a joint entry into some blissful existence in another sphere. There is not a particle of evidence to justify any such belief: but it has persisted, through the encouragement of the religious fakers of various kinds, for thousands of years. In this encouragement these religious frauds are making the way easy for the commission of crimes which might otherwise not occur. The same sort of belief is also provocative of murders and suicides in Britain, they would be considerably reduced if people did not hold these superstitious beliefs the hope that in the next world a more favourable turn will be given to their desires. Small as is the number of murders and suicides in Britain, it would be considerably reduced if people did not hold these superstitious beliefs which lead them along the road of crime. The idea that the next world has some existence in which a more equitable kind of life can be lived than on earth is one of the deepest sources of various types of crime.

Another field in which religious beliefs and practices are a serious cause of crime is connected with the marriage laws, which are based in reality on the monstrous principle that a wife is the property of her husband in the bodily sense. This kind of theory is responsible for the sex domination by men over women, which is the cause of many kinds of crime, direct and indirect, especially in relation to children. The obstruction put up by the Church against reasonable procedure for the dissolution of misconceived marriages is another cause of much crime. It is said that the present law is wide enough to meet all proper cases: but how nonsensical that statement is can be shown by the following: It is not true that resort to the divorce court, with all its unpleasantness, is satisfactory to many people: nor the resort to the magistrates' courts for separation orders on the ground of cruelty, etc. The other week the writer made a list of the people who had told him that their marriages were unsatisfactory for various reasons. That list came to 56 couples. Of those, only five couples had resorted to the Divorcé Court for the dissolution of the marriage; four had invoked the aid of the magistrates' court, and three had entered into private separation deeds. The rest of them (44 married couples) had carried on in varying degrees of misery and dissatisfaction, some for the sake of the children (a monstrous reason in itself), some because they disliked the local publicity given to divorce cases in the local Press, and some because they could not incur the expense of contested proceedings.

The pretence that the total of divorces, separation orders made by magistrates, and private separation orders represents the total of failed marriages in this country, is ridiculous. It is doubtful whether the number of reasonably happy marriages exceeds ten per cent of the marriages contracted in churches and registry offices. One main reason for this deplorable state of affairs is the property approach to sex which is one of the features in the attitude of the Church to marriage. It must be remembered that for centuries adultery was regarded as a crime; but that did not check it in any way.

The difficulty in arriving at the truth about the causes

of failure in marriage and in sex relationship can be judged by this incident: Some years ago the present writer was acting as the official shorthand writers' representative in one of the divorce courts. Mr. Justice Horridge was the presiding judge, sitting without a jury. In the afternoon there were a succession of cases in which husbands were asking for decrees against their wives on the ground of desertion. In each case, according to the petitioning husband, the wife had vanished, leaving three, four or five young children for him to look after. This, incidentally, throws some light on the bunkum which is circulated that the presence of children will keep a marriage together! The judge asked each of these husbands whether they could explain why their wives had run away without a word; they all replied that they had not the slightest idea, as they considered they were good husbands, living on good terms with their wives. The thought crossed my mind that the poor wives were having too many children imposed upon them under the Church theory of the duty of submission. These kind of cases went on till close on 4 o'clock, when a case finishing at 3.50, the judge suddenly announced that the court would adjourn, murmuring *sotto voce* that he had listened to enough perjury for one afternoon.

These are matters of considerable public importance, but are not ventilated, as the combined vested interests of Church and State, backed up by the lawyers, who are influenced for another reason, act together for the purpose of discouraging any proper discussion of such matters. The Press, in general, adopts the same attitude, though occasionally some paper may draw attention to the absurdity of the pretences which underlie the moral and sexual life of the country. How opinion has changed on these topics from the Victorian age may be judged from the fact that there are at least four sitting High Court judges who have been parties in divorce proceedings, and certainly two Cabinet Ministers. In Queen Victoria's time, even an innocent party to a divorce suit could not be received at Court, by decree of that sanctimonious lady, though even in her time, it was alleged, *sub rosa*, that many of her Prime Ministers had broken the commandment against adultery: hence the saying current in those days that the real sin was not committing the act, but being found out. On the other hand, it is a little difficult to understand how the disgruntled Foreign Secretary to whom this allegation about the Queen's Ministers was attributed could have known for certain of the true state of ministerial morality, as some of the Ministers concerned were no friends of his, and therefore not likely to have confided in him.

The resistance of the Church to a system of dissolving marriage by mutual consent is a grave cause of crime and misery in Great Britain. No doubt one reason why the State and Parliament support the Church on this point is because it is suspected that the number of persons who would apply for such decrees would be so great as to knock to pieces completely the idea that marriage of the existing kind is really a sound and acceptable basis for a truly moral or decent society.

MATERIALISM RESTATED. Fourth edition. By Chapman Cohen. Price 5s. 3d.; postage 3d. paper 2s. 6d.; postage 3d.

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Materialism—A Vindication

By A. YATES

IT is curious to note the absurd arguments to which Mr. Wood is driven in defence of his anti-materialist delusions. One would have thought that a moment's consideration would have saved him from pursuing the following: "Why," he asks, "if evolution is just a blind unorganised process, as Materialists claim, do species always evolve towards a *higher level of intelligence* and not towards a higher physical standard? . . . I contend," he says, "that, as the mammoth has become extinct while undersized man has survived, the ultimate superiority of Mind, and not Matter, must be the purposeful design of evolution."

Cannot Mr. Wood see that there could be no development at all if not a development from lower to higher forms of life, or from the simple to the complex? As I stated in my last article (which Mr. Wood evidently considered it expedient to by-pass) man's mental and physical powers have developed co-ordinately, each supplementary to the other. He has evolved a power of bodily movement of which other animals are incapable; otherwise he could not have reached his present biological status.

If the extinction of the mammoth, and the survival of undersized man are to be taken as proofs that the "ultimate superiority of mind and not matter must be the purposeful design in evolution," what about the survival of all the other species in the zoological catalogue? To give consistency to Mr. Wood's argument that the survival of mind and not matter is the purpose of evolution, they should have been "scrapped" along with the mammoth. We might even go further and ask, why did man, himself, develop "that muddy vesture of decay," his corporal case or body, if pure unalloyed mentality was the sole object of the evolutionary process?

He tells us "Physical matter, the sole concern of the materialist, becomes even less important."

Has it never occurred to Mr. Wood that our social life would be impossible were it not for the mechanical achievements of human ingenuity? The infinite variety of objects which are owing to man's constructive skill could never have been produced if his mental capacity to conceive had

not been supplemented by a conformation of body which enabled him to construct them. For instance, what would it avail him if, possessing the mental power to design a watch, he had not the physical ability to make it?

Mr. Wood is unlucky in his choice of arguments and illustrations. When examined, they turn out to be against himself. He is better at making positive assertions that require no ratiocinative proof. He tells us on the authority of a book by Dr. Paul Brunton, that "Our present conception of a three-dimensional material universe is completely false and untenable, and has been scientifically disproved by the physicist's microscope, infra-red rays and psychological research. Matter is now known to be composed of nothing more solid than radiations of energy, and Mind cannot, under any circumstances be proved to be physical." Did the author of the book discover all this by a protracted contemplation of his novel? That is, I understand, the usual method by which the Yogi arrives at recondite truth. Can Mr. Wood conceive a *four-dimensional* universe? If so he might explain how it disproves materialism, also, if matter is composed of nothing more solid than radiations of energy, how he accounts for the unequivocal solidity of a brick on his toes or of a misdirected hammer on his thumb?

It is evident from the foregoing extracts that Mr. Wood has soaked himself, to the prejudice of his better judgment, in all the nonsense with which psychical fanatics bolster up their delusions. But credulity is so strong in many people that it displaces or nullifies to some extent their faculty of reason. Their desire to believe a thing is so insistent that it prevents them from marshalling in sufficient force any rational objections to it. This peculiarity of temperament is exemplified in the case of the few intellectually eminent men who have succumbed to a belief in spiritualism and other so-called psychic phenomena. With them there is, in reality, no such thing as a balance of evidence. They simply wish to believe, and the desire outweighs every argument against it. Hence the aptness of the common phrase "wishful-thinking."

CORRESPONDENCE

CHAPMAN COHEN

Sir,—I am writing to say how very sorry I was to see the death of Mr. Chapman Cohen. I have enjoyed *The Freethinker* the last 20 years, but all those years in Plymouth I have not met a fellow Freethinker. I have felt very lonely all the time as there have never been any meetings, would you be so kind as to put me in touch with a fellow Freethinker? I feel so lonely all myself; I am 87 this year. I still take the journal, but shall miss Chapman Cohen, as he made life so much happier for me by being such a good scholar.

I am an O.A.P., as you see by my age; it's so very lonely with no one to speak to about all the problems that affect life in general and what a mess all the nations seem to be in these days, and this law-abiding nation, too, seems all in a muddle. I wonder about it all, but I would like to know someone else who believes in Freethinking, it would take a load off my mind. Could you by any chance mention it in one of the journals I should be very grateful.—Yours, etc.,

EMILY MARY-AMOR.

BUDDHISM

Sir,—I couldn't agree more with the views of F. Clive-Ross on the philosophy of Buddhism. Buddhist interpreting the facts of Nature concludes that behind her workings exists a reality which is unfathomable and unknowable, yet manifests itself in laws of unflinching regularity. No childish doctrine here of a personal or a conscious God.

Compare this view with that of the Christian theists, many of whom still maintain that the world was created 4004 B.C.; who state that their God breathed on a lump of clay, which immediately turned into a man; who then took out one of his ribs,

which turned into a woman. Their God is endowed with qualities ranging from mercy to jealousy, as Prince of Peace to a mighty man of war; who, if asked properly, will alter the course of natural law and grant the worshipper his wishes. Their God is, in short, nothing more than a glorified human being. Any true thinker can see which of these two views is the most logical.—Yours, etc.,

L. F.

WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

Sir,—While I agree in the main with the criticisms by Mr. Clive-Ross of Mr. Cutner's feeble and largely irrelevant reply to Mr. Morgan, I must join issue with him over his contemptuous dismissal of Berkeley, Hume and Western philosophy in general.

It is certainly true that the West has much to learn from the East—for example, the realisation that the unending pursuit of fame, wealth or power will not bring happiness—but the converse also holds good. Eastern philosophies, magnificent though they are in conception and structure, suffer from the grave defect of regarding the world of the senses as either essentially evil (Buddhism) or completely illusory (Hinduism). The logical deduction from all such views is, as Schweitzer showed in his brilliant work "Indian Thought and Its Development" (which I advise Mr. Clive-Ross to read when he has exhausted Guenon) that all work of social reform designed to improve conditions of life on this earth is meaningless. In short, the bottom is knocked out of ethics. The empiricism of Berkeley and Hume, with its postulate that all knowledge is derived from sense experience (though Berkeley, of course, believed inconsistently that it is God who, as it were, presents such experience to us), is a valuable corrective to Eastern thought on this matter.

The unnamed "Eastern student" mentioned with approval by

Mr. Clive-Ross, who regards the theories of Berkeley, Hume, etc., as "suitable for an eight year old," merely reveals by such stupid arrogance the mentality of an even younger child.—Yours, etc.,

(Rev.) JOHN L. BROOM.

MIND AND MATTER

SIR.—May I have a word on the mind and matter controversy? It will be agreed that the brain, or matter, exists, but who can indicate the whereabouts of the mind? My belief is that the mind does not exist as a separate physical entity, but is a function of the brain. Amongst the many functions of the brain are those of consciousness, thought and will, and all these cease to exist when the brain can no longer function. If a person's brain is destroyed the mind disappears, and if the brain is impaired the functional mind usually undergoes change. This proves that the mind is subject to the brain.

If we knew all the characteristics and circumstances of a poet or scientist (a point raised by Mr. Douglas V. Morgan) we should be able to account for the richness and diversity of their mental life; in fact it is only upon a materialistic basis that the question could be answered. There is no implication from this fact that human life is futile, or that striving for the betterment of life is pointless. Secularism has its roots in materialism, and accordingly is a good philosophy.

Bertrand Russell has written that "the mind grows like the body, and like the body it inherits characteristics from both parents. It is affected by diseases of the body and by drugs; it is intimately connected with the brain. There is no scientific reason to suppose that after death the mind or soul acquires an independence of the brain which it never had in life."—Yours, etc.,

ALFRED D. CORRICK.

POSSESS ONE WORLD

SIR.—An over-populated world cannot be a pleasant one—witness the difference between the rationally populated Scandinavian countries and the deteriorating conditions in England. Is it not, then, of particular concern to Freethinkers to promote rational birth control, for this world is the only one in which Freethinkers can hope for fulfilment?

The majority's snarling refusal to face facts about over-population is a typical "religious" reaction. So, when trying to put forward the rational view, *The Freethinker* may find it helpful to ask the emotionally biased to consider the problem of the over-population—of cars.

Our salesmen are encouraged to sell more and more cars, yet we live on an island with limited road space where overcrowding is bound to lead to fatalities. Might we not explain this and point out that unless we are prepared to set a limit to the greed of commerce—as represented by the manufacture of cars without limit—we ought not to make a hypocritical fuss about "The Road Toll."

I suggest that such an unsettling thought might start a chain of basic thinking and help Freethinkers oppose the vested interest in over-population held by the Church (more "souls"), the State ("mightier still and mightier") and the manufacturers (more consumers of mass-produced goods and weapons).—Yours, etc.,

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

MENSURATION AND THE FLOOD

SIR.—All printed numbers are correct, except area of earth should be 196,950,000 square miles (p. 98). Name is Sir J. G. Frazer, not Fraser; and on p. 99 "one mile or 29.2" should read "one mile on 29.2." Thanking you for your care of the figures.—Yours, etc.,

GEORGE ROSS.

IN SPAIN TODAY

SIR.—When our ship left Barcelona on March 19 we found on board ship a Spanish stowaway. Ship was turned back and man delivered to Spanish authorities. Such trip costs to Ministry of Transport 4-6 tons of coal and six hours of hard work for firemen, including me. Our opinion is that man was Spanish spy or agent but too foolish to fool our crew. As far as I know all Spaniards serving in Blue Division and fighting in Russia about 1941-1942 have good jobs in Spain and Spanish Morocco.

In Tarragona (Spain) is old city wall built 400-300 B.C., Roman Circus, Scipio's Tomb and underground made by Romans, Arabs and Christians. In underground is jail for political prisoners. In Lisbon kind guide shows old cathedrals to visitors. In Tarragona cathedrals can be visited during special services conducted for tourists. In Barcelona on high rock is big jail guarded by barbed wire, mine fields and many jail guards. Political prisoners stay in underground.—Yours, etc.,

PETER RABBITT.

BIBLE AND PRESS

SIR.—I notice a lot of daily newspapers quote verses from the Bible every day; then turn to the back page—it's nothing but horse racing, dog racing, tips, etc. Is this not hypocrisy? In some cases the editor is an elder in the church.

Hope you can write an article about this in *The Freethinker*, which I enjoy reading every week. I am a retired working man.—Yours, etc.,

J. McFARLANE.

E.D.C.—(Europe's Damnable Crime)

Seek you that bloody thing called E.D.C.?

Yes, "bloody" is the word, take it from me;

If Germany rearm, this thing is plain—

Hitler and Mussolini come again.

The time to stop this dreadful crime is now;

At once such knavish folly disavow.

Take care!

Beware!

Through their Triumphal Arch,

The Beasts of Belsen now are on the march.

They tell us love of freedom yet doth burn

In British hearts—but can the boobies learn?

Why must we follow in the troubled wake

Of Frenchman Schumann and the Yankee Ike?

Has our old war-horse, Churchill, gone to sleep?

If so, the ghost of Marlborough must weep.

Take care!

Beware!

Through their Triumphal Arch,

The Beasts of Belsen now are on the march.

Why should our young men die for Francs and Dollars.

For Sterling, Kroner, Kronen, Kronor, Thalers?

Because the trembling rich-men everywhere

Need the jack-boot and whip to make us fear.

The Beasts of Belsen they would mobilise;

They patriotic dust throw in our eyes.

Take care!

Beware!

Through their Triumphal Arch,

The Beasts of Belsen fully armed will march.

—BAYARD SIMMONS.

Clearing the Air

SOME years before the era of Esperanto, there flourished the international language "Volapük." According to the "Histoire de la langue Universelle" Volapük had in its heyday a million adherents and thirty or more regularly appearing periodicals. Volapük split on the question which proves a dilemma to all international languages—to change, or not to change? Eventually Volapük disappeared, to be replaced by "Idiom Neutral."

The collapse and disappearance of Volapük after such a brilliant career proved a never-to-be-forgotten lesson to Esperantists, and when the *Fundamento de Esperanto* appeared it was decided to make this book inviolate so that to this day nothing is changed in it. Esperantists thus have what they consider sound historical reasons for maintaining the status quo in Esperanto, and Fundamentalists to this day support this position, and thus it would not be useful to suggest any change in circumflexed letters, as these are part of the *Fundamento* and as such inviolate.

I do not object to the letter "j" because of its sound, but specifically because of its use as a sign of the plural. The letter "s" is undoubtedly the most common international sign, being used in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese; Dutch also has imposed it, so that three-quarters of the world use it (There are also some words in German which use "s" in the plural) and it would be more logical in a language calling itself international.

The absence of the grammatical endings in English does not make the language any easier to learn because English has inherent difficulties of its own. The presence of these endings in Esperanto does not make it any clearer—"a noun's a noun for a' that." Likewise the use of -n for the accusative is unnecessary, as the same sentence may be rendered in a language without an accusative ending and still be clearly understood. GEORGE DICKINSON