

# The Freethinker

Vol. LXXVII—No. 38

Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

Price Fivepence

IN EARLIER ISSUES OF THE FREETHINKER I dealt with past and present relations between Church and State in various countries and periods. Under this heading I traced this relationship in connection with the Roman Catholic Church, the Reformed Churches and the major non-Christian religions. I only alluded, however, very briefly to one of the most important contemporary aspects of this complex problem, that is, the current relationship that exists between the Churches and the political regimes in the Socialist world. This, after all, whatever one's political views may be, certainly represents one of the most influential aspects of this major problem, since people in the West appear at times to be inclined to

forget that about 1,000 million people, some forty or so per cent. of the human family, now inhabit the eastern bloc of Socialist nations which nowadays stretch from China to East Germany. I must add that my omission of this important aspect of the problem of Church and State was due simply and solely to sheer ignorance. People's approach to such questions is so often distorted by prejudice and propaganda that it is hard to get accurate information on such topics.

Since writing my paper for Paris which appeared here some little time back, I have been fortunate enough to pay a comprehensive visit to Germany which included a visit to Eastern Germany, the German Democratic Republic, under exceptionally favourable conditions which enabled me to obtain authoritative information upon this precise question. I am in particular obliged to Herr Otto Buchwitz, who was already a Social Democratic M.P. in the Kaiser's Germany and now occupies the elevated position of Acting President of the Parliament in the German Democratic Republic, with whom I was privileged to have a lengthy interview. Though I did not meet its author personally, I am also much indebted to an exhaustive article on the Church-State relationship in the Democratic Republic by Dr. Otto Nuschke, the leader of the Christian Democratic Party in the East German Parliament and himself a member of the present coalition government. I might add by way of elucidation that contrary to the general opinion in Britain, the German Democratic Republic is neither completely socialist in its economy—about 15 per cent. is in private hands—nor is it a one-party monopolistic state on the model of the U.S.S.R. Contrarily, besides the government "Socialist Unity Party" made up of a fusion between the old Communist and Social Democratic Parties, there are four opposition parties, including the Christian Democratic Party, organised on a confessional Christian basis.

## Fact and Vatican Fiction

It is really hardly necessary to point out here how often the Vatican in particular has denounced *religious* persecution in Communist lands, including the "Peoples' Democracies," to which the German Democratic Republic belongs. Certainly *religious* persecution represents a sub-

ject upon which the Vatican should be an authority! Actually the accusation is entirely without foundation. No *religious* persecution is or ever has been enforced in either the Soviet Union or in Eastern Europe. It is probably true that certain clergymen were killed or imprisoned in, say, the Russian Civil War after 1917; and more recently we know all about Cardinal Mindzenty. However, in all such cases, Mindzenty's in particular, the clerics who went to prison did so as *traitors*, not as priests. (This was so particularly in the case of the Orthodox Church in Russia, which at first fiercely opposed the Revolution. In present day Hungary the Roman Catholic Church takes up a similar attitude towards the regime.) It is

also true that the Marxist-Leninist philosophy, which represents the official philosophy east of the (so-called) "Iron Curtain," is anti-religious—did not Marx describe religion as the opium of the people?—but it does not seek to eradicate religion by force, nor even by anti-religious propaganda, which is not nowadays encouraged throughout the Socialist world; but by scientific education, the teaching of a materialist philosophy such as Marxism, and, above all, by the creation of a Socialist society which, it is held, will make religious opium permanently superfluous in the happier world of the future.

## Church and State in the German Democratic Republic

The above are long-term perspectives common, I should say, to the entire Socialist world, and not only to the German Democratic Republic. But meanwhile religion is still here, including Germany and, for that matter, the U.S.S.R. Consequently the governments of the "Peoples' Democracies" have to do something about it *now*. The present East German constitution recognises this—it has to do, since, according to Dr. Nuschke, "in its overwhelming majority the population of the German Democratic Republic belongs to the evangelical [*i.e.* Lutheran—F.A.R.] Church. There are also, he tells us, about two million Catholics in the G.D.R., about 28,000 of whom, according to the Hamburg (Protestant) Press were present at last year's Catholic Congress in Cologne, about which the present writer wrote at the time. Evidently the Communists are much less efficient in exterminating their Catholic critics than was the Inquisition in suppressing anti-Catholic heretics! We also learn that the Jesuits are now established in the U.S.S.R.—they should prove apt students of the Marxist dialectic! Actually, although there is no State Church in East, or for that matter, West, Germany, religion, as my authorities indicated, is actually partly supported by the state. On this point Dr. Nuschke tells us:

"In the German Democratic Republic there is no State Church, but the Churches receive from the State considerable financial contributions. Since the foundation of the German Democratic Republic until the end of 1956 these amounted to more than 120 million marks. Beyond that there is a special fund for the restoration of historical

—VIEWS and OPINIONS—

## Church and State in the German Democratic Republic

—By F. A. RIDLEY—



churches destroyed during the war by Anglo-American air raids. The total amount of money spent for this purpose amounts to the end of 1956 to 7.2 million marks."

The education of the clergy and the publication of religious literatures have governmental assistance. I was myself assured by Mr. Buchwitz, who is a very prominent member of the governmental Socialist Unity Party, not only that no religious persecution existed but that all denominations impartially receive the same assistance from the State. The only exception to this otherwise universal toleration would be a religious cult preaching Fascism and anti-Socialism, or anti-Semitism as a dogma—there were, it appears, Nazi religious movements of this kind in Hitler's day. Actually the Churches now come off better than do the Freethinkers! Several of the Socialist intellectuals with whom I argued in the G.D.R. declared that the long-term perspectives of Socialism and Marxism made any specifically anti-religious societies unnecessary. In the Soviet Union, for example, they pointed out that whilst such societies had actually been actively encouraged by the government in the early years of the Revolution, they were so no longer. Apparently the old League of Militant Atheists, which formerly adhered to the World Union of Freethinkers, and which was represented at the London Conference in 1938,

## Militancy—A Further Comment

By G. I. BENNETT

IN HIS ARTICLE Mr. Cutner, in writing about Charles A. Watts, makes an admission of the utmost significance, as it seems to me. He tells us that Watts "was a very keen publisher, and he recognised, as any keen business man would have recognised, that if the Rationalist Press Association was to make any headway, its approach would have to be different from (Foote's and Bradlaugh's)." Foote and Bradlaugh, as is well known, were forceful Atheists who pulled no punches. All honour to them, they did, in the particular circumstances of their day, achieve more in one sense than milder men could have achieved. Because, as Mr. Cutner says, they were ready to suffer prosecution for their convictions (Foote actually going to prison for blasphemy), they made it possible for others to attack Christianity without expecting the heavy hand of the law to fall on their shoulders, and caused the authorities to lose their enthusiasm for blasphemy prosecutions at the close of the nineteenth century. But they were not founders of any numerically considerable freethought movement: their uncompromising spirit would alienate rather than appeal to many potential supporters.

So this statement of Mr. Cutner's is in effect an important corroboration of my argument that militancy is a weapon of doubtful effectiveness in the struggle with Christianity. And it is because I have long felt this that I wrote my "Why be Militant?" I am not vague in my objection to militancy, as Mr. Cutner taxes me (and Mr. Pike) with being; the foregoing is my objection to it—my chief objection.

This controversy of ours, it will be observed, has in no way been concerned with our degrees of unbelief on religious questions. I do in fact share Mr. Cutner's unbelief to such an extent that our differences of view or differences of emphasis, where they occur, make little matter. Differences of temperament must, of course, be allowed for. To Mr. Cutner controversy and disputation are the breath of life. He will tackle all comers with an energy, a gusto, and a facility of pen that I cannot hope to rival. But then, I haven't got his enthusiasm for "entering into the fray."

has now been dissolved. Anyway, I pointed out to my "Red professors" that however matters may stand in the Socialist countries where the long-term philosophy, Marxism, is atheistic and materialistic, this happy state of affairs does not exist in the still capitalist lands of the West, including England, where the governing classes ally themselves ever more closely with organised religion in its opiate quality! At least we have to fight religion directly and not wait for the long-term Marxist dialectic to come to our assistance.

### Communism and Religion

Making allowance for local variations, what applies in the G.D.R. probably applies throughout the Communist world in general. It is high time, in my opinion, to contrapose the above facts with the lying fiction with which the Vatican, now as always, seeks to blacken and to distort the actions of its opponents.

I must apologise for two slips of the pen in the last paragraph of my article, *Some Impressions of Germany*. Wagner, of course, was baptised, not "born" in St. Thomas Church, Leipzig; whilst the Leibnecht referred to should have been Karl, not Wilhelm (both names are famous in German Social Democracy). Unfortunately, I was away and had no chance of checking the proofs.

F.A.R.

We need our controversialists, I agree, and Mr. Cutner is a very good and knowledgeable one with a veteran's memory of the freethought movement and a veteran's record of service in it. But I maintain, as I have done throughout, that our constant endeavour should be so to present the freethought point of view that those outside our ranks who are thinking people will give us a respectful ear and end, I hope, by enlisting under our flag.

## What happened to the Apostles?

ACCORDING to generally accepted ecclesiastical records, only one of Christ's Apostles—John—escaped martyrdom. Matthew was slain with a sword in Ethiopia; James, son of Zebedee, was beheaded in Jerusalem; James the brother of Jesus, was thrown from a pinnacle of the Temple and then beaten to death with a fuller's club; Philip was hanged up against a pillar at Hieropolis, a city of Phrygia in Asia Minor; Bartholomew was flayed alive at Albanopolis in Armenia; Andrew suffered martyrdom on a cross at Patræ in Achaia, which was a Grecian colony; Thomas was run through the body with a lance at Coromandel, in India; Thaddeus was shot to death with arrows; Simon Zelotes was crucified in Persia; Peter was crucified, head downwards, it is said, during the persecutions of Nero; Matthias was first stoned and then beheaded; Paul was beheaded at Rome by Nero; Judas Iscariot hanged himself, according to St. Matthew's Gospel.

It is also recorded that Jesus Christ after his ascension into Heaven, did not remain there permanently; see St. Mark, 16:20. And they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them. According to an old history I once read, Jesus Christ made his way to Spain, where he died years afterwards!

The Jews' one and only Heaven was built on top of Mt. Olivet, near Jerusalem; it was their Theological College; Jesus knew his way up and down there quite well; see Acts, 1: 11 and 12. It is also referred to as Zion—the Lord's House; not to be confused with the Temple, which was built further to the West and on top of Mt. Moriah. Heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout the land. (See Luke 4: 25.)

ANDREW DICKSON, New Zealand.



# Did John Stuart Mill Fail?

By H. CUTNER

WHEN I SAID or implied in a recent article on Mill that I did not think he had fulfilled his early promise, I was only expressing an opinion and never expected for a moment that people like Mr. Arnstein, who had obviously studied his many books, would agree with me. I did not make, in fact, a dogmatic statement. I felt (perhaps wrongly) that Mill was barely read these days except for his *Autobiography* and his essay *On Liberty*. I could recall no recent edition of any of his works. In the R.P.A. Reprints there was the one *On Liberty* and *Three Essays on Religion*; and in Dent's *Everyman On Liberty* is published with other essays. But *A System of Logic* and most of Mill's other works can only be had (I think) in the old editions. If there was a demand for him among the general public he would certainly have been often reprinted. Perhaps Mr. Arnstein can give us the date of the last reprint of the *System of Logic*?

As far as I have read Mill, he seems to me to have logically agreed that there were no grounds for belief in the Christian religion but...? But in his heart, the God-idea was not too bad. As J. M. Robertson points out in his *History of Freethought*, Mill's "posthumous presentment to the world of the Voltairean idea of a limited-liability God, the victim of circumstances—a theorem which neither meets the demand for a theistic explanation of the universe nor the worshipper's craving for support—sets up some wonder as to his philosophy; but it was probably as disintegrative of orthodoxy as a more philosophical performance would have been." And he goes on to say, "The surprising thing is that neither Gregg [author of *The Creed of Christendom*] nor Mill faces the rejoinder that a God not omnipotent cannot be theologically pretended to supply the explanation of the universe which theism seeks and claims to find..."

As for Mill's *Utilitarianism*, while it had "his most direct influence for rationalism," it is "ill-planned and imperfectly thought"; and "it has always given nearly as much intellectual dissatisfaction to competent Utilitarians as it offered opportunity of cavil to opponents." Even Mill's *Examination of Sir W. Hamilton's Philosophy* did not take him much away from "a probable God"—he told Carlyle in 1834 that he believed in "a probable God"—and in his *Three Essays on Religion*, according to Joseph McCabe, "he professed belief in a finite and impersonal God."

Now, whatever shortcomings his father, James Mill, may have had, he was, as J. M. Wheeler points out, "a complete sceptic." Reading Bishop Butler's famous *Analogy of Religion* "made him an Atheist." And that is what he wanted his son John to become. Yet with all his education, his logical training, and his intercourse with some of his great contemporaries, J. S. Mill could write some of the nonsense so prominent in his *Three Essays* towards the end of his life, for they were posthumously published, as was his *Autobiography*.

In my article, I called attention to this nonsense. It was devastatingly criticised by G. W. Foote. Not that he disagreed with many things in the book—indeed, he admitted that "there are many passages which the apologists of Christianity very prudently ignore." But "Christian lecturers are never tired of quoting the panegyric of their blessed Saviour" in this volume. It was bad enough to cause one of his most intimate friends, Prof. Bain, to be surprised, for they all thought Mill a "thorough-going negationist."

That Mill was greatly influenced by his wife is, of course, admitted by all—including Mr. Arnstein. Whether that influence was a good one is a matter of opinion. Foote thought very little of an essay she wrote for the *Westminster Review* which "assuredly did not place her beside Harriet Martineau or George Eliot." And he was contemptuous of Mill's opinion, "that her mind included Carlyle's and infinitely more," as Mill wrote of her in his famous *Autobiography*. He even thought her superior to Shelley, and how wonderful she was to inspire others to write great literature.

Foote thought the *Essay on Theism* "singularly feeble" in comparison with the other two. Mill actually said, when dealing with the exploded Design argument, that "in the present state of knowledge" the "large balance of probability [was] in favour of creation by intelligence." This was written after Darwin's *Origin of Species* was published, and shows that Mill "neither understood nor felt the force of Darwinism." I am sure that James Mill would have recognised how much Evolution had completely disintegrated not only Christianity but the famous Design argument of most Theists.

Let us see what Prof. Bain, his friend and biographer, says about John Stuart Mill:

He had a subtle, logical mind...his intellect was of the purely speculative order...he possessed a rich store of principles...he had not much memory for detail...he had amassed a store of facts bearing on political or sociological doctrines...he had an intellect for the abstract and the logical out of all proportion to his hold of the concrete and poetical...he was cut out for a metaphysician...but he could never have become an historian or man of letters...he had no faculty of literary criticism, a scanty knowledge of human nature, and an extremely feeble imagination...

The truth is that Mill was not fitted to discuss the origin of Christianity, which required a profound knowledge of literary criticism and of history, "in which Mill was deficient," said Foote. He adds:

There is not the slightest evidence that he had studied the relation of Christianity to previous systems, the growth of its literature, the formation of its canon, and the development of its ethics and dogmas. He probably knew next to nothing of the oriental religions, and was only acquainted with the name of Buddhism. Nay, if we may trust Prof. Bain (his friend, his biographer, and his eulogist), he knew very little of Christianity itself. He scarcely ever read a theological book.

In fact, Mill was "not even well read in the sceptics that preceded him." This is rather hard on Bradlaugh, whose candidature for Parliament was supported by Mill in 1868, as Mr. Arnstein notes. Yet Bradlaugh was the most formidable Atheist of his day with a profound knowledge of Christian history and literature. Had Mill never read anything by "Iconoclast"?

Mill's panegyric of Christ outdoes even Renan, who seems to me to have had Jesus on the brain. For Mill says "whatever may be taken away from us by rational criticism, Christ is still left; a unique figure, not more unlike all his precursors than all his followers, even those who had the direct benefit of his personal teaching. It is of no use to say that Christ as exhibited in the Gospels is not historical... the tradition of followers suffices to insert any number of marvels... but who among his followers or among his proselytes was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus or imagining the life and character revealed in the Gospels? Certainly not the fishermen of Galilee, as certainly not St. Paul..."

But one has only to read the whole of the *Essay* in which this and a great deal more in the same strain occurs to see  
(Concluded on next page)



## This Believing World

It should prove interesting to learn exactly what the State suppression of religion has done to Christianity during the Communist regime in Russia, which has now lasted more than 40 years. In 1917, for example, there were 460 churches in Moscow. Now, in 1957, although the population has risen enormously—it is 8,000,000—there are only about 50. With one exception also, all the Jewish synagogues have been closed, for under Stalin there was a “purge” of Jewish intellectuals, most of them being “liquidated” or sent to Siberia. Religion, in fact, in Russia is for the “over 60’s”—those who had been indoctrinated before they were 18. No one now is allowed to have religion taught him under 18.

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But is all this suppression, mostly by force, the way we Freethinkers feel is the best way to eliminate belief and faith? Surely the lesson of history has shown that brute force used to suppress religion or Freethought is the *worst* way, and one that can never be supported by true Freethinkers? Either religion is true or it is not. If it is not, then only the light of reason based on science and history can prove its errors. We do not know what 40 years of literal repression has done for reason among the Russian people, but we would not be surprised to learn that even among the young people, religious rituals are still faithfully carried out.

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That stout old “infidel-slayer,” the Rev. Donald Soper, was the soap-box orator for the ITV programme on religion the other Sunday, ready to answer all questions against his faith from a studio audience. He made, needless to say, an immeasurably better case than the silly girl who was put up in the same place some months ago—but he was smart enough not to try to answer questions which have never been answered. For example, he was asked about the “existence” of God, and admitted that there was no answer whatever from the point of view of reason or science. It was all a matter of faith. Yet he took consolation in the fact that Bertrand Russell advocated the ethics of the Christian religion as our best foundation, which proved that after all parsons could offer something to the world.

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Although Dr. Soper believed that Jesus was the Son of God and the Saviour, it was mostly on the ethical side of Christianity he based his defence. Goodness, love, mercy, charity, and the rest, made up the Christian faith, and in that audience—quite a large one, by the way—there wasn’t one who had the courage to challenge this type of impudence. These virtues no more belong exclusively to Christianity than they do the religion of the Australian aborigines. And of course there wasn’t a question put to the reverend speaker—except a faint-hearted one on God’s existence—which showed the slightest realisation that there was such a thing as Freethought in the world. The people just listened to the parson open-eyed and hopelessly ignorant.

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Why cannot, for a change, TV and ITV put up a fully instructed *Freethinker* on the soap-box with an audience of parsons and priests or, at least, of all-believing Christians? No doubt whatever this would come as a terrific shock to viewers especially if the “orator” were allowed to give an unscripted reply to all questions. We have an idea that even many of our reverent Humanists would also be deeply shocked if “our Lord” were described as a myth

exactly as Osiris or Jupiter. Still, would not the experiment be worth trying?

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We noted with extreme satisfaction the splendid letter in *The Observer* by Mrs. Margaret Knight protesting at the way the Roman Church appears to have captured the BBC for “religion on the air.” She pointed out that some of the “directors” who were responsible for programmes were Catholics, and that the Catholic *Radio Guild* openly boasted that its object was “under God, to bring our country back to the old faith,” contrary to the Beveridge Committee insisting that religious broadcasting was not to be conceived as “that of seeking converts.” Naturally, this brought an angry reply from the Chairman of the Catholic *Radio Guild*, who tried to soften the blow by denying nearly everything.

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Nobody wants to stop Catholics or Protestants from broadcasting, as Mrs. Knight pointed out in her reply—but she rightly deplored “the bias which leads the BBC to cooperate with a Roman Catholic organisation and to give a generous allowance of time to Roman Catholic programmes.” What Freethinkers complain of is that, as far as possible, we are never allowed to put our case. An occasional heretical question promptly replied to by a parson is about the utmost we get—and this, not from a privately-owned company, but from what is a State-directed organisation. We hope Mrs. Knight’s vigorously worded protests will have some effect.

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### THE CHIEF SCOUT?

TELEVISION has few more consistently rewarding insults to offer than its Epilogues, and last week’s standard was reasonable. “Because, after all, what He was really saying to us—surely, wasn’t it very like—well: Be Prepared?” He too carried a staff.

—JOHN OSBORNE (*The Observer*, 11/8/57).

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### DID JOHN STUART MILL FAIL?

(Concluded from page 299)

how lamentably Mill fails in understanding what he is talking about. Almost every line has been disputed by Freethinkers long forgotten; and even now many of our better instructed Christians would laugh at poor Mill’s childishness. The “unique” figure of Christ is just as absurd as the talk about “the poor fishermen of Galilee.” Foote scathingly challenged the statement about Christ being “unique” as well as the “originality” of his teaching. These “show his utter ignorance of the subject.” There is not a single maxim, he insisted, “however good or bad, however sensible or silly, in the whole of Christ’s discourses that cannot be found in pagan moralists and poets or Jewish doctors who flouished before him. . . .”

However unpleasant it may be to eulogists like Mr. Arnstein, the fact remains that in writing this *Essay Mill* did not show the promise of his earlier and better work. That at least is my opinion, but of course everybody is entitled to dispute it or to hold some other opinion. In the ultimate the question must be decided by evidence. Does Mr. Arnstein dispute that?

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NEXT WEEK

THE BLASPHEMY LAWS TODAY



# THE FREETHINKER

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All Articles and correspondence should be addressed to THE EDITOR at the above address and not to individuals.

THE FREETHINKER can be obtained through any newsagent or will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad): One year, £1 10s. (in U.S.A., \$4.25); half-year, 15s.; three months, 7s. 6d.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 41 Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1.

Details of membership of the National Secular Society may be obtained from the General Secretary, 41 Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1. Members and visitors are always welcome at the Office.

## 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.

## Lecture Notices, Etc.

### INDOOR

Wales and Western Branch N.S.S. (Bute Town Community Centre).—Tuesday, September 24th, 7 p.m.: L. EBURY, "Atheism and Morality."

### OUTDOOR

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Broadway Car Park).—Every Sunday, 7.30 p.m.: Messrs DAY, CORINA, and SHEPPARD.

Edinburgh Branch N.S.S. (The Mound).—Every Sunday afternoon and evening: Messrs. CRONAN, MURRAY and SLEMEN.

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

London (Tower Hill).—Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: Messrs. D. TULLMAN and L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Deansgate Blitzed Site).—Every weekday, 1 p.m.: Messrs. WOODCOCK, FINKEL, SMITH or CORSAIR.

Sunday, 3 p.m. (Platt Fields) Messrs. WOODCOCK, MILLS, etc.

Sunday 8 p.m. (Deansgate Blitzed Site): Messrs. WOODCOCK, MILLS, SMITH or WOOD.

Merseyside Branch N.S.S. (Pierhead).—Meetings most evenings of the week (often afternoons): Messrs. THOMPSON, SALISBURY, HOGAN, PARRY, HENRY and others.

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

Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square).—Sunday, 11.30 a.m.: R. POWE. Thursday, 1 p.m.: R. POWE. Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY and R. POWE.

Wales and Western Branch N.S.S. (The Downs, Bristol).—Sunday, 6 p.m.: D. SHIPPER and L. EBURY.

West London Branch N.S.S.—Every Sunday, at the Marble Arch, from 4 p.m.: Messrs. L. EBURY and A. ARTHUR.

## Notes and News

THE rearrangement of the BBC's services seems likely to reduce only those programmes that are of intellectual value—Third Programme talks and the like. There is certainly no indication that religion will suffer from the changes. On the contrary, a new weekly radio programme of Christian news and comment, entitled "Christian Outlook," has been announced for the new Network Three, the first broadcast being on Wednesday, October 2nd, at 6.45 p.m. The BBC thus persists in its policy of supporting the "main stream of the Christian tradition." How outdated this is may be shown by comparison with France, where M. Jean Cote-reau broadcast on the occasion of the International Congress of the World Union of Freethinkers in Paris. It was at the Congress, too, that the French Freethinker, Louis Doreau, told us that the BBC is similarly mistaken in its overseas broadcasts in French. It assumes—M. Doreau said—that France is Roman Catholic, and so it continually irritates intellectual Frenchmen, who are largely anti-Catholic!

## The Freethinker Sustentation Fund

PREVIOUSLY acknowledged, £241 10s. 9d.; E. Swale, 12s.; W. Man-hinney, 2s. 6d.; F. B. Bolton, £3 15s.; R. S. Astbury, 5s. 6d.; A. W. Harris, 6s.; A. Hancock, 1s.—Total to date, September 13th, 1957, £246 12s. 9d.

WEST HAM and District Branch N.S.S. begins the season with a notable event on Sunday, October 6th, at 7.30 p.m. in the Stratford Town Hall, when a discussion has been arranged between Mrs. Margaret Knight and a Christian representative in Dr. Donald MacKay, a physicist of London University. The subject is "Christianity or Scientific Humanism?" Many readers, by the way, will have noticed Mrs. Knight's effective letters in *The Observer* on Roman Catholic influence at the B.B.C.

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THE Central London Branch will be keeping N.S.S. propa-ganda regularly before the London public during the autumn and winter indoor lecturing season, and Mr. J. M. Alexander, the organiser, has again completed an excellent syllabus, which, when available, may be had from him at 249 Caledonian Road, N.1. The programme starts with a lecture by Mr. F. A. Ridley, who will be giving some of his impressions from two recent visits to the Continent. This will be on September 29th, and the following week there will be a debate between Mr. L. Ebury (N.S.S.) and Mr. R. Coster (S.P.G.B.) on "Will Secularism help the workers?" The lectures are held on Sunday evenings at 7.15 p.m. at the Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, off Edg-ware Road, a few minutes from the Tube station.

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IT is pleasant to receive visitors at the office, and this summer there have been many—far too many to name individually. But we might mention recent provincial speakers on London outdoor platforms of the National Secular Society at Hyde Park and Tower Hill. Mr. Martin Caines (President of Wales and Western Branch), Mr. George Colebrooke, of Cumberland, and our Vice-Presi-dent, Mr. Tom Mosley, of Nottingham, have all made such contributions to N.S.S. propaganda during August. Another interesting visitor was Mr. Okechukwu Onwueg-buna, a University man who is returning to Nigeria, where he hopes to begin freethought activity.

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MR. G. BANKS, of Pengam, Mon., is offering £20 "to any minister or individual who can show him from the Scrip-tures where it states we ought to keep Sunday as a day of rest or as a holy day." Because of the common belief that Sunday is a day set apart by an Almighty God as a special day, he says, many restrictions are in operation, telling us what we may not do on Sundays. Mr. Banks' money is, of course, quite safe. The Bible takes the seventh day as the Sabbath.

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FOLLOWING the Sudanese Government's taking over of 300 Catholic mission schools in Southern Sudan, the Sudan Parliament has passed a law giving the Ministry of Educa-tion power to nationalise practically all private schools. Although leaders of Sudan's 197,000 Catholics are protest-ing strongly against this "religious intolerance," little notice is being taken by the mainly-Moslem north, who probably wish to curtail Christian activities and, recognising the Vatican menace, spread Islamic propaganda in the south. In answer to Catholic protests, *Al Avam*, a Khartoum Arabic daily, charged Italian R.C. missionaries with trying to "renew the imperialism of the Duce under the pretext of religion." Catholics are also complaining that the Govern-ment has not kept its promise to protect religious instruc-tion in schools and that some priests have been refused admittance to the mission schools now under State control.



# Freethought Televised to Millions

(Concluded from page 291)

The following dialogue took place on Mike Wallace's TV programme "Night Beat" on the American station WABD from 11 p.m. to 11.30 p.m. on May 22nd last. The estimated audience was between three and four millions.

WALLACE: When was the last time that you stepped inside a church or a temple to witness a service, Mr. Lewis?

LEWIS: I have been invited to speak at many churches and I was in one in Miami two years ago. I spoke from the platform at a Wednesday night Forum, but not to attend services.

WALLACE: That is the last time that you went to a service?

LEWIS: Yes, sir.

WALLACE: What kind of a service was it?

LEWIS: That's a Unitarian Church.

WALLACE: The Unitarian Church. They asked you to speak at their Wednesday night forum, not at a service?

LEWIS: That's right.

WALLACE: How can you remain a conscientious atheist if you do not know more of what is going on inside the opposition, so to speak?

LEWIS: I think I am perfectly acquainted with what goes on inside the opposition. I think I know all about the services and much of the ritual that takes place. It can be described as a form of post-hypnotic impressions upon the people who have become inculcated with this idea of God, and the religious ceremony, when they were children. The child would know nothing about these ceremonies unless the parent, or the preacher, had inculcated these things in his mind when it was in an impressionable state.

WALLACE: Mr. Lewis, let's up-date the story a bit now. There's a fellow in town, an Evangelist preacher by the name of Billy Graham, a man you've publicly attacked. In an open letter to Mr. Graham, you charge as follows: You say, "Your campaign is purely a mercenary undertaking. The only thing spiritual that you're interested in, in this New York crusade, is the religious motto on the money you get."

LEWIS: That's true. I did charge him with being mercenary.

WALLACE: What leads you to believe that you understand Billy Graham's motives so well and credit them so little?

LEWIS: Because it seems incredible to me that an honest man would preach such an obviously false doctrine, and he certainly has given no evidence to support his claim, and is not performing what he says he performs. He cannot fulfil his promises.

WALLACE: What's that?

LEWIS: And that is, he claims he is giving spiritual value to the people who come to hear him. He's preaching a doctrine that has no evidence to support it, and as Ingersoll said so many years ago, he's "hooting the same hoots that have been hooted for hundreds of years," and I don't know of a single instance where results have been obtained from it. He is preaching a false doctrine.

WALLACE: And you still cannot understand why thousands of people, tens of thousands of people, are coming to Madison Square Garden to listen, to pray, and some of them to come at his call?

LEWIS: I think I can explain that. Only yesterday I got a newspaper clipping from Detroit stating that Billy Graham's Crusade here has recruited 250,000 people who are being brought here by train and bus and other forms of conveyances to attend his meetings at Madison Square

Garden. In other words, in plain language, he's packing the Garden with these people who are already believers in order to make it appear that he is a big success. To most of them it is an excursion to New York.

WALLACE: You mean these are people who are already there and he's . . .

LEWIS: Yes, he is bringing them here in "truckloads." He's bringing them here in trains; they're stopping in hotels and he arranges for their transportation. There is no doubt that they are coming to New York for a visit and they're obligated to go visit Billy Graham at Madison Square Garden. I say that's packing the meetings.

WALLACE: We spoke with Billy Graham's office today and they reply to your charges this way: First, that he "packs" the Garden, illegally, so to speak. "Untrue and our files are open to the public on the bus accommodations we have made; all chartered buses are for groups from Brooklyn, Staten Island and elsewhere in New York. Middle Western people—only forty have come from Chicago." Second, that he is making money from the crusade. "He's paid a salary of \$15,000 a year from the Minneapolis Evangelist Foundation. All offerings at the Garden are taken only for defraying expenses of rental and publicity. They are handled by a gentleman who is an executive director of Macy's Department Store who volunteered to be our Treasurer."

LEWIS: I defy him to open his books to the public. I say that Mr. Billy Graham probably found preaching the gospel more profitable than being a Fuller Brush salesman. That is what he was before he became an Evangelist. I say that there is absolutely no proof, and particularly when he tells you that he wants people to accept Christ as their redeemer, there's no proof that a character such as Jesus Christ of the New Testament ever existed. He has no such proof. He is preaching a doctrine that has absolutely no foundation whatsoever, spiritual or otherwise.

WALLACE: One final question, Mr. Lewis. When you are on your deathbed, do you think that it is barely possible that you might call either for a rabbi or a priest as so many, I think you will agree, as so many professed non-believers have done before you?

LEWIS: No, sir, that is not true. I don't know of any non-believer that has ever called for some clergyman to come to him. I was on my "deathbed" twice. I had two heart attacks. In both instances, I was given up and I had no intention then of calling for any priest or rabbi or any other clergyman. I believe with Thomas Paine that in silent resignation there is more consolation than the murmuring wish of a prayer. What is the purpose of calling for a clergyman? He can't do anything for me. He can't do anything for himself. He will suffer from the same ills of the flesh. He'll die just as I will, as all others will die. He doesn't possess powers other than any ordinary human being. And the muttering of a prayer is as useless a thing as I can imagine.

WALLACE: Mr. Lewis, are you bitter, perhaps, because there is no God in your belief?

LEWIS: Oh, to the contrary. I'm perfectly satisfied. I am an emancipated human being, completely free from a belief in a tyrant God. In fact, I would really feel sorry for an Omnipotent Being who couldn't make a better universe than we have. If, with all the resources at my disposal, I could not make a better world, I would be ashamed of myself.

WALLACE: Thank you, sir, for coming and explaining



your point of view to us tonight, Mr. Lewis. In his book, *The Bible Unmasked*, Joseph Lewis has written: "It is our duty to expose the Bible. We must continue to tell the truth about the Bible. We must continue to enlighten the people." And he goes on: "And if after the true facts are known, there are some who still insist the Bible is good enough for them, they are welcome to it." What would

a religionist answer? In the Book of Common Prayer, these words are set down: "We have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep." For those who disagree with Mr. Lewis, his challenges to religion may possibly be worth while. For, possibly, many of us tonight will re-examine and, chances are, reaffirm our own religious beliefs.

## Catholics and Euthanasia

By D. SHIPPER

*Suicide and Euthanasia*; Catholic Truth Society; by the Rev. G. J. MacGillivray; pamphlet, 4d.

FOR CATHOLICS there is no distinction between suicide and voluntary euthanasia, and the author violently attacks the Voluntary Euthanasia Legislation Society. He maintains that "our life is not our own but belongs to God," and because we ignore God we "go astray in questions of this kind." Actually, he says, atheists are hardly qualified to discuss this subject at all, because "if there is no God" there is, obviously, "no such thing as right or wrong." Non-believers thus speedily dismissed, Mr. MacGillivray is able to deal with believers, telling them "we are His property." The "only possible way" for us to retain lasting happiness is to go in the way that God has marked out for us." The actual departure should create little anxiety because "the body does not end in the grave." On the contrary, "it will be transformed, *no doubt*, in a way that as yet we *cannot imagine*." How the author can have "no doubt" about something which he "as yet cannot imagine" might prove a trifle puzzling to the reader unfamiliar with the intellectual gymnastics performed by Catholic writers.

Explaining that *sometimes* it is lawful to kill, the Rev. asserts that the public authority, which has "a certain power delegated to it from God" may use the weapon of capital punishment. Then follows an extremely interesting dissertation on how Catholic soldiers of differing combatant countries in a war may kill each other with an easy conscience.

Whereas it is "always wrong" to kill an *unborn* child in order to save its mother's life, it is quite lawful to kill the *civilian* population of a town which is being bombarded because of its fortifications. Although it is "morally certain that some non-combatants will incidentally be killed," this is not a sin, because "their death is not intended, but *merely permitted*." (!) Finally, although a man is never "justified in killing himself," if in the armed forces "they may in these circumstances allow themselves to be killed." (One of the few occasions on which a chit from the sergeant-major is not required). Although many people find repugnant the idea that suffering has value, Catholics appreciate (from God's revelation) that suffering is not "the one great evil." They understand that "the one absolute evil is sin," and that suffering "is only an evil in a secondary sense" and that it may be utilised so as to "become the means of great good."

Something else to bear in mind is that "death is *not* necessarily the *end* of suffering." On the contrary those who have sinned and "made themselves the enemies of God" and obstinately refuse to repent, have to face "the eternal suffering of hell."

Clearly then, it is "simply murder" to put someone to death painlessly when "the continuance of his life seems useless" and if the unfortunate sufferer in question is in a "state of mortal sin" and you are giving them no time to repent, so killing the soul as well as the body, "you are doing your very best to send him to hell" and are despatch-

ing him from the temporary and *comparatively light suffering* of this world" to the "eternal suffering of hell." Even when administering drugs to alleviate severe pain, one must be careful this does not prevent the patient from "doing what is necessary for the salvation of his soul" and "special care" must be taken if the unfortunate patient appears to have been "living in a state of mortal sin" without showing signs of repentance. It is quite obvious that if drugs are administered in such a way as to make the patient sleep continuously before dying, the sinner will not be "given the opportunity to make his peace with God" and such continuous sleep should be avoided if possible, even with a *pious* patient who appears "at peace with God." He must be allowed "lucid intervals" when he can resign himself to God.

We *must* bear in mind that when a person dies in a state of mortal sin, they go "straight to the eternal pain of hell." Also, it must not be forgotten that, "as death approaches, *the devil* makes his last attack," this being "his last chance to get that soul into his clutches."

For those who deny the existence of God and the immortality of the soul there can be *no objection* to euthanasia, he says. "If men are just beasts," he continues, "they may as well be treated like beasts." "With people like that we cannot argue — we have *no common ground*."

No, Mr. MacGillivray, we have no common ground! Your heartless views on death and lack of feeling for pain are detestable to anyone with the slightest pretensions to humanitarianism.

Your attempts to instil the fear of Hell into those intellectually weak enough to assimilate such nonsense belong to a bygone age.

FACTS FOR FREETHINKERS — 20

### Scientists and Survival

PROF. LEUBA made a similar inquiry concerning belief in survival. The question was: do you believe in the continuance of the person after death in another world? This is perfectly fair, in that (a) it embraces belief in both immortality and a mere limited survival, and (b) it makes no stipulation as to whether continuance shall be with or without bodily accompaniments of any kind. It is the fashion to posit a kind of ethereal body to harbour the spirit, thus to aid recognition and location.

The results of this inquiry contained the following, and were throughout of the same character as those pertaining to a God. Twenty per cent. of the greater physicists held belief; of the greater biologists, 15 per cent. were similarly inclined, of the sociologists only 10 per cent., while no more than 2 per cent. of the greater psychologists, who study mind as their special job, were ready to see it as something which could endure bodily death. Again, in every group, the more expert were the less inclined to belief.



Leuba also used the membership list of the American Sociological Society, and the 1933 (current) year book of the American Psychological Association. In each group 75 per cent. at the lowest, and 90 at the highest, of those asked responded to the inquiry, so that the delinquents could not have turned the scale had they all been of the same mind. Indeed, one of them pointed out that while there was every inducement for believers to reply disbelievers would in many cases prefer to maintain silence. The figures were compared with similar statistics based on the 1906 edition of Dr. Cattell, by an investigation carried out by the same statistical methods. Another striking decline of belief is indicated since 1914. Among the greatest scientists the physicists dropped from 40 per cent. believers to 20 per cent. in 19 years, the biologists from 25 to 15, the sociologists from 27 to 10, and the psychologists from 9 to 2. Again, the physicists, who do not study mind, are prepared to give its continuity the most favourable consideration, but as more is known about life and mind belief diminishes, until only 2 per cent. of the more eminent psychologists credit it. And the psychologist really has the last word. *C'est son métier*. He is assuredly in best position to say whether the nature of mind permits of its separation from a living brain.

With regard to the two colleges, one was a religious college, with students recruited from religious families. When they entered college 42 per cent. held belief, but when we come to the Seniors about to leave, we find only 27 per cent. believing in this cardinal Christian doctrine. A comparison shows that since 1914 belief among freshmen fell from 80 to 42, and among seniors from 70 to 27 per cent. In the other college belief fell from freshmen (29) through sophomores (20) and juniors (14) to seniors (5 per cent.).

It is the first time that such a comparison has been possible, and it may be inferred that an inquiry instituted today would show further advances in disbelief. Moreover, the results may be taken as a criterion to the decline of belief elsewhere. There is a marked decline over a period, testifying to the change in the social circles from which the students are recruited. Further, of the believing freshmen in one college, 51 per cent. admitted they had never assigned any reasons for their belief.

Leuba concludes that the largest proportion of believers are found in the following categories: (1) the scientists who know least about living matter and mind; (2) the less eminent men in each science; (3) the scientists and students of 20 years ago; (4) the students in the lower college classes.

Here we have the four factors, the complexity of the science; the degree of ability attained by the scientist; the passing of time and accumulation of knowledge; and in the case of the students the development of reasoning power and their general intellectual progress; all determining whether belief is possible. *We are therefore not dealing with mere haphazard private opinions. We are dealing with a movement of thought.*

G. H. TAYLOR.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### SPENCER AS A MATERIALIST

While it is true that our greatest English philosopher, Herbert Spencer imagined an uncaused cause which he named the "Unknowable," he did not attempt to personify or define it. Apart from a few scattered guesses about this unknowable, his monumental synthetic philosophy of the "knowable" is purely materialistic and in many instances far ahead of his (1820-1903) and even of our time. Even today one meets self-styled Freethinkers who believe in "eternal verities" and use the word "spiritual," which to a real root-and-branch Materialist has no meaning.

To this writer Materialism is a far more definite, clear and convincing principle than the mere negative terms Atheist or Agnostic.

ELLA T'WYNAM.

### A FRENCH READER ON PASTEUR

In "This Believing World" of August 9th I see Pasteur seems to have been enrolled in the army of the supporters of the God-created Life theory.

What Pasteur demolished was not spontaneous generation, *in general*, but the *then*, so-called spontaneous generation, within the limits of both the *then* available knowledge and the *then* scientifically conducted experiments. His statement about it is a model of scientific honesty and prudence, and by no means were his opponents Rationalists or Freethinkers!

I know that, now and then, some ill-advised religionist will flourish Pasteur as an example of a scientist who marvellously reconciled Science and Faith. One is entitled to speak of such a reconciliation when both items are of equal impact upon the reconciliator's personality. Such was not the case with Pasteur, whose faith, a mere infancy habit, was superficial, and supported by his respect and gratitude for aged, believing parents. Pasteur the scientist overwhelmingly eclipsed Pasteur the Catholic, and the clash between Science and Faith does not seem to have troubled his nights. In fact, he never investigated the question thoroughly.

J. FURNEL (France).

### PACIFISM

Freethought opposes dogma—particularly religious dogma. Why then should we be silent on the pacifist question? Surely, to take the lives of innocent children is to commit the most dogmatic action possible. The most priest-ridden, undernourished, wretch has a chance of emancipation whilst he is alive, but the dead baby has no chance. Let us take the initiative in tackling this huge, immediate problem.

E. CROSSWELL.

## OBITUARY

THE death has occurred, at the age of 86, of Mr. Andrew Allison, senr. A member of the West Ham and District Branch N.S.S. and a lifelong Freethinker, he was once a regular speaker in Beresford Square, Woolwich, alongside his old friend, the late Mr. Stewart Wishart. He also served for a period on the West Ham Council, being Chairman of the Education Committee. A secular service was conducted on September 6th at the City of London Crematorium by the Vice-President of the Society, Mr. T. M. Mosley, before relatives and members of the Branch. We send condolences to Mr. Allison's relatives.

F.G.W.

It is with regret that Bradford Branch N.S.S. announces the death of one of its stoutest supporters and popular lecturers, Charles William Kearman, of Leeds, died in hospital on August 16th after an illness lasting 18 months. He was 64. Mr. Kearman lectured regularly before his illness and was known for his lucidity and beauty of expression. We extend our sympathy to his widow and children.

W.S.

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By G. H. TAYLOR

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