

The Freethinker

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IN 1493, the year after the discovery of "The New World," the then Pope, Alexander VI, officially divided the newly discovered continent between the two great colonial empires of the period, the Iberian kingdoms of Spain and Portugal. In making this sensational award, the Holy Father—better known in other and less "Holy" capacities as Rodrigo Borgia!—was acting as the Father and supreme ruler of all Christian men of all nationalities. However, the Pope's division of "The New World"—soon to be called "America"—between the two Iberian empires, did not stand unchallenged for long. For amongst the pilgrims who were scandalised by what they saw in the Rome of the Borgias, was a German Friar, one Martin Luther, who soon set the North aflame. The Protestant reformers and their disciples had little respect for Vatican decrees, whether in the Old World or the New. It was not long before the Protestant seamen of England and Holland, with the redoubtable Sir Francis Drake at their head, were flouting the Papal award, and were, as Drake put it, singeing the beard of the "most Catholic" King of Spain.

"The Clause in the Will of Adam"

Nor was it only Protestants who disputed the political geography of the Borgia Pope; that "most Christian" and Catholic monarch, Francis I of France, who hated Protestants like the plague, and would certainly have burnt alive his famous subject, John Calvin, if he could have laid hands on the French Reformer, none the less, made the historic affirmation that he "would like to see the clause in the Will of Adam which divided the new world between Spain and Portugal!". He never saw it! To-day, the northern half of the American continent is no longer Spanish, even if such names as *San Francisco* remind us of its original occupiers.

Latin America

The political and economic evolution of Anglo-Saxon-North-America have gone ahead so much more rapidly than the southern sub-continent, that to-day, we use the term "American" almost solely in relation to its Anglo-Saxon section. But, south of the *Rio Grande*, which divides Mexico from the United States, Iberian languages, culture, and in particular, religion, still retain their sway. Though South America under Simon Bolivar threw off the yoke of Spain, just as North America under George Washington had already thrown off the yoke of England, yet "Latin" America remains Spanish and Portuguese just as much as North America remained Anglo-Saxon, in fact, racially, probably rather more so. Writing in 1946, Mr. Avro Manhattan gave us these figures for, respectively, North Anglo-Saxon America, and South (and Central), "Latin" (Spanish and Portuguese) America the U.S.A. had then an area of 3,022,387 square miles, and a population of 134,000,000—Mr. Manhattan omitted Canada from his calculations—whilst Latin America contains about

8,500,000 square miles, with a total population of about 130,000,000, about the same as that of the U.S.A.

Catholicism in Latin America

The fanatical Spaniards established Catholicism as the sole legal religion in their vast American empire. In modern Latin America, as in mediæval Europe, the Church held between a third and a half of the land in the southern continent until the Fall of the Spanish Empire about 1800 (cf., Manhattan). In, perhaps, most of the Latin-American Republics—with the notable exception of Mexico—the situation has changed very little since then. Allied with the

army, the big landowners, and, in general, with the political reaction, the Vatican has maintained, not only its religious, but, equally, its economic, political, and not least its cultural and educational monopoly. In Columbia, religious persecution of Protestants still operates ferociously. When the present Pope, Pius XII—then Papal Secretary of State—toured Latin America in the 1930s, his tour, Manhattan informs us, was "a triumphant procession."

The Peron Régime

Democracy in Latin America is a fragile plant of recent growth and of precarious duration. The normal régimes in Latin America are military or Clerical-Fascist Dictatorships. The present régime of General Peron in the immense—and immensely wealthy—Argentine Republic began as a combination of these two forms of government. The General was elected President of the Republic in 1946 (February 24) and was regarded as the political representative of the conservative classes in the Argentine. He had the backing of the army and the Church, and like most Latin-American Dictators, proceeded to suppress the political parties and trade unions on the Left. As far as the Vatican was concerned, the gallant General at first showed every indication of being Rome's "blue-eyed boy"; a typical Clerical-Fascist ruler! Divorce was utterly prohibited, the Church and State were drawn closely together; all education, including university education, was made for the first time a clerical monopoly. The Peron régime appeared to be that precise type of politico-ecclesiastical régime so aptly described by the great historian Buckle, where the State controls man's body, and the Church his mind.

Divide and Rule

It is usual to describe the Peron régime as a "Fascist" government. As, however, Mr. Robert J. Alexander has pointed out in his *Peron Era*, the term, "Fascism," has a different connotation in Latin-American society than in the very different European conditions. Though Peron has imitated Hitler's repressive measures against the Left, he has also done a great deal to raise the economic and political level of the workers in the Argentine. As a result, the President can rely on working-class support in dealing

—VIEWS and OPINIONS—

When Dictators Clash— Peron versus the Pope

By F. A. RIDLEY

with the "upper classes." This was sensationally demonstrated when, not long ago, an Argentine mob burned down the Jockey Club at Buenos Aires, the headquarters of Peron's Conservative critics! General Peron, advised, perhaps, by his late wife, that remarkable woman, Eva Peron, appears to be an adept at the Machiavellian game of "divide and rule" by playing off one class against another.

An Argentinian "Henry VIII"

President Peron's policy, in fact, appears at present, to resemble very closely that of an eminent contemporary of Machiavelli, our own Henry VIII. Not, of course, personally—Peron, as far as we know, has had no other wife since Eva Peron died—but politically. Henry Tudor remained a pious Catholic down to his dying day, but he became "The mighty lord who broke the bonds of Rome," as the Protestant historian, J. A. Froude, described him, because he could not establish his own royal supremacy until he had got rid of the dictatorship of Rome. It was one Dictator against another! The same position seems to apply in the Argentine to-day, where another "Defender of the Faith" is setting up his own dictatorship on the ruins of that of Rome!

Peron's Anti-Clericalism

We learn from our contemporary, the London *Observer*, that Catholic Action, to the activities of which we have referred before, began the present rupture between Church and State by setting up Catholic Unions and a *Catholic Democratic Party* in opposition to Peron's own totalitarian

organisations. The President commented sharply that "the priests' place is in the Church, *not* in politics"! An anti-clerical, but *not* anti-Catholic slogan! Up to the present, President Peron has not imitated the ferocity of his Tudor predecessor. No ecclesiastics have been executed. But a whole succession of measures have undermined the *political* power of the Church. *Catholic Action* has been denounced as "the agent of a foreign power"—this is not only true in the *Argentine!* Divorce has been legalised, Catholic universities have been closed down, and State subsidies withdrawn from Catholic schools. At present, Peron is presenting a Bill to his—totalitarian—parliament calling for a Constituent Assembly, which will legally and formally disestablish the Church. In such extreme measures, President Peron may split his own supporters, but, paradoxically, he will get the support of his former Left opponents; since in Latin countries, Socialism and Freethought are virtually convertible terms. If he succeeds, his example is likely to find imitators in a sub-continent now in process of rapid modernisation.

"The Rejoicing Third"

One may pursue the Tudor Peron parallel, perhaps, further. It was the Reformation which, in England, *began* as a *political* movement, but which *ended* by establishing *religious* liberty. No Henry Tudor, no Charles Bradlaugh! Will this parallel be completed? Will Freethought in the Argentine be "the rejoicing Third" which will profit, similarly, by the present clash of two Dictators, with the resulting breakdown of religious monopoly?

New Zealand Calling!

By ARTHUR O'HALLORAN

(President, N.Z. Rationalist Association (Inc.))

THERE is a considerable body of people who, although they openly state that they have no use for the Churches and who reject the Christian dogmas invented by the Church Fathers, are apt to suggest that "Rationalists are flogging a dead horse." Sometimes also the view is put forward that "Rationalism is too negative."

To the Rationalist who joins up with *organised rationalism* (and every Rationalist who does not evade his responsibility) the need for a vigilant and militant movement is perfectly clear. I would go so far as to say that, if we are to safeguard the advances made by the great pioneers of Freethought, and if the counter assaults of the Churches are to be repulsed, Rationalist groups everywhere must be on the alert and ready to do battle.

Take the position in New Zealand. I have before me the Anglican Church paper *Church and the People*, issue March 1 of this year. On the front page is an article giving an account of how the Primate had a week or two previously opposed organised Sunday games. It quotes him as follows, "Wellington Lawn Tennis Association and other associations have seen the reasonableness of the requests that from time to time I have made to them; in deference to my requests they cancelled club and junior ranking matches on Sunday mornings." He then goes on to say that he regretted that the Hutt Valley Association had not shown a similar willingness. In the same issue of the paper the leading article applauds the Minister of Education for having stated that he "would stake his political career" (would he?) on having our secular system of education reviewed. The organ of the Church further quotes the Prime Minister as follows, "The life of this country rests on the Christian faith." To those who have heard him read his budgets as Minister of Finance it

is obvious that on such occasions, at least, he has other views.

This tendency of politicians to speak with two voices is, of course, not confined to New Zealand. The politician speaking with the hierarchy of the Church, say at an unveiling or "dedication" service is sometimes hard to reconcile with the party politician speaking on the floor of the House.

However, to return to *Church and the People*, Rationalists do not, and, of course, should not, object to a Church paper using its columns to propagate religion. What we object to are the factual mis-statements, the reckless assumptions, the intolerant demands by the believer in the supernatural for more and ever more "religiosity" in our radio programmes; the attempts being made to undermine our secular system of education; the moves to restrict or cancel our "organised sport" where and when it is asked for. And it is certainly disturbing to see the constant cultivation of a political-religious tie-up, from which most of our politicians seem afraid to keep aloof. Why, we often wonder, seeing that church-goers represent only about ten per cent. of the community—or at the maximum fifteen per cent. on a "Holy Day"?

In the realm of civic government the Churches are certainly much to the fore in their efforts to identify it with "the Christian Way of Life." What have appropriations for libraries, for footpaths, the arrangements for water supply, the selection of parking areas and the striking of rates to do with the supernatural and the variety of conflicting dogmas it has given rise to? Yet public bodies are opening their meetings with prayer and the mayors of various cities are from time to time inviting their councillors to attend Divine Service with them, where, no doubt, their eyes are for a brief period, turned towards the "Holy City," and where, perhaps in a moment of exaltation they see the streets "paved with gold" and hear an echo of the "eternal Allelujahs."

There is certainly nothing to support the view that Rationalists are "flogging a dead horse."

The Material Basis of Culture and Morality

By R. READER

FOR the militant Christian there can be no possible connection between an individual's culture and morality, and his material circumstances. The fact that millions are to-day living empty, futile existences grubbing for earthy necessities; barging, pushing and shoving with coarse voice and uncouth manner and gesture; listening to pitiful drivel on the Light Programme when they might be enjoying Bach and Handel on the Third; watching television when they should be having more babies—all this, and much more, means one thing only to the Christian: these people are Leading Wrong Lives.

We agree with the Christian that a world freed from mediocrity would be a pleasant, interesting place; that good breeding, courtesy, unhurried kindness, generosity and friendliness, and the disinterested pursuit of the best in the arts are all very desirable. We also agree that for every one of us these things are not to be had just for the asking: that, unless one is either a saint or martyr, a certain effort and goodwill is necessary to attain them. We would, however, point out that two things powerfully assist the said effort: time and money. Such necessities as an acceptable accent and impeccable syntax are buried in any public library, but their acquisition is enormously facilitated by frequentation of the right milieu. And this, unfortunately, takes both time *and* money. Some people have plenty of both, but the masses are not so fortunate. Or the nature of their occupation is against them (the militant Christian is invited to spend a month in a rolling mill or forging shop and to try to read Ruskin after his evening meal—he will soon find out what is meant). Also, there are attendant dangers. Some individuals, after cultivating culture, rise up high and dry, bereft of any constructive ideas whatever. And this, when one is expected to contribute to the world's essential work, is absolutely fatal.

No. However much we may deplore shallow mass culture and morality, we must realise that sound material reasons have brought them into being. People are grubbing for earthy things for the best of all reasons: they have no time, money, experience or taste for anything else. Come what may, they must eat. They cannot live on air, promise-crammed by broadcast propaganda.

The militant Christian, however, as patron of the higher living, will certainly welcome a hint on how to bring it to the masses. And this, happily, can be given by a quite homely illustration.

When, therefore, he invites friends to a soiree, he tells his wife how many will be coming. It does not do for six to turn up with food prepared for three. Nor can scratching about under the table for fallen crumbs be tolerated. A successful dinner is a matter of calculation—an affair of how much food, tableware, table space, and how many guests. These things are the ABC of the higher living.

Now magnify the thing to world proportions, with the hostess Mother Earth and the guests all humanity. The basic conditions remain the same. How much? How many? But here the Christian displays a gusty generosity and insouciance. "The more the merrier!" he cries, angrily resenting any contrary assertions, and sending ambassadors into the wilds to preach the good news.

The result is contemporary chaos—an impossibly overcrowded room and an ever-growing multitude trying to feed at a table of limited size. More and more push in, ever more cramped, irritable, and vulgar; everyone grabs; the food gives indigestion even to the better-placed; and the dark men who formerly scratched about on the floor under the table now show a deplorable tendency to rise

up and demand the square meal promised by their betters. In the general mêlée, the hubbub of recrimination, the voices of culture, and morality, order and reason, are heard ever more faintly.

We invite the Christian to look at this edifying spectacle, this contemporary negation of sanity, and to tell us frankly, man to man, and in all seriousness, what he thinks of his handiwork. For his handiwork it most certainly is. In former times, when the earth was sparsely populated, conditions were little better, but earlier peoples had the excuse of possessing only the most primitive and inefficient means of production which did not suffice, even for their small numbers.

Our age has no such excuse. The unparalleled scientific advances of the 19th century offered—probably for the first time in human history—an almost complete release from mundane competitive drudgery and toil. But the facts were smothered, suppressed, or replaced by others to conform to the conceptions of religious neurosis. Science was applied partially. The result is the swollen world population of to-day which, when forced into its tiny niche in one country, breaks out muttering in another place. Will the strain be held much longer? No one knows—least of all the Christian, preoccupied, as he is, with the higher living.

It is not a pleasant situation, but the Christian can be of some slight assistance in repairing the damage or, at least, not making it any worse. The next time he feels impelled, by religious neurosis, to utter delirium about increasing and multiplying, he should pause, think out his sentences carefully—and then say the exact opposite.

FACTS FOR FREETHINKERS

Church Revenues

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND COMMISSIONERS CONSTITUTION: The Church Commissioners were set up by the Church Commissioner's Measure, 1947, on April 1, 1948, to unite Queen Anne's Bounty (incorporated 1704) and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners (established in 1836) they exercise all the functions of the constituent bodies.

The full Church Commissioners meet as required and at least annually to consider the report and accounts (which are transmitted to Parliament and the Church Assembly and published by the State) and to elect to the Board of Governors and estates and finance committees, by whom the business of the commission is transacted under the measure.

THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS, which normally meets monthly, comprises not more than thirty commissioners.

THE ESTATES AND FINANCE COMMITTEE comprise the three Church Estates Commissioners, who are joint treasurers and control the day to day direction of business) and not more than four additional commissioners appointed annually of whom at least one half must be laymen, who are commissioners otherwise than in right of office. The Committee also acts as the general executive of the Board jointly with a committee appointed by the Board, the Administrative Committee.

FINANCE: The revenues of the commissioners are derived from their estates, principally the ancient church estates transferred from bishoprics, deans, and chapters and certain now abolished dignitaries' offices in cathedrals, and from Stock Exchange and other securities, all their revenues, other than specific trust funds, are carried to a

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This Believing World

The complete indissolubility (from a Christian point of view) of marriage, has been "news" in our newspapers, in spite of the General Election and the grim threat of strikes. Religion in some form or other is *always* news—so long as it is orthodox and based as far as possible on primitive Fundamentalism; in spite of that, the hard-pressed Christian Church has had often to change its views, willy-nilly, and the latest findings after a six-year inquiry by the Church of England have had to admit that there are occasions when Christian marriage can be dissolved in spite of Jesus and the Prayer Book.

Of course, there is actually no such thing as a "Christian" marriage. Marriage in this country is only legal when performed by a state official—that is, it is a purely secular ceremony; and if a priest, parson, Buddhist monk, rabbi, or African witch doctor, wants to add some religious ritual it does not add a jot of legality to the marriage. And divorce is also purely secular. For sensible people, what the Church—any Church—says on the marriage or divorce question is just disregarded. It is the secular and legal position that really matters.

A Committee of the Free Church of Scotland accuses the B.B.C. of blatant Roman Catholic domination—an accusation only partly true. The domination comes from the *Christian* religion, the many sects of which can get almost as much radio and TV publicity as they like. If Mgr. R. Knox were to get the huge audiences gathered by the redoubtable Billy Graham, we can rest assured that the B.B.C. would advertise Knox quite as much as it has done Graham.

But the Free Church of Scotland let loose the other day its own brand of atom bomb. Although, it declared, "hardly one in eight of the people of Scotland are Roman Catholics, almost half Scotland's criminals were Roman Catholics." Nearly half the prisoners in Glasgow's Barlinnie and Duke St. jails were also Roman Catholics, and in Borstal as well. But what a delightful testimonial to true Christianity is this atom bomb—and how all these true believers love each other!

A number of eminent people have been filling some pages in the *Daily Sketch* with what they thought would happen "if Christ came back to-day." In all probability, if this quite impossible event could happen, poor Jesus would be so bewildered crossing the road that he would have no time to tell us what he thought of us. He would, no doubt whatever, be the subject of a coroner's court. But some of the articles are gems of humour—or nonsense, which you like. For Lord Hailsham who, as a lawyer, always bases his conclusions on evidence, no evidence is necessary when it comes to Jesus. If "our Lord" came back, he would bring us *laughter*! Jesus, the greatest Man of Sorrows the world has ever seen, the greatest of all the Despised and Rejected—this Jesus would make us laugh! But perhaps Lord Hailsham means that we would all laugh *at* Jesus?

And why not? Why should we not laugh at the appearance of a desert hermit, unwashed and hungry, with a belief in Devils and Demons, in Witches and Wizards, in Spooks and Spirits, in Myths and Miracles? And even the infinite adoration of Lord Hailsham might not be equal to the presence Divine of an unbathed Deity—without laughter.

In the believing world everywhere the powers that be have never ceased to bewail the freedom of the Press, the freedom of thought, the freedom to move about freely, the freedom of being able to read and study the masterpieces of world literature. Over and over again, in the U.S.A. for example, attempts are always being made to stop people from reading even classics like Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, Mrs. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and the *Arabian Nights*—and now there is a row about letting U.S.A. citizens read Aristophanes's *Lysistrata*! How political power loves a Censor—in fact, exactly like the Roman Church.

Any correspondence in any of our national newspapers against the Catholic "Index" will always bring a crop of replies from some Catholics who will insist that they are in full agreement with it because they can always get a "dispensation" to read what they like; from others, that they never can get a dispensation but like it; and from priests who say the Church (that is, God) has always had the power to censor what it likes—and a good thing too. And millions of Catholics grovel—yes, grovel—before this Censor!

Church Revenues

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general fund. The income of the General Fund amounted to £7,835,287 for the year to March 31, 1953, these secured commitments amounted to £6,633,232, leaving a surplus of £1,202,055 for disbursement during the current year in the maintenance and extension of the schemes of grants for the benefit of the clergy.

The cost of the Commissioner's schemes of grants is met from the appropriation account of the General Fund. This account held £2,753,412 in the year to March 31, 1953. £650,598 was spent in grants for the benefit of the parochial clergy (£492,322 being the cost for the year of recurrent grants, £14,117 the amount of grants to incumbents on first appointments to benefices, and £144,159 grants of capital to meet benefactions and bequests for benefices and for endowments of new benefices), £50,000 was allocated for the assistance of living agents in cathedrals, £1,824 represents the interest charge in respect of loans for the provision of buildings for worship in newly-developed areas, £108,594 was set aside to provide against future losses on dividends from securities and on maturity of annuities under the Tithe Act of 1918. Also set aside were amounts of £100,000 for the exoneration of benefits from pension charges and £250,000 for the maintenance of clerical stipends, £1,092,396 was appropriated for the provision of churches, parsonage houses and the endowment of the clergy in new housing areas; a balance of £500,000 was carried forward in the account.

This carry forward of £500,000 represents the bare safety margin which must be kept in hand against any unfavourable emergency.

Towards making additional provision for the parochial cure of souls by increasing incumbents, incomes, or the stipends of assistant curates, deaconesses or lay workers, the Commissioners have promised to allocate among diocesan stipend funds a sum of £900,000 annually.

A sum exceeding £1,500,000 for the provision of church buildings over the next ten years has been reserved by the Commissioners.

F.A.R.

[From *Official Year Book of the Church of England, 1954-5*—pp. 257-8]

THE CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS.
By W. A. Campbell. With a Preface by the Rt. Hon. J. M. Robertson. Price 2s. 9d.; postage 2d.

THE FREETHINKER

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To Correspondents

Correspondents may like to note that when their letters are not printed, or when they are abbreviated, the material in them may still be of use to "This Believing World," or to our spoken propaganda.

ALEX TALBOT.—We agree with your estimate of the Billy Graham crowds. Freethought propaganda is mostly wasted on them.

J. QUINN.—The Jesuit certainly flays Jehovah's Witnesses very effectively. Will deal with him as space allows.

IAIN PATERSON.—We note your Christian friend's story of the man of 90 who dropped dead while reading *The Freethinker*. We envy him!

MRS. VIOLET POTTER.—No Roman Catholic may read books that have been placed on the *Index* without obtaining special permission. The practice of Confession would aim at discovering any disobedience in this respect.

D. MORGAN.—We have repeatedly dealt with Spiritualism in these columns including the "cures" of Mr. H. Edwards. Are you a new reader?

Lecture Notices, Etc.

OUTDOOR

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

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Broadway Car Park).—Every Sunday evening, 7-30 p.m.: HAROLD DAY.

Kingston Branch N.S.S. (Castle Street).—Every Sunday at 8 p.m.: J. W. BARKER and E. MILLS.

Manchester Branch N.S.S.—Every Sunday, 3 p.m., Platt Field; 7-30 p.m., St. Mary's Blitzed Site: Speakers, Messrs. McCALL, MILLS, or WOODCOCK. Every weekday, Deansgate Blitzed Site, 1 p.m.: G. A. WOODCOCK.

Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square).—Every Wednesday at 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY and H. ARTHUR.

West London Branch N.S.S.—Every Sunday at the Marble Arch from 4 p.m.: Messrs. RIDLEY, EBURY, O'NEILL and WOOD. *The Freethinker* on sale at Marble Arch.

INDOOR

Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Trades Hall, Thurland Street).—Thursday, June 9, 7-30 p.m.: B. HAYLETT, "The Significance of History."

Free Discussion Group (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—June 3: Rev. Mr. SMYTHE, "What is Truth?"

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, June 5, 11 a.m.: Dr. W. E. SWINTON, "The Religion of Albert Einstein."

Notes and News

The Freethought movement has always been ready to co-operate with other bodies for the furtherance of common aims. A General Election provides, as it were, a peak point in such mutual help. For instance, Mr. B. Bradlaugh Bonner (great-grandson of Bradlaugh) recently wrote in these columns as an Abortion Law Reformist. But our most disappointing contact was with the National Equine Defence League, whose Organising Secretary, in response to our offer of some space, refused "to associate the League in any way with the National Secular Society. It is so anti-Christian, and I will not be a party to anything

The Chapman Cohen Memorial Fund

Previously acknowledged, £850 7s. 11d.; F. Brooks, 2s. 6d.; L. Wood, 10s.; E. J. Hughes, 5s.; T. Benton, 10s.; A. Hancock, 1s.; Kingston Branch N.S.S., £9 3s.; Mr. Koorland (Ealing), 10s.; total, £861 9s. 5d.

Donations should be sent to "The Chapman Cohen Memorial Fund" and cheques made out accordingly.

anti-Christian." Now one of the N.S.S. principles is the extension of moral law to animals, and in our desire to co-operate in this matter we did not inquire whether the League's Organising Secretary was Christian, Jew, Moslem or Atheist. We have now to ask him the following pointed question. Would he avail himself of the services of an Atheist veterinary surgeon? Or would he stick to his Christian principles and watch the animal suffer?

The Bolton *Evening News* and the Barnsley *Chronicle* are foremost among many provincial papers which, since the Margaret Knight controversy, have been giving an increasingly generous amount of space to freethought letters. Mr. J. Toudic and others in the *Evening News*, and Mr. H. Irving in the *Chronicle*, both Freethinker readers, have maintained a most persistent and successful pressure which cannot do other than bear some useful results among their readers.

Material from *The Freethinker* continues to find its way into the various freethought papers of the world. Tributes to Joseph McCabe by G. H. Taylor and F. A. Ridley appeared in the *New Zealand Rationalist* and *Progressive World*; an article by H. Day reappeared in *Ripsaw* (U.S.A.). In addition, many minor features in *The Freethinker* are constantly reappearing.

BERNARD SHAW ON THE GREAT IMPOSTOR

At present, if a woman opens a consulting room in Bond Street, and sits there in strange robes, professing to foretell the future by cards or crystals or revelations made to her by spirits, she is prosecuted as a criminal for imposture. But if a man puts on strange robes and opens a church in which he professes to absolve us from the guilt of our misdeeds, to hold the keys of heaven and hell, to guarantee that what he looses or binds on earth shall be loosed and bound in heaven, to alleviate the lot of souls in Purgatory, to speak with the voice of God, and to dictate what is sin and what is not to all the world (pretensions which, if you look at them objectively, are far more extravagant and dangerous than those of the poor sorceress with her cards and leaves and crystals), the police treat him with great respect; and nobody dreams of prosecuting him as an outrageous impostor.—(From *The Intelligent Woman's Guide*.)

Available June 15

"MORALS WITHOUT RELIGION"

by Mrs. Margaret Knight, (of B.B.C. fame)

Price 6/- Plus postage 3d.

Obtainable from:-

The Freethinker Office,
41, Gray's Inn Road, London W.C.1

Order in good time to avoid disappointment

An "Answer" to Atheism

By H. CUTNER

A CHRISTIAN paper with the absorbing title *Your Answer* was sent to me the other day by my friend Tom Mosley of Nottingham, and I would not have noticed it but for an article therein entitled "An Answer to Atheism." In general, the intellectual level of these American Christian journals does not rise above that of a five-year-old moron, and anybody who can remember the old nineteenth-century Christian tracts which were produced in profusion then will have a good idea of this primitive paper.

This "answer" to Atheism is long and wordy, and actually does not contain a *single* answer to Atheism. The writer, an R. E. Underwood, claims that he came from a Christian home and, by the age of twelve, became a God-hater and was convinced that God was a myth and the Bible a Jewish "scrap-book" full of "absurd legends." I am always intrigued with the youth of these "Atheists" and how very early they swallowed nearly everything in favour of "infidelity." Underwood, however, was not content with this and was soon reading all the Freethought literature he could find "in public libraries"—Paine, Ingersoll, Voltaire, "and others." Here again I am intrigued. It is almost impossible to get any Freethought literature in English public libraries, and the first question I should like to have asked our convert is which public libraries had the works of notorious Freethinkers on their shelves? As far as I have been able to find out, Foote and Bradlaugh were always rigorously excluded from every free library in this free England of ours. Even such a great scholar as John M. Robertson, and there were very few his equal during his lifetime, was thoroughly boycotted. Then Underwood tells us that he read Voltaire, the idea being that it was that arch-infidel's anti-Christian writings which he read. I hate to call a man a liar, but I am tempted to call Underwood one. It is almost impossible to get Voltaire's numerous "infidel" writings in English in any public library—and not even in French. I happen to have them complete in French, but that is because I have the complete writings of Voltaire (with the exception of some of the plays and correspondence).

Underwood claims that he lectured "all over the country" in his teens; and later was debating and distributing infidel books and pamphlets to such an extent that his friends called him "the champion blasphemer." He even met another infidel, Martin S. Charles, and in 1931 founded the Godless Age Publishing Company. It seems extraordinary that such terrific activity is not mentioned in the encyclopædic *Fifty Years of Freethought* by the late G. E. Macdonald, so long the brilliant Editor of the *New York Truth Seeker*. If anybody had known about such a blasphemous champion, it surely must have been Macdonald. Yet all this selling of infidel books, and delivering lectures, and holding debates, all this marvellous championing of Atheism, appears to have completely passed him by. I wonder whether we are in the fairyland of imagination? Or, in other words, I do not for a moment believe in Underwood's fictions.

But, as is the case in all the Christian tracts I have read, both Charles and Underwood suddenly found God. It came almost in a flash, in spite of all the debates and lectures and reading Paine, Ingersoll, "and others." Underwood heard "the old but ever-new story of Jesus," and he was completely bowled over—or rather, after he heard his ex-infidel friend give him "the longest sermon he had ever heard." I looked back in the article but could find no trace that he had ever heard any sermon before. He

was a *complete* Atheist at twelve and never went to church.

But after this, Underwood had no difficulty in arriving at a sense of "sin," the favourite environment of Billy Graham, without which that ingenious evangelist would have no vocation. Once you find "sin," it's a mere step to find Jesus, and Underwood went over to God "in the headquarters of the godless movement"—the precise address unfortunately not given. I wonder what the godless errand boy there thought of the way the Light suddenly struck such a hardened and blasphemous infidel as Underwood?

In the whole of this long and particularly boring article there is not a line "combating" or "answering" Atheism. Not only is it apparent Underwood has not the ghost of an idea what Atheism really is, but it is obvious he could not answer a single Atheistic argument. Merely to say one is a God-hater at the age of twelve does not make a man an Atheist. He must at least give some intelligent reasons "for the faith in him." In other words, I call Underwood a gross perverter of the truth, and a particularly ignorant one at that. Christianity fully deserves him.

Cricket and Christianity

By G. H. TAYLOR

While the Church approves, Lord's will endure.—SASSOON.
THE earliest connection of cricket with Christianity possibly occurs in the Bible, wherein we are told that "Peter standing up with the Eleven . . . was bowled" (or was it "bold"?)

A much later connection, in this case a conflict, was at the end of last season, when, after a summer most unfriendly to the game, suggestions were being made that part of the Sabbath should be used for the continuation of county matches, of which a depressingly large proportion had been interfered with by rain. Had it not been for the 1954 Budget windfall for cricket in tax relief, many counties would have found it almost impossible to continue as first class. A similar experience this year would bring up the same suggested solution. In that case many cricket lovers among the clergy—dog collars are a by-word at county games—might find an uncomfortable conflict of principle with pleasure.

It is perhaps too much to hope they will emulate Lord Frederick Beauclerk, Doctor of Divinity, who in the early nineteenth century held the benefice of Redbourne in Hertfordshire, but not, apparently, so as to interfere with his sporting interests. The frequent notice, "Next Sunday there will be no service in this church," usually indicated that he was more concerned with bat and ball. Though he kept a curate, the latter was also not available for service, it seems: one imagines he was taken to play as an expert at silly point.

By his own admission Lord Frederick (a descendant of Charles II, the Merry Monarch) expected his cricket to bring him 600 guineas a year in wagers. He later became virtual dictator of the M.C.C. and is recorded as saying: "Cricket is unalloyed by love of lucre and mean jealousies."

Some 230 men in Holy Orders are recorded in Wisden as first class cricketers, but they are predominantly Anglican. The Squire and Parson, of course, were the first patrons of the game, and the first players were their retainers. It was the Dissenters who tried to scotch the

game. The Puritans pointed to an old Act of Henry VIII which made all games illegal because they distracted young men from archery. The *Book of Sports* (James I, 1617) sought to restore some games to legality, and it was re-issued by Charles I, with the object of permitting some of them to be played on Sunday. The list was ordered to be read from the pulpits. The Vicar of Maidstone refused to make known His Majesty's wishes. A Puritan Divine branded Maidstone as "a prophane town," its inhabitants having "plaid stool-ball, and cricket, openly and publicly on the Lord's day." In 1654 (under Cromwell's Commonwealth) six cricket-players at Eltham were each fined two shillings for playing on the Sabbath. Puritan influence, even after the Restoration of the Monarchy, drove underground the playing of cricket on Sundays, with a consequent loss to the records of the game.

It was therefore only when the game had become thoroughly aristocratic that Sunday playing was publicly countenanced. In 1712, for instance, the Duke of Marlborough and Lord Charles Townshend played cricket in Windsor Forest one Sunday. It was Lord Townshend who confessed that at Eton he had "loved the Game better than the Book," and the Duke himself said he had preferred it to Moral Philosophy at St. Paul's. The match was played for 20 guineas, the players all receiving remuneration, right down to the boy who acted as notcher (scorer), his share being one shilling. The ensuing protest said that "many conscientious Dissenters are alarmed at this princely way of Sabbath-breaking." Marlborough was also accused of political motives and vote-catching.

A few weeks later appeared a pamphlet, *The Sabbath Breakers*, comparable in its way with the infamous lying pamphlet of Price Hughes on an infidel death-bed, so effectively disposed of by Foote. In the *Sabbath Breakers* four young men play cricket at Maidenhead on the Sabbath. In the middle of the game the Devil walks on to the pitch and introduces a "very Beautiful Woman." The players were at once distracted from their game by her appearance (the author was patently a non-cricketer). Two of the players tried to embrace her and were immediately struck dead: the others chased themselves home in a panic and were last seen "lying in a Distracted Condition," a state which no doubt applied to the Puritan author himself.

Marlborough escaped the law, but lesser mortals continued to be fined till 1845, when the Act was amended. Probably the first recorded case of Sabbath-breaking by cricketers was in 1622 at Boxgrove in Sussex. In the absence of proper facilities the churchyard was used for the game. Some of the church windows were smashed—we are not told how many runs were allowed for these hits—and "a little childe had like to have her braynes beaten out with a cricket batt." The players had enjoyed the "mayntayning and defending" of two churchwardens, who, from all accounts, were organising matters from Sabbath to Sabbath, the minister's servant also being accused of playing during the time of evening prayer.

This habit of putting "the Game before the Book" was also in evidence at an incident recorded in 1710 at Cambridge, where the Master of Trinity gave permission to some undergraduates to leave Hall before Grace had been said. This annoyed one of the Fellows to the point of writing a pamphlet in which he accused the lucky ones of "waxing impatient to make a match."

Even Dissenters, it should be noted, have had their weak moments. Oliver Cromwell was stated by his enemies to have had a "profligate" youth and to have "fallen into a dissolute and dangerous course" in being addicted to "foot-Ball, cricket, cudgelling and wrestling," earning for himself the name of Royster. It is said that John Bunyan first felt the call for repentance while engaged in the game

of Cat, a crude relative of cricket. It is recorded that "the conviction flashed across him that repentance was too late. In the desperation of this conclusion he resumed the game." (One recalls that the little opening on to the Narrow Way is called by Bunyan the Wicket, and its custodian the Keeper.)

The Free Church contacts with cricket at the top level are, however, meagre. The first Free Churchman to become president of the M.C.C. was the late Earl Baldwin. One famous Yorkshire cricketer, Tunncliffe ("Long John o' Pudsey") attained high office in the Methodist Conference. Sunday cricket has had the goodwill of such Non-conformist literateurs as Dickens, Charles Kingsley and—if we are to judge by the friendly descriptions in *Our Village*—Miss Mitford.

The present writer was some years ago a member of a provincial town team, whose members wished to play on Sundays as well as Saturdays. The club committee, chapel-goers to a man, refused to sponsor Sunday cricket. Fortunately they did not own the ground, with the result that we simply changed the name of the team, dropping the name of the town and substituting "Mr. So-an-So's Eleven," and played on Sundays in defiance. A great deal of cricket is, of course, played on Sundays, and I hope the practice will eventually extend to the first class game, in which, quite apart from religious considerations, a whole day (Tuesday) would thus be left free for travel. Local Sunday benefit matches for county players already apparently have the blessing of the M.C.C.

Cricketing yarns with an anti-religious flavour are many and varied. The following is repeatable. A distinguished Test cricketer died, and came up for Judgment. His life was reviewed by the Recording Angels and found to be faultless, except for one unforgivable slip; towards the end of his career he had left the county game and gone into the Lancashire League. He was condemned at once and sent to the Lower Regions. It was a warm Saturday and he was greeted with the information that he had been picked to play in the afternoon match. He was given a bat which was guaranteed to make him a century of runs in the most glorious style. The weather was perfect, the crowd immense, and to his special delight he noted that the bowlers on the other side were his old enemies on earth. Eagerly he went in first, took his guard and decided to start with a six. He waited for the first ball, but none came. "Where's the ball?" he shouted to the umpire. "Ah!," replied that worthy, "That's the Hell of it. Now you know where you are. There isn't a ball in the place."

INHUMAN RIGHTS

In the United States we know the Bill of Rights. Christians, American and otherwise, do not know about the "Bill of Inhuman Rights" which is promulgated in God's Word, the Holy Bible. Preachers are so negligent that they do not expound this important part of Holy Writ. It deals with food supply, an important ingredient in our every-day living. In the Bible, God tells us how to get a low-cost light lunch or bedtime snack. See Isaiah 9:20, which reads as follows:—

"And he shall snatch on the right hand and be hungry; and he shall eat on the left hand, and they shall not be satisfied: THEY SHALL EAT EVERY MAN THE FLESH OF HIS OWN ARM."

For full-meal directions, see Leviticus 26:29. You will find:—
"AND YE SHALL EAT THE FLESH OF YOUR SONS, AND THE FLESH OF YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL YE EAT."

See also Deuteronomy 28:53, 55.

By eating our own children, God has given us a way to end juvenile delinquency.—From *Inhuman Rights*, a pamphlet by FRANK C. HUGHES, U.S.A.

NEXT WEEK

BILLY GRAHAM IN SCOTLAND

By the Rev. J. L. BROOM, M.A.

Correspondence

DUTCH DELIGHT

I have just read *That Day Alone* by Pierre van Paassen, who relates in it some anecdotes concerning an old Radical bookseller of Gorcum, a township in Holland, his name Wilhelm Bos. In his bookshop he and some of his old cronies used to meet and discuss current affairs. Thus the following. The editor of a freethinking journal over in England [probably J. W. Gott—Ed.] had been imprisoned after publishing a picture of Samuel anointing Saul, the costumes and accessories being those of a modern hairdresser's shop, the walls being hung with posters advertising ointments and pomades. Bos and his friends wrote a scathing letter to the King of England denouncing the editor's imprisonment and asking the king whether he took his title of Defender of the Faith to mean he must countenance such petty persecution as that to which the editor had been subjected. They wound up with a whole string of sarcasm about Saul the son of Kish who went looking for donkeys and found a throne, and told the King to stick to *his* throne and not make an ass of himself.

Bos and company did not, of course, expect an answer but, strange to say, the English government, instead of ignoring the scurrilous epistle, rose to the bait and made a double ass of itself by lodging a diplomatic complaint at the Hague. Our townsmen were officially reprimanded but, knowing their rights and enjoying a triumph beyond expectation, set to work on a circular letter which they sent to all the crowned heads of Europe, and actually evoked a considerable response in the mails, and never ceased to recall with delight the hilarity which greeted Wilhelm Hohenzollern's reply in the bookshop.

H. BLEWITT.

MRS. KNIGHT STARTED IT

Mrs. Knight did it. Canada's *Liberty* is now running a debate on religion, right in the Bible Belt! Among the letters I put in a word for Reason, like this: "Religion, being based on faith, cannot be defended by reason. Credulity is the one grand essential, religiously. One must believe to order and regardless of reality. All debate must therefore be futile. Actual living is all done regardless of religion, which is now in the position of a Sunday circus. Man has grown up and gone realistic in spite of himself. The only one with a reason-for-believing is the atheist, who sees that all gods are man made and that 'heaven' has the same stamp. All religion is mere childish wishful-thinking.—Yours, etc.,

J. F. KIRKHAM.

Toronto, Canada.

MYTHS NOT NEEDED

Re Mr. Brooks' arbitrary division of people into (a) those amenable to reason and (b) those who need myths, surely the latter must be wooed and assailed until they see the light.

Man is a reasoning animal and all must be made conscious of this and awakened to their powers of reasoning.

H. FIDDIAN.

ETHICS

The letter on the Nottingham debate reads strangely from a Secularist. For Mr. Turner to write that he agrees with a clergyman that "Ethics requires theological sanction," that Ethics is a "scourge," a subtle narcotic numbing the brain, is just nonsense. To quote Chapman Cohen, he "needs a little mental stocktaking to get rid of incurable goods and restock on better lines." Moral concepts arise out of human relationships and have a *social* value. One stares at Mr. Turner's words "that the B.B.C. permits Mrs. Knight to put forward dangerous doctrines." The wise course, he says, is to control oneself and not strive to control others. To explain or teach the evolution of moral ideas and show their independence of theology is part of the Secularist Philosophy. If Mr. Turner will read the quotation from Bradlaugh called "Moral Truths" (*Freethinker*, page 147) it might relieve his mental confusion.—Yours, etc.,

T. M. MOSLEY
(Hon. Sec., Notts, Branch N.S.S.)

P. Turner, in his letter of May 13, does not give his definition of Ethics, but it, presumably, differs considerably from mine. For me Ethics is the Scientific Study of Morals and Morality, past, present and future; and Morals have only an incidental connection with any religion. For me Morals are the precepts for living the best (or optimum) life, individually or collectively; Morality is the practice of these precepts and Ethics is the study of views held in the past and the present of what this optimum life should be, as well as any prognosis for the future.—Yours, etc.,

W. EDWARD MEADS.

EX-CHOIR BOYS IN PRISON

As an atheist I often apply the word "Gullible" to believers. I must regretfully apply it to H. Day concerning his article, "An Open Letter to Billy Graham." To repeat in all sincerity, as a fact, that 95 per cent. of the prisoners in a large prison were ex-choir boys, because an Archbishop had discovered it, shows a sad lack of a sense of humour, and a lack of appreciation of a nice sense of humour of H.M. convicts.—Yours, etc.,

C. U. SYMES.

H. DAY writes: I may be gullible, but in this case the gulling is being done by the Archbishop of Canterbury, supported by prominent journalists. Far be it from me to deny a nice sense of humour in the Archbishop or in the guests of H.M. corrective institutions, but perhaps Mr. Symes can elicit some actual figures in this connection. It would be interesting to learn just what proportion of our misfits, malefactors, etc., are and are not believers in gods and devils, angels and fairies, souls and spirits, heaven and hell, etc.

FAMILY PORTRAIT

It matters not whether Jesus Christ was an only child or not, but it does matter that a play should, or should not be presented because a Cardinal sends a protest to the Director of the B.B.C. (and I don't doubt that his particular play will not be presented again without "permission" being granted by the religious influences concerned).

Since there are no records of the birth and family life of Jesus Christ apart from the Bible itself, we can only assume that Archbishop Griffin has not read this piece of literature just lately, for in Matthew 13: 55 and 56 we are told that Jesus had at least four brothers (mentioned by name) and some sisters as well. This information (for what it is worth) is corroborated by Matthew 1: 24 and 25, which state that Joseph, "took unto him his wife" but that he "knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son." This, for the delicate minded who have not read about the rapings and murders committed by the "chosen people of God" earlier on, means that he did not have sexual intercourse with his wife until after she had had her first child.

We are immediately forced to recognise the fact that if Mary had borne only *one* child, it would be unnecessary to refer to him as the *Firstborn*. Furthermore, if Joseph did not "know" his wife until after this event, he must have done so later on, otherwise this information too is quite pointless. I am not sure if the Archbishop knows what the word Virgin means, as I believe members of his Church are shielded to a certain extent (at least publicly), from such knowledge, but to the layman, any woman who has been "known" even once, ceases to bear that title.

I deliberately state "for what it is worth" above, because these so-called leaders of religious thought and doctrine have been busily altering, deleting from and adding portions to the Bible ever since it was first decided by majority vote, which of the old books did, and which did not constitute the "Revealed Word of God." The latest modification, taking place in our own times, is the change from "Thou shalt not kill" to "Thou shalt do no murder," an alteration which conveniently leaves the question of war, Hydrogen bombs and all forms of *mass* destruction, outside the province of these followers (in name only) of the Man of Peace.—Yours, etc.,

RUSSELL SPRUCE.

POINTS FROM LETTERS

Congratulations on the Abortion Law article. When Christian myths are all exploded, there still remains what Cohen termed the dangerous residue, the Christian state of mind.—J. M. LEWIS.

Some time ago the Rev. Huxley Williams of Christ Church, Brondesbury, London, said "Much that passes for religion today is absolute nonsense, and is being rightly rejected by a generation whose passion for truth and scientific accuracy is most stimulating."—M. GILPIN.

I have just read the article on Catholic Action in this week's issue and could not forbear from writing to express my appreciation for such an incisive treatment of one of the minions of that unmitigated enemy of every freedom, the Roman Catholic Church.—ALFRED ALMOND.

Special Book Offer

While stocks last we can offer the following parcel containing: *Psycho Analysis* (Kenyon) published 6s.; *Has Humanity Gained from Unbelief* (Bradlaugh) published 1s.; *Secularism* (Bradlaugh) published 1s.; *Rome or Reason* (Ingersoll) published 1s.; *Age of Reason* (Paine) published 2s. 6d.; *What Is The Sabbath Day* (Cutner) published 1s. 3d. The whole parcel (valued 12s. 9d.) offered to readers of *The Freethinker* for 7s. 6d. post free. Cash with order. Strictly net.