

Is Theism a Logical Philosophy?

YES, Argues Rev. Burris A. Jenkins
NO, Argues E. Haldeman-Julius

[The following debate was held at The Linwood Forum of Kansas City, Mo.—in Dr. Jenkins' Linwood Boulevard Christian Church—on Sunday evening, April 13, 1930. Rev. Burris A. Jenkins argued the affirmative and E. Haldeman-Julius argued the negative in this debate, which was stated in the following form: "Resolved, That Theism Is a Logical Philosophy." We publish herewith a verbatim report of the debate.]

AFFIRMATIVE ARGUMENT BY DR. JENKINS

Ladies and Gentlemen: Permit me first of all to express, or try to express, my personal gratitude to Mr. E. Haldeman-Julius for coming up here tonight to debate with me, and incidentally to help The Linwood Forum out of the hole; and no doubt I may be permitted in your behalf to express your gratitude to him for this work of kindness and charity. I have debated with a good many brilliant men, here and elsewhere, such as our good old friend Clarence Darrow, a number of times, Judge Ben Lindsey, a number, and Harry Elmer Barnes; but I have never debated with a keener mind, crossed swords with a more brilliant rapier, than I shall be called upon to do tonight. And I must confess a great deal of timidity in going up against the power of this man's mind. There is no discount, too, on his courage. He maintains his view, whether it is popular or unpopular, whether the skies stand or whether they fall.

I should like the question to read—and I think he gives his consent—Resolved, that belief in God is a logical philosophy. Theism is a term that not everybody grasps, but belief in God everybody does. Of course the subject is a metaphysical one, a philosophical theme. Somebody has said that a metaphysician is a blind man groping around in a dark room after a black cat that is not there. A pretty fair definition of those who try to explore the ultimate sources of human knowledge and the ultimate basis of human thinking. And that is exactly what we are undertaking to do here tonight.

A Universal Tendency of Men to Believe in a God

One who sets out to prove that there is a God is rather wasting breath. There is no demonstration, either for or against. People are incorrigible believers, for the most part, and have been throughout the course of history, in the existence of a controlling mind, spirit, something which they personify as God; and perhaps the very first argument which may be adduced for the probability of his being lies in this all but universal tendency of the human mind so to think. Particularly the greatest of human minds from the dawn of history have been theists, from Plato and Aristotle, easily to be recognized as perhaps the greatest minds of antiquity, and beyond whom we have not grown very much, with all of our so-called evolution and development, on down through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, to such men as Leonardo da Vinci, the universally minded, and Goethe, and Heine, and Shakespeare, clear on to our present day. It is a rare thing to find in the course of history one who has declared for a very definite atheism. Perhaps you may meet a man who calls himself an atheist. But when you come to know him, his actions speak louder than his words. Clarence Darrow claims to be an atheist. You all have met him—at least you have seen him—and you know the difference between his philosophy and the practicality of his life. He holds that this great universe of ours is nothing but a machine; that it is just a happen-so, nobody ever started it, no mind ever designed it; that it is a pretty dangerous and a pretty cruel machine, that it grinds these little human beings, each one of us, into powder, and that when the curtain comes down on the end of our careers there is night; that we go out into everlasting darkness and everlasting sleep; and he does not think that life is worth living at all. I hold that pessimism is the logic of atheism, the feeling that life is not worth while. I do not see how one can very well escape from that natural result of the premise that there is no controlling over-soul, or mind. One time when I said to Mr. Darrow, "If you think it is true we are only happy when we are asleep and don't know anything, why don't you go to sleep?" It is an easy thing, just one little pull at a trigger," the dear old gentleman said, "I want to see the curtain go down on the last act." The logic of his unconscious belief is more powerful than that of his avowed belief.

The interest that my opponent takes in life, the avidity with which he attacks his work—he just now told me in my office that he was having a world of fun out of his business, his life; of course he is; you can see it shining in his face; and his actions speak louder than his words—show that he believes in life. It seems to me that this thing which we call personality, contradictory as it is oftentimes, living differently from what it thinks and believes, this strange, queer thing we call I, Me, individuality, is the hardest thing for the atheist to get over, to account for. I do not see how he can reach any philosophy which will be final without explaining, to a degree at least, the existence of the Me, the I.

The Argument by Descartes from Personality

It is the father of modern philosophy who starts with this proposition as the beginning of his whole system, "I refer, of course, to Descartes. There are those who, of course, would try to persuade

us that we can't be sure of our own existence; that we can't be sure of anybody else in the world; that all this scheme of things, the stars, the moon, the rain, these whirling worlds, all this may be illusion, delusion; that we can't be sure of the existence of any of them; that we may simply deceive ourselves all the time.

But Descartes starts out with this proposition: "I think. Therefore I am." And with that as a basis he builds up his entire system of philosophy. I think that he stands upon firm ground and that he starts from a good starting-point. When I realize that I am an entity, an individual, a personality, I think, there is no illusion about it, because I am sure. I think. Therefore I must exist. From that I pass on by graduated steps to the assurance that my neighbor exists. I meet and compare notes with my friend; I know that he exists; he gives me his ideas and I give him mine, for what they are worth. We interchange thoughts; and nothing can convince me that E. Haldeman-Julius does not live. He is very much alive.

From that we go on by steps building up a system that is logical and practicable and applicable to human life, which lands us at theism. As a matter of fact, it is a far easier thing to account for this universe on a theistic basis than it is on an atheistic one. I do not envy the man who tries to make some sort of logical and philosophical scheme which will account for all this without a great mind, a great soul, a great creative artist back of it all. It seems to me there is no escape from the assumption that, unless there is such an individuality behind our personality and behind all this great system of whirling worlds, the whole thing is just chance, just chaos, just a happen-so; that is utterly inescapable. There is no philosophy that fits it except the philosophy of a creative mind and a purpose running through. Of our great scientists of today, most of them are driven by their researches beyond the limits of human knowledge to the belief that the origin of it all must be in another Great Scientist who built it, established its laws, set it going upon its way.

You may call the names of the leading scientists of today and most of them are theists, believers in God. On the other side of the water there are Sir Oliver Lodge and J. B. S. Haldane; on this side of the water, Michael Pupin, Robert Millikan, men of that stamp, experts in their field of scientific investigation. I know that Mr. Harry Elmer Barnes, in his *The Twilight of Christianity*, insists that these men all have compartmental minds, that they are all right enough in their own compartments of astronomy, or physics, but that they have no right at all to speculate as to ultimate things of philosophy, metaphysics. Mr. Barnes insists that he has that right because his science is anthropology, and sociology, and that he can speculate as to all this, but all these other gentlemen are not sufficiently informed. And so he says there is a twilight.

Well, there are compartments and compartments; and these gentlemen, having demonstrated their ability in scientific realms, are surely justified in using the same brain power in speculating in metaphysical realms as well; and when we bear in mind that the greatest of the human intellects from the beginning clear down to the present time, so far as their thoughts are recorded, are driven to the conclusion that there must be a creative power back of it all and an increasing purpose running through it all, when we realize this fact, then we begin to appreciate that, unless the whole of the human race, with its past experience, is utterly illogical, then belief in God must be a logical position.

The Pragmatic Working of the Theistic Belief

It is not very long since there was current in America a system of philosophy called pragmatism. It was in very great vogue about thirty years ago, and it left a great impress upon our thinking. One of the great progenitors of that vogue was William James, the psychologist. Surely he has a right to think in this realm of metaphysics, because he is a scientist of a psychological turn, as Mr. Barnes is. Then it was carried on by Professor George Burman Foster of the University of Chicago, very able in philosophy. Pragmatism was this: that is true which functions serviceably for humanity; that proposition is likely to be correct which works well in human life.

Now, I recognize the limitations of that philosophy. I know that it has been tried through a generation and has not been established as infallible and absolutely true in all particulars. Nevertheless, there is a modicum of truth in it, that that thing is likely to be true which works well in human life. If it functions serviceably for humanity, then the inference is that more than likely it is in harmony with the logic of affairs and of events.

Now, the theistic philosophy is the only thing that has worked in human society at all. There never has been any other philosophy tried out among men, either in a small way or in a large way, in social construction, except the theistic belief. Well, you say, there is an experiment going on right now over in Russia, in establishing an atheistic society. Once again, the actions of the Russians speak louder than their words, over and over. We all know of a Lenin cult. They are not very far from worshipping as their Messiah the founder of their republic, the Soviet Union, Lenin. And he is well worth believing in, for he was a very great and fearless man. But Russia, better than almost anybody else, is showing up the impossibility of the human mind resting in atheism. In Russia today there is an enthusiasm for the social program, for the communistic regime, that is nothing less than a worship, a devotion to the cause, that is profoundly theistic in its very spirit, a sacrificial devotion that amounts to worship.

Now, we see men acting as if they were theists, even while with their lives they express agnosticism and occasionally atheism; not often atheism, but usually agnosticism. My young son, fifteen years old, came home from high school one day—he was then a sophomore—and said, "I have got through with all this old stuff, I am an atheist."

I didn't say anything then. Days passed on and weeks; when a favorable opportunity came and we were having a good chin-chin, I talked things all out with him. He said, "Maybe I am not an atheist after all. Maybe I am an agnostic." I said, "That indicates that you are growing, that you don't think you know it all. I thought you thought you knew it all; but if you have reached a position where you are doubtful about things, or you have reached a position where you call yourself an agnostic—an honorable term—you are growing." He has got over being a sophomore, and still he is an agnostic.

I see in people who claim agnosticism a great many who would like to see if there is any purpose behind the world, if life is going anywhere; and yet they all act all the time as though there were a purpose, as though law does reign and not chaos, as though something can be done to affect the machine for the good of the human being; so they set to work very vigorously and determinedly to make the machine work for their benefit.

Faith in a God Through Nature

I often travel out in the country in an automobile and I have seen some of the days of this springtime when the world is white with April, if not with May, and I have seen the works of the farming people. They act as if they believe in the procession of the equinoxes, in the return of spring, of summer, of harvest and fruitage. They go on that basis. They consider that there is logic in the events of the world in which they are a part. They may not be able to explain it; don't stop to think, perhaps, that there is a law-giver behind the law; but they act just as if they thought the law was working just the same. How do I know? Because I see it. They make careful preparation. There I see the hillside dotted with white leghorns like great flower petals; I see the fuzzy balls as big as my hand, chafing around on toothpicks after their fussy old mothers, the hens; and I think maybe I can get an invitation later down to Girard or in that neighborhood. And then I see little calves, fresh born—I saw one lying one day under a hedgerow; it must have been born that morning, its sides still wet and the old mother standing licking them; I see little mule colts, even out in Kansas I see queer and wobbly mule colts, with bodies about as big as a hobby-horse, and ears and legs as long as they will ever get to be. Now, how do those things all come about? Just a happen-so? I see the corn come up, as big as my hand, and the wheat in head and the oats ready to cut, along early in June. Those farmers, because they have believed that the harvest was coming, that they could get something out of their fields, have prepared this land for the resurgence of fresh new life in the spring. They are putting their trust in the creative power that is back of it all.

Then I see men and women bearing life when it is scarcely to be borne. In the midst of weariness, pain, suffering, disillusionment, and lives wrecked and broken, I see them pulling their belts tighter and saying, "It is going to be better tomorrow. I will be better tomorrow. Things are going to be better with me after a little while." And they thrust out their jaws and clench their teeth and go ahead. I take off my hat to the courage of humanity that can endure so bravely and so well. They act as if they believe that there is an order in it all; that it is not a machine grinding us to powder, wrecking and destroying our poor, little lives; that nature is something else than red in tooth and claw; they anticipate something better to come tomorrow, and tomorrow.

Last night I saw Otis Skinner playing the part of a one-hundred-year-old man, and the most beautiful part in the play is when he sits and looks out musingly and says, "I have lived here so long because I liked it. Ahead of me was a little light burning. I looked forward to this day when my children and my grandchildren and my great-grandchildren would be coming to celebrate my one-hundredth birthday." And then he says, "As this light has come, I look forward to another light, dimmer and farther off, that will keep me." He adds, "I want to see my great great-grandchildren." Here it is, human life looking forward, always something tomorrow, and tomorrow, and it is going to be better and better. We believe in life, even when we think we do not. We believe in its logicity, in the reign of laws; we believe in its purpose, that it is going somewhere and getting somewhere.

We would not be able to lie down and sleep at night if we did not believe that there were an overarching power, something I cannot define. I don't know what you call it. Call it the Over-soul, with Emerson, if you like; call it Father, as Jesus called it; and as most other nations and religions have called it; call it what you please, we could not sleep if we did not have an unconscious dependence upon that power. Suppose you did not believe that the sun would rise tomorrow morning; or suppose that you had grave doubts of it, or agreed that the probabilities were against its coming up tomorrow, or that there would be any tomorrow. You could not sleep any more than a man that was going to face the electric chair at seven o'clock in the morning; you would pace up and down your bedroom all night long, unable to rest. If you didn't believe that somehow some power would bring the sun back again over the eastern horizon—I know that is not scientific; no, that the world would turn during the night toward the sun over on the east—you could not sleep.

The Comfort of Belief in a God

Then all this life of beauty and cleanliness which is embedded in us, now, in this springtime we are all getting out our paint brushes and whitewash brushes and whitening up the fences—not in the city, but in the country. If we have a back yard, we are cleaning it up; if we don't, the Boy Scouts will come tumbling over the back fence and remind us of it. It is the duty of a citizen to clean up, make his place just as beautiful and ornamental as he can. A chap said to me

one time, "When I get way down I have only two things to do, get drunk or put on dress clothes." I knew that the first was all talk. He had never been drunk—he may have been just a little "lit-up" but he had never been drunk, I know. He was talking with respect to the old Greek gods; it was either Bacchus on the one hand or Apollo on the other with him. In 1917, working with the British army, to my astonishment I found out that there was a regulation that every Tommie had to shave every morning, no matter whether he had water to shave in or only mud; whether in the barracks or in the trenches, he had to scrape his face, and they came out rosy and fresh, even in the trench period. Better orderliness, cleanliness. Water has an effect upon our lives. Pragmatic philosophy, undoubtedly, works serviceably for humanity. People think there is something back of it all, a great artist, creating beauty and art.

If we didn't believe that there was a great power directing eternal destiny, how should we even be able to stand by the side of those we love better than ourselves and see them slipping through our fingers, out into the unknown? Or how should we ever be able to recover after such a loss? Have you been through it? Something more precious than your own life ebbing away, and you clutch at it and try to hold it back, and you can't. And then you see the green door of the earth swinging over it and you say "Good-bye." How can you go on living, how is it possible to go on living? Why don't we destroy ourselves when losses like that come unless deep down in our life somewhere we have the consciousness that "it is not all of life to live nor all of death to die"; that back of it is beneficence, kindness; that there is more of good than evil; that the problem of good is just as great as the problem of evil for us to solve. In our philosophy, consciously or unconsciously, that is what we believe, and we act as if we believed it, no matter what our words.

And so the purpose of all human thinking and all human knowledge is, I think, to bring the human mind at rest somewhere. I don't think the human mind can rest in an unexplained universe. The purpose of all life is to find equilibrium, rest. The psychologists now, in their most modern researches, are teaching us that this is the end and aim of existence: consciously or unconsciously to find rest, peace, confidence. Down in the lower strata of our nature sometimes we manifest very, very queer urges, such as the desire to go clear back to our mother's breast to rest again. And the psychologist tells that we go farther than that, that we yearn for the rest of the mother's womb, the prenatal rest, for the warmth and the repose and the unconsciousness that preceded birth.

Those are results of recent scientific investigation. And if that is true, then all of human kind, with all of its thinking, is seeking to find rest, equilibrium, calm; and I defy anybody to find rest in an unexplained and inexplicable universe. Now, maybe Mr. Haldeman-Julius can do it. Let us see.

NEGATIVE ARGUMENT BY E. HALDEMAN-JULIUS

I agree that an explanation of the universe is necessary for the satisfaction of the mind. But different minds demand different explanations. The realistic-minded individual seeks for proofs, for scientific tests, for reasonable conclusions, for merciless examination of all assumptions. He is willing to suspend judgment in those domains where he still lacks complete knowledge.

On the other hand, we find the so-called "spiritual"-minded individual who believes because he has been taught to accept certain notions about God, because he has grown accustomed to relying on his emotions for opinions instead of the full use of his rational faculties. Such tender-minded, non-realistic individuals usually seek out those domains of knowledge that are still unexplored and place their God in that environment of mystery and darkness.

Only a few centuries ago man knew little of the world in which he lived, so it was his habit to have his God right around the corner. As knowledge grew, God was sent farther and farther into space. Now it seems, with God driven from pillar to post until a new hiding place is desperately required, a few believers have resorted to invisible electrons. They have tucked their God away—temporarily—in that still uncharted world. But it is safe to predict that in another generation or two man will understand the electrons, and perhaps the ether beyond the electrons, and these will also show the operation of natural, mechanical processes that do not admit any agency outside and above matter. It is typical of the theological mind to claim as its sphere the outermost, receding points of darkness, and ignorance. As knowledge grows, such centers of theism disappear.

Does Chance, Mechanism or Naturalism Offer an Explanation?

There is strong authority for the idea that man, like the lower animals, is a mechanism—a machine—and that the whole universe is mechanical. The philosophy of materialism has not been discredited. Dr. Jenkins brings in Descartes' argument for God. Does he not know that Descartes' reasoning included the idea that all animals were machines, except man? Descartes was really the first of the modern mechanists, though in a jumbled, incoherent way. He separated man from the animals because he did not have the benefit of Darwin's myth-destroying discoveries in biology. Darwin laid the foundation for the truth of evolution, for the comparatively simple con-

clusion that man is nothing more than a distant cousin of the apes.

Descartes also suggested that the mind is "spiritual" and the body material, and that God had decreed neither should be influenced by the other—that they were separate entities. In this he lacked the knowledge given us later by psychologists, who have shown that mind is merely the function of the brain and that the brain is a material substance. One might as well argue that digestion is a separate reality, when the fact is that physiology corrects, as so simply and shows that digestion is merely the stomach in action, a purely materialistic, physical function.

To hold that this non-material substance (as Descartes described the brain) comes from God, and that this substance's picture of a God must be based on a reality, is to utter the sheerest fancy of formless words. There must first be evidence that the brain is not a material thing.

Yes, chance, mechanism, naturalism, materialism do offer interesting grounds for the belief that there is nothing in matter that is above matter, that what we call power or force is the result of matter in motion—that and nothing more—and the further belief that the materials of our limitless, immeasurable universe perhaps always existed.

It seems more reasonable to picture something like ether always having been instead of imagining its creation out of nothing by something outside nature and matter. That this is still a mystery I do not deny. But I do insist that it is not solved by the theistic assumption that matter was created at the word or the will of a God or Gods. Such a belief implies a First Cause, which is a logical absurdity. For this notion has it that everything is the effect of some cause, that a cause is the effect of some other cause and that nature works back from effect to cause and from cause to effect until it rests upon a Prime Mover, a First Cause—which, according to this peculiar logic, assumes that there can be a cause that was not caused, and that that First Cause was God. This brings up the logical question: Who made God? If everything must have a cause, then the First Cause must be caused. To say that this First Cause always existed is to deny the basic assumption of the theory and to provoke the rejoinder that if it is reasonable to assume a First Cause as having always existed, why is it unreasonable to assume that the materials of the universe always existed?

In passing, I want to add the thought that there is no basis in science for the notion that causes and effects can be traced backward to a simple First Cause. Each thing that seems to be an effect cannot be said to have a single cause, but the causes and the effects are so interrelated as to be beyond anyone's power to separate them. For example, let me stand in the center of a room and hear a telephone bell. I walk over, pick up the receiver, and say "Hello." What was the cause of that act? Was it the fact that I had ear drums, that I had legs to carry me to that telephone, that I had fingers to pick up the receiver, that I had an apparatus for speaking that enabled me to say "Hello," that someone put the telephone there, that someone invented it, that someone rang the bell, that someone told someone to ring the bell? You see the complications. If we can't get at the immediate cause of my answering the telephone, how can we search back to a First Cause? The whole thing is an illogical fancy and has been rejected by thinkers for five hundred years. Even some theologians frequently annihilate this argument before presenting their own equally vulnerable arguments. The idea of the First Cause came originally from Aristotle and then through the Catholic Church, which found it necessary to buttress its faith with something akin to logic; this argument had the appearance of logic—but on examination that poor semblance faded. My point is: We can conceive of an endless, eternal cycle of causes, but we cannot conceive of a First Cause.

Just how the stuff of the universe came into existence, if it ever "came," I do not know. But that lack of knowledge should not be considered a good reason for imaginative flights, for baseless assumptions. We all recognize the factor of chance in many things. We are familiar with games of chance. Bertrand Russell tells in one of his lectures that double sixes in dice will come once in about thirty-six throws. That is a law of chance. When a thing acts mechanically, when it always does the same thing in nature, we have a different problem. If the forces of nature, acting through their material properties, always behave in a certain way, we are seeing a machine at work. If it were to be eccentric, or changeable, or whimsical—then we could say, perhaps, that some mind had shown itself at work in nature.

Are the Difficulties of Atheism Insuperable?

An atheist is one who rejects the assumptions of theism. The atheist says he has good reasons for rejecting theism. It is an explanation, so called, that does not satisfy his mind. He finds that the difficulties of theism are insuperable. He analyzes the First Cause argument, the argument for God from Design, from Purpose, from Law implying a Lawgiver, the argument from Justice and Moral Reasons. He finds them, each and all, a tissue of assumptions and inconsistencies. He rejects them on the score of logic and reason.

It is for theism to bring out its proofs for a God, not for the atheist to prove that there is no God. If the theist has no valid arguments, the atheist rests his case. To illustrate this: Some man says that the earth is a hollow sphere, and

that at its heart is a strange world, which he may fantastically describe. I say that there are conclusive evidences in science that the center of the earth is solid. He then says: "Prove to me that the earth's center is not hollow and inhabited." And there you are. Proof—disproof—is a question of reason and evidence.

Dr. Jenkins is an evolutionary creationist, as I understand his argument. He believes with Descartes that God gave the universe a push and set it in motion, leaving it to finish itself and go eternally on its way. That, I claim, is a bold assumption. There is no evidence for that position. But you say: "Who made the world?" I answer: Prove your statement that the world was "made." Doubtless you will say: "Ah, it stands to reason—it had to be made." But that is an assumption. Science does not know the meaning of the word "made." We know of things being fabricated, but not "made." And to trace the universe back, with a thin wavering line of rhetoric, to a First Cause is to evade the question.

If you believe in Creation, then you must believe the Creator was created, and then you get something out of nothing. And if you are going to prove that—to attempt that amazing proof—then you are going to have a pretty hard job.

How Man's Knowledge Is Growing

All that philosophy implies is that we seek an explanation. But I agree that an explanation is possible and that it is likely to come. It is only on this point that I disagree with the agnostics who dogmatically say that the mystery of life is unsolvable. I do not accept this theory. Knowledge is growing every day. Man conquers new domains each decade. Who is to say there is a limit short of complete knowledge? Judging by the advances man has made as a seeker after facts, it seems logical to conclude that the day will come when man will be able to explain every act of nature. And judging by the trend of his achievements thus far, it is safe to say that supernaturalism or theism will not enter at any point of the survey. It may be hundreds of years before the explanation of science is complete; I am not trying to set any date. But remember that man as a thinking animal is a recent phenomenon. He has been using his head logically for only about 2,500 or 3,000 years. Science itself is less than 2,500 years old, and out of that time you must discount the Dark Ages, a thousand years of intellectual stagnation.

I am an optimist. I believe that man will never again surrender to the forces of obscurantism. And this moving history of man—his cultural, scientific and economic history—proves one thing with bold significance: as man grows in intelligence, as he learns to think for himself, as he grasps newer and greater secrets from nature, his primitive fears disappear, his faith in supernaturalism declines, his belief in Gods dies down. There is more intelligence today than ever before in man's entire history. There is also less of God in man's mind. The lesson is a simple one. The growth of intelligence means the growth of skepticism.

It has been a slow evolution, but it has been a fairly steady one. The process is being accelerated today. Man's mind is achieving a quicker pace. Man's intellectual progress is a certain abandonment of myths about God and supernaturalism. In the evolution of mind I see the growth of skepticism; away from theism to a mild form of deism; away from deism to agnosticism; and now I see still greater progress—the abandonment of all beliefs in supernaturalism. And if you will make an honest survey of history, you will be struck by the consistent fact that most of the world's progress can be traced to those individuals who were brave enough to defy conventional-minded religionists. The houses of God have never been hospitable to progress. They have always

been centers of obscurantism, superstition and reaction.

The Starting Point of Descartes—"Personal-ity." Does the Logic of Personality Lead to Theism?

It is interesting to note that the history of the church shows that it has contributed little to theistic thinking. It has been the source of no arguments for theism, so far as I know. The Catholic Church had to go back to Aristotle, Plato and Socrates for its arguments in support of the God idea. Other arguments had to be taken from lay philosophers, like Lord Bacon, Descartes, Spinoza, Kant. Each, particularly Kant, played havoc with the theistic ideas of other philosophers, including the Church's schoolmen. I merely throw out this suggestion to emphasize the thought that the church has always been too active as a business enterprise to give much thought to the validity of its beliefs.

The theistic philosophers have shown themselves to be wrong—each succeeding philosopher disputing the arguments of those who went before, until we reach Kant, who killed off all their arguments, then became frightened at his temerity and forthwith invented an entirely new argument known as the Moral Law. If you want to become an atheist, read Kant thoroughly, and you will get rid of ninety percent of your theism; then read philosophers who came after Kant, and you will get rid of the other ten percent. Of course, this argument of Descartes' could not escape Kant's philosophical axe. He struck off its head neatly in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. Descartes' "ontological" proof never had any standing. As I understand him, existence is something that is perfect in itself, from which it must follow that God, being something completely perfect, must be a reality.

Descartes' argument is best answered by stating it—for its absurdity is obvious. "I think, therefore I am," said Descartes. Thus it followed, in his reasoning, that as he thought of a God, therefore a God must exist. That can only mean one thing: that belief in an idea makes it true—that an idea doesn't have to be proved, but all one needs is to have the concept. Of course, that is just as good a proof for atheism as it is for theism. It is just as good a proof for a personal God as for an abstract modernistic God. It is just as good a proof for a personal Devil, with horns, as for a personal God. And plainly, in the light of common sense, it isn't the shadow of a proof for anything.

Are all ideas that men have devoutly held, all notions in which men have believed and which men have even died for, therefore true? Surely not. What Descartes actually said, shorn of all its involved philosophical lingo, was this: "Whatever I think is true." Imagine it! What I think is true. What Dr. Jenkins thinks is true. What Mrs. Eddy thought was true. What John Wesley, who believed in witchcraft, thought was true. What everybody thinks is true—which means that truth is equivalent to the sum of all absurdities.

I am sure that Dr. Jenkins does not believe in a hell; but, according to Descartes' logic, Dante's hell—a vision as vivid as anyone ever had—must be a reality. Dr. Jenkins doesn't believe this—he can't really believe in this antiquated reasoning of Descartes—no thinking man could believe it. Its only use, and what a poor use it is, can be as a mere confusing trick of rhetoric. It is very sick logic, deformed logic, the sheer denial of logic.

Furthermore, this principle of Descartes plainly begs the question of the nature of ideas. It ignores the source of ideas in analogies from the world around us; the idea of perfection, for example, being, when all is said, merely a notion of something indefinitely and vaguely better than what we have. What is a perfect being? What is meant by a perfect life? What is meant by the

idea of perfection? It is an idea which cannot possibly be stated in final, concrete, realizable terms. Some ideas are direct reflections of things visibly before us. They are ideas that can be tested. They are ideas that will work. Other ideas are indirect. Some ideas are so remote and vague that they can scarcely be called ideas—and the God idea is a classic example of such remoteness. Many ideas are so tangled up with analogies, far-fetched inferences, repetitions and assumptions that to speak of them as clear (even though they may be stated in an orderly form of words) is to violate the meaning of language.

Even on the basis of Descartes' own argument, is it conceivable that he had a picture or a consciousness or an idea of a God that was even dimly comparable to the picture or consciousness or idea that he had of himself? Obviously not. His idea of God was an abstraction or it was a mere personal simile—a God greater than a man, a God-mind greater than the human mind, and so on. To prove God's existence by his own—in presuming to attempt that, Descartes shows the pitfall which philosophy spreads for those who think in words and not in real images. If Descartes had any picture of a God in his mind, it was probably the picture of a being who had all the virtues and none of the defects of Descartes himself—a bigger and better Descartes.

The Universality of Theism? The Belief of Great Minds? Modern Science and Theism

It is not long since theists argued that belief in a God was universal. They now say, "All but universal," because it has been found that numerous tribes of primitive men do not believe in a God, that such a belief comes much later in the scale. But this knowledge given to us by the ethnologists did not succeed in killing off the argument in its entirety; it still lingers.

But let me, for the sake of Dr. Jenkins' argument, grant that belief in theism is universal. Is this to be accepted as a valid argument in favor of the existence of a God? I think not. The theists add that while error may be local and occasional, universal agreement is something altogether different; it is man in the mass using reason to discover some great truth, in this case the truth of the existence of a God. This argument, used in this late day, shows the poverty of intellect to be found among our theistic apologists. It is unworthy of serious consideration, except to remark that until man reaches a pretty far stage in history he is almost certain to be universally wrong on most subjects of an intellectual nature. According to this argument, we should have to believe today that the sun swings around the earth and that the earth is flat, for those were universal beliefs for thousands of years. Religion might take some comfort from this argument if the intelligence of the world today supported its position. But the opposite is the fact. Religion is dead at the top; it is dying rapidly at the bottom. The intelligence of the world is relentlessly—and cheerfully—deserting the God idea.

Dr. Jenkins argues that most great minds in history have embraced theism. This is not stating the case quite accurately. The history of man's intellect shows that with the development of reason and the spread of knowledge, he grows more skeptical; he works closer and closer to atheistic conclusions. Knowledge develops; it does not come with the climax of a Creator making a universe. Historical perspective is essential to grasp the picture. Great minds were convinced, even before modern science had discovered such a growing case for atheism, that the God idea was false. Almost without exception, the great minds have certainly rejected all the ideas which have been derived by religion from the idea of God. The great minds, again almost without exception, have denied the validity of the popular reasons and even

of the best philosophical reasons for belief in a God. Great minds, let me add, have helped to build, from age to age, the knowledge which in a logical, steady, inexorable evolution of thought leads to atheism.

But Dr. Jenkins says that modern science is moving rather strongly in the direction of theism. This is not true, according to the figures quoted by Professor J. H. Leuba, in his study entitled *Belief in God and Immortality*, a most useful and important work. First Professor Leuba went to one thousand students with questions regarding their belief in a God and in immortality. He then put his questions to professors. Among one thousand students, Professor Leuba found eighty-two percent of the girl students and fifty-six percent of the boy students believing in a God; and among the professors he found only thirteen percent of the leading psychologists who would admit belief in a God. Education does not help theism.

But let us examine Leuba's figures more closely. Taking the greater scientists (more than a thousand in number), Leuba found the following believers in a God: physicists, 34 percent; historians, 32 percent; sociologists, 19 percent; biologists, 16 percent; and psychologists, 13 percent.

You will notice that our theists, in seeking support for their position among the scientists, usually draw on physicists like Millikan and Eddington. These men are not competent to render a conclusion with the same authority as a biologist or a psychologist. Theistic questions do not enter their sphere. At certain points, these questions do concern the psychologists. When the theists argue that man has a religious instinct, psychologists recognize that this argument is to be tested in their field of research. As students of the emotions and instincts, they seek for this "instinct" which theists attribute to man. But they cannot find it. And it is among these psychologists that we find only thirteen percent who accept theism. So that argument fails.

Where Is "the Finger of God"?

Biologists, who study the origin and processes of life, are about as skeptical as the psychologists. They cannot find "the finger of God" in the evolution of life. In these two fields of science which bear most directly upon theism, we find belief in a God is not considered a satisfactory explanation. As Leuba's questionnaire was sent out fourteen years ago, it is safe to say that the percentage has fallen still lower, even though physicists like Millikan and Eddington pay peculiar and illogical homage to the theistic element. They take a religion that is without supernaturalism and a science that they limit by denying scientists the right to encroach on what they claim should be the proper domain of the theologian; by twisting science and emasculating religion they affect an unreal armistice. But the war goes on just the same, and science goes ahead each day to new victories, while religion falls before new defeats.

It is my opinion that the psychologist, by virtue of his special science, is more qualified to discuss problems of theism, because some of the arguments of the theists encroach upon his science. For example, Dr. Jenkins made use of Descartes' exploded argument that starts with thought ("I think, therefore I exist") and leaps to the weird conclusion that because a person thinks of a God it must follow that God exists. This notion was promulgated in the first half of the seventeenth century, before there was such a thing as the science of psychology. Psychology had to meet this so-called argument, and that it dismissed it curtly is to the credit of the psychologists, for they, along with the philosophers, showed that it is quite common for us to have ideas that do not correspond, save by false analogy, to real objects—centaurs, for example. My mind can picture the idea of a being half man and half horse, but no psychologist would accept that as proof of the existence of a centaur.

Since theism touches psychology at so many points, it follows that the observations of the important psychologists are more worthy of respect than arguments emanating from physicists whose training is limited exclusively to the study of matter. These few physicists who speak favorably of theism are—in that respect—eccentric. It is to be noted, furthermore, that these physicists do not offer any proof of theism and that their laboratory methods, which have resulted in such important knowledge of material things, have not produced the slightest evidence for a God. At the most, even a Millikan or an Eddington has only said that there is a good deal of the mystery of life which is yet unsolved. No intelligent man denies this. It is indeed a statement of the obvious. And when they talk about theism, about a God, Eddington and Millikan are only guessing. They are deserting the scientific method and taking refuge, at this outermost point, in mysticism.

Let me say this: the opinion of a scientist in favor of theism is worth nothing unless that scientist can offer scientific evidence in support of theism. Does Eddington offer any evidence of physics that there is a God? He does not. To the farthest point that science has reached, the case for theism is strong—it is the only satisfactory, sound explanation—and the case for theism is very, very feeble. On the whole, the world of scientific thought is atheistic. The few whimsical scientists who use theistic language are seen plainly to be forgetting their character as scientists and behaving in a temper of quite common fallacy. When Eddington speaks of definite things in physics, for example, we follow him respectfully. He is talking about his special subject. He is offering facts, not fancies. But when he says that the inner conviction that a God exists is a proof of the reality of God—then he is clumsily stepping into the domain of the psychologists, and I assure you that there isn't a first-rate psychologist who doesn't smile at this unoriginal and unscientific argument of Eddington.

Theism Collapses With Theology

In shirking the details of theism, Dr. Jenkins illustrates the necessity of vagueness in defending God. I grant that the idea of theism does not mean the doctrines of Christianity, nor revelation, nor heaven and hell—and all that rigmarole. However, theism is the essential basis of all these superstitions; and without the belief in God, these superstitions could not exist. That is why it is important to show that the idea of God is quite as baseless, quite as superstitious in its essence, as any of the outmoded concepts of theology which Dr. Jenkins agrees to discard.

It must be noted, however, as a curious and relevant circumstance, that Dr. Jenkins believes certainly in the existence of a being or a power of which he knows nothing certainly whatever. He waives details—which means, after all, that he waives knowledge of God. Is God the reality—the great and necessary and unshakable reality—that Dr. Jenkins contends? Then surely a great deal should be known about God. The reality should have some features upon which men, who have claimed all these centuries to study God and his attributes, could reasonably and clearly agree. But no—Dr. Jenkins knows there is a God, but he is singularly lacking in knowledge of this God. His knowledge is, we perceive, only a form of words.

I am not asking Dr. Jenkins to give me a complete description of God, but I think he should have something really definite and demonstrable in the way of knowledge about his God. If he replies that we see God in nature, I say that he is only calling nature by another name; he is using as proof of his theistic assumption that very assumption itself, alone and unsupported. No—all of the fancy names men have for God are merely the names of forces or principles or reali-

[Concluded on page three.]

The Strange Death of President Harding

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"Much has been written of the inhuman cruelty of Torquemada. Llorente (secretary of the Inquisition) computes that during Torquemada's office (1483-98) 8,800 suffered death by fire and 96,504 were punished in other ways (History of the Inquisition, IV, 252)."
—*Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XIV, p. 783.

Pope Gregory IX. Approved burning heretics.
"When in 1224 Frederick II ordered that heretics in Lombardy should be burnt at the stake, Gregory IX, who was then papal legate for Lombardy, approved and published the imperial law."
—*Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. VI, pp. 781-782.

Pope John XII. Ran a divine institution of prostitution.
"But we read with some surprise, that the worthy grandson of Marozia (Pope John XII) lived in public adultery with the matrons of Rome; that the Lateran palace was turned into a school for prostitution and that his rapes of virgins and widows had deterred the female pilgrims from visiting the tomb of St. Peter, lest, in the devout act, they should be violated by his successor."
—Edward Gibbon, *History of Christianity*, p. 753.

Pope Benedict IX. An infamous criminal.
"Rome had still to see Benedict IX, A. D. 1053, a boy of less than twelve years, raised to the apostolic throne. Of this pontiff, one of his successors, Victor III, declared that his life was so shameful, so foul, so execrable, that he shuddered to de-

scribe it. He ruled like a captain of banditti rather than a prelate. The people at last, unable to bear his adulteries, homicides, and abominations any longer, rose against him."

—John W. Draper, *The Intellectual Development of Europe*, Vol. I, p. 381.

"He was a disgrace to the chair of Peter."
—*Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. II, p. 429.

Protestants
John Calvin. Burned Servetus at the stake.

"On an eminence, at some distance from the city, Servetus was fastened to a stake, surrounded by heaps of oak-wood and leaves, with his condemned book and the ms. he had sent to Calvin attached to his girdle; and, amid his agonizing cries, the fire was kindled, and the wretched man expired his heresy in the flames. Whatever apologies may be urged for this memorable crime, it must remain a mournful and scandalous blot on the history of the Reformation. The disgrace of it has particularly attached to Calvin, and with much justice, from the special and unhappy relation which he bore to the whole transaction."
—*New International Encyclopedia*, Vol. IV, p. 62.

Cotton Mather. Fostered witchcraft persecution.
"He used his great influence to bring the suspected persons (witches) to trial and punishment. He attended the trial, investigated many of the cases himself, and wrote sermons on witchcraft . . . which increased the excitement of the people."
—*Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. XVII, p. 883.

John Knox. Father of Presbyterianism. Intolerant.
"Knox, appealing to the Old Testament, declared that those who were guilty of idolatry must justly be put to death."
—W. E. H. Lecky's *Rationalism in Europe*, Vol. II, p. 16.
John Wesley. Founder of Methodism. Superstitious.
"The giving up of witchcraft is

in effect giving up the Bible."

—*Wesley's Journal*, 1768.

Jonathan Edwards. Preached infant damnation.
Referred to babies as "vipers" in the eyes of God. See Jonathan Edwards' "Original Sin." Cited by Lecky, distinguished historian, as "one of the most revolting books that have ever proceeded from the pen of man."
—*Rationalism in Europe*, Vol. I, p. 134.

Christianity rests its whole case upon the argument that life is not good and that men should therefore subordinate everything to the thought of their "immortal souls in Heaven." Thus Christianity preaches the doctrine of the evil of materialism, the doctrine that the world is strewn with snares of flesh and Devil, the doctrine of sin as a disobedience of a God's laws—it preaches these doctrines as a matter of business, hoping to keep men from realizing in freedom and sanity and pleasure the superiority of life over Christianity.

There have been a number of arguments for the existence of a God. They have been poor arguments. They have been strained arguments. They have been (and are) arguments which can convince nobody save one who wants to be convinced and is willing to make the process uncritically easy. But evidences for a God; proofs of a God; facts to place the existence of a God beyond doubt: these have been singularly lacking in what is rhetorically called "the case for theism."

Every person is disappointed somewhat by life. It is best that one should be disappointed in great things, because then one will also be pleased and enriched in great things. Does this seem a paradox? What it means is simply that one's disappointments and one's achievements are determined in their character by the level and range of one's appreciations.

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Concluded from page two.]

ties which we recognize apart from the idea of God. They don't reveal God. God doesn't explain them. The moment a theologian tries to be definite about God, we find that he is simply fastening the name of God upon something else—upon nature, upon life, upon the universe, upon the electron.

There is—I make this statement carefully—no such thing as a clear, independent idea of God. It is all reflection and analogy, it is all a superfluity and mixture of terms, and its only result is confusion. Details? Oh, certainly, Dr. Jenkins is discreet in avoiding them. His God is an insubstantial mirage of "the infinities and the infinites." It is a fact, again, that theism does not stand and never has stood as a solitary idea. It is the basis of innumerable dogmas and superstitions. It is the idea which has assuredly led men into the most fantastic tricks of thought and belief. It is the idea which has been most sadly and violently at war with the civilized effort to understand reality and to find light and progress in the world.

Theism, says Dr. Jenkins, is not to be confused with theology. But all that this means is that the theological idea of God does not necessarily include all other theological ideas. After all, theology is the deliberate and very ambitious effort to understand God. To speak of God, in the tone of serious belief, is to speak theologically—only Dr. Jenkins, as a theologian, doesn't go as far as some others. His theology is less in quantity—and it is just as vague, or rather it is more vague and fully as unreasonable. I ought to point out, too, that the arguments which Dr. Jenkins advances in behalf of theism are the identical arguments which theologians have advanced, (after borrowing them from the philosophers); that they are arguments which come familiarly and quite as unconsciously from the lips of men who believe in inspiration, revelation, immortality and all those details which Dr. Jenkins judiciously sets aside as unpromising. Theology depends upon theism. If theism is an unsupported theory, theology collapses. The two must share the same fate.

The Fallacious Argument of "Law and a Lawgiver"

We now come to the theistic argument that where there is law there must be a lawmaker. We are told that the orderly, regular movements of the planetary system, for instance, prove "natural laws," and the conclusion is asserted that these natural laws imply the existence of a lawgiver. One could not expect to go through a discussion of theism without meeting this fallacious and untenable piece of reasoning. It has been dismissed as unsound by competent thinkers, but the argument persists.

The fundamental error is found in the theist's habit of confusing a human law with a natural "law." A legislature passes a law saying that after a certain date it shall be illegal to behave in a certain way, to have liquor, for instance. If you break this law, and are not caught, nothing happens except the usual next morning headache. If you are caught, you may be sent to the penitentiary. Or let us say that the people make up their minds to break the law so flagrantly that enforcement falls down and the law is either ignored or repealed. That is a human law. That implies a lawmaker, of course.

But it is treacherous logic to say the "laws" of nature are the result of the will of a lawmaker. The scientific use of the word "law" as applied to nature means only this: things in nature act in certain ways—their movements are uniform—and when you use the word "law" you merely describe how things are observed to conduct themselves. This does not mean that someone—a God—told them to act just that way. That is an assumption. Bertrand Russell gives serious consideration to this argument in one of his lectures, and after disposing of the claim of a lawgiver in nature along the lines I have just followed, this English philosopher adds: "Why did God issue

just those natural laws and no others? If you say that he did it simply for his own good pleasure, and without any reason, you then find that there is something which is not subject to law, and so your train of natural law is interrupted. If you say, as more orthodox theologians do, that in all the laws which God issues he had a reason for giving those laws rather than others—the reason, of course, being to create the best universe, although you would never think it to look at it—if there was a reason for the laws which God gave, then God himself was subject to law, and therefore you do not get any advantage by introducing God as an intermediary. You have really a law outside and anterior to the divine edicts, and God does not serve your purpose, because he is not the ultimate lawgiver. In short, this whole argument about natural law no longer has anything like the strength that it used to have."

Joseph McCabe says in one of his books: "The phrase, 'God has impressed his laws on the universe,' is one of the looziest conceivable. It is seen to be utterly unintelligible the moment you remember the unconsciousness of objects; there is not the remotest conceivable analogy with human legislation, as the argument implies. In fine, it is clear that if things acted irregularly there would be more reason to look for explanations. A thing acts according to its nature, and if its nature be relatively stable (like an atom), its action is consistent and regular."

There are many other theistic arguments, but all, on examination, are seen to be mere assumptions, bare sophistry, adroit evasion of obvious facts, the urging of metaphysical balderdash in an attempt to refute realistic approaches to life. The arguments for theism are heated and numerous, but the results are always the same—they cannot show us the slightest evidence for the God idea. They cannot show us the finger of God in any period of man's history. They cannot show us their God in nature. They cannot show us that God exists, that there is any power interested in man or his problems, that there is any method for man to save himself except through his own efforts, through his own mental exertions. Man must fight with his own sweat, and blood, and tears. If he is winning a measure of joyousness and gladness and laughter out of life, it is because of his faith in his own powers and not in some mysterious entity beyond the clouds.

REBUTTAL ARGUMENT BY DR. JENKINS

Mr. Haldeman-Julius draws a distinction between the spiritual mind and the scientific mind which does not seem to me valid; at least, in my own thinking it is not valid. It is a very common assumption that the spiritual has nothing to do with the real, with facts, with life as it is. That is the constant mistake that the pietistic world is making. I am surprised that Mr. Haldeman-Julius should be betrayed into making this distinction, because everything that has to do with truth, beauty, art, literature, science, is spiritually minded; and I maintain that he himself is a profoundly spiritually minded man because he is interested in all the beauties of the world. And I maintain that I am no less scientific in thinking if I have a little strain of spirituality in my own being.

He calls me an evolutionary creationist. Maybe that is what I am, but my idea was that I was a mystic and something of an agnostic—pretty much of an agnostic. I have passed the sophomore period when I could say things categorically. I don't know about this. I don't know about that. The mind is open. And I think that is true of the great mystics down through the ages, clear to the present time, including Buddha.

It is a mistake to call Buddha an atheist. One who is familiar with the Buddhist hymns and the Buddhist philosophy which characterized the ancient Indian people, and Buddha in particular, mythical and mystic character as he is, coming out of the great past, would not call him an atheist. Buddha was a great humanist; he loved mankind; and he gave up a palace and a princess wife and all power to go into the highways and the byways, the dusty roads of India, to serve suffering humanity. Buddha was actuated in his humanism by his desire for some sort of contact with the Great Mystery. I claim some

sort of kinship with Buddha. We are mutually mystic. I think that is true of the great philosophers and thinkers, religious and otherwise.

I admit that preachers have been awfully busy trying to raise budgets and build churches and make the mare go; and too often they have neglected to think. But even in odd moments thoughts have come out. There have been thoughts among the philosophers of Oxford and Cambridge; and the best book I know on this subject we have been debating is from a great theological, philosophical professor in Oxford, Dr. B. H. Streeter, a book called *Reality*. The profoundest thing I know, it gets right down to the roots of this difficult metaphysical question we have been trying to discuss.

I know that the argument from the first cause is no longer used. I never used it. I insist I never used the phrase or the idea throughout what I had to say, and if I implied a creator theory, I did not intend to do that. I may have spoken of the Creator, but I spoke of an Artist, the great Over-Us-All, Power, Mind, Spirit, what you will to call it, that is back of it all. I don't care whether you say matter was never created or not, or force was never created or not; that they always existed. Einstein has just knocked the spots out of the whole question of time and space, and it seems we didn't know anything about either—and I am sure I am not one of the three men in America who understand Einstein. I don't know. I say I am agnostic as to creation, its time, and all that sort of thing.

Again, in speaking of Descartes, I don't think Mr. Haldeman-Julius was quite fair to Descartes. He would lead you to believe that Descartes said, "I think; therefore I am," and then right off said, "I think God; therefore God is." There was a long space of reasoning, careful building of his superstructure, step by step, stone by stone, from that foundation, "I think; therefore I am," convincing him of his own existence, before he finally reached the highest pinnacle of his philosophy, "I believe in God." You can't jump just from the bottom to the top and say, "Look how foolish he was, jumping at conclusions." There was long labor and a life of thought before Descartes finished his structure.

And Kant I know, with his categorical imperative, his appeal to the moral law in the universe. He looked at the starry heavens above and said, "These things fill me with awe, the stars above and the moral law within." That was his greatest argument, the moral law in the universe, for logic in its construction, for the creation of obligation and duty on the part of man.

Mr. Haldeman-Julius draws a distinction also between natural law and civil law, which I realize is a frequent source of confusion on the part of many religious thinkers; and I am glad he drew that distinction, so that we can get it clearly and sharply in mind. I will elaborate that point a little. Natural law, as I understand it, is something that man finds out about the constitution of the earth and the universe. He studies causes and effects, the results of certain conditions, and he writes them down in his laboratory notebook or in his astronomical notebook. When he finds a thousand or ten thousand times that, given certain situations, certain results follow, then he writes that down and calls it a law of nature. I make the bold assertion, and I think it will hold water, that moral law is discovered in the same way. It simply grows out of man's experience in all the events in this complicated thing we call society, rubbing shoulders, jamming, and oftentimes stepping on each other. When, after long observation, we find that under certain circumstances men will act and react towards each other in certain ways which strike our sense of justice and right, then we put it down on the statute books and we say this is the law, it shall be so. Moral law, then, is the outgrowth of our knowledge of ourselves, just as natural law is the outgrowth of our knowledge of the material world. There is no real distinction between the two.

And here, if anywhere, Bertrand Russell slips up a little in his thinking. I tremble and catch my breath when I take the name of Bertrand Russell on my lips and venture to suggest the possibility that Jove has nodded in his philosophical thinking. I know he probably is the greatest thinker in England at the present time, without any doubt. When Bertrand Russell fails to perceive that the laws of the Being, of the Artist, the Over-Us-All, the Creator, may be just as truly laws of his nature as the laws of man proceed

out of his being or as natural law proceeds out of the material world, it seems to me that he has lost a point.

Now, Mr. Haldeman-Julius says that I don't believe in hell. Well, I don't believe in certain kinds of hell. I believe in other kinds. I don't believe in a literal brimstone lake of fire. I remember that fifteen or twenty years ago when the papers got hold of an utterance of mine of that kind and printed it, and there was quite a good deal of discussion, a colored brother of mine, further north, a very fervent preacher, announced he was going to answer Burris Jenkins on this idea of hell. He said, "Now, that kind of gospel may do all right up there on them boulevards where Dr. Jenkins lives and preaches, but if I was to preach that kind of gospel there would be no clothes on the lines nor chickens in the coops of these same people up on the boulevards." That preacher was a pragmatist, you see. He felt that truth was that which functioned serviceably for his congregation, and that he would better preach the kind of truth that worked well in his environment.

Now, I am agreeing with what Mr. Haldeman-Julius says about pressing pragmatism to too great an extreme; I think there is a little modicum of truth in what he says. But what the experience of the race for thousands and thousands and thousands of years has tested and found valuable; and what has rung true to that mysterious thing within us which I call mysticism in myself, and religious thinkers in all the world have followed for two thousand years, I think there is likely to be a little something in it.

THE REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF MR. HALDEMAN-JULIUS

I am sure of one thing: that at the end of this debate Dr. Jenkins won't get off of his knees and I won't get down on my knees. So I am sure that there will be no concessions at this end and I am not so sure about any concessions at the other. I don't think either one has been trying to win over any converts. I know that is my attitude. I just get a lot of fun out of it. I enjoy studying theologians, I think they are very amusing creatures, and I can't imagine anything funnier than a theologian in action. But instead of going to the circus, I read books on theism.

I am sure Dr. Jenkins does not get the scientific distinction between a mystic and a realist. An accurate definition of a mystic is one who believes that he can reach truth intuitively; that he can reach truth within himself without reference to man's experiences; that he has mystical power to reach in himself and achieve what he would call truth; while the realist, of course, follows the scientific method of laboratory tests, scrupulous regarding every fact and very careful observation. They are two separate mentalities, two hopelessly different personalities, and I can't imagine a good scientist permitting himself to become a mystic, though there are a few, and the few mystical scientists are those who are giving such comfort to the theologians; men like Eddington and Millikan, who are very good physicists, who are men of science in their own laboratories, but when they step out in the arena of philosophical thought they utter ideas that would pass for pretty good coin among the fanatics in a Salvation Army band. I think I am speaking pretty literally, because some of their arguments are the same arguments used on the street corners. In Eddington's latest plea before the Society of Friends in London, just a few months ago, and of course for that reason more important than his book, *The Nature of the Physical World*, that he wrote about three years ago, he says that the reason the religious idea is sound is because there is proof of it in man's experience. Man has experienced religion, he has experienced God, therefore it is true. Well, according to that same logic, the poor moren who gets up on the street corner and gives his testimonial is scientific and it is absolutely right and everything that he says is true, every philosophical point that he is bringing out must be so, because he says he has experienced it; and that, of course, is mysticism. Eddington does not reach that conclusion through scientific means. He does not take the same methods that he used in his laboratory, to bring out that idea. He just simply reaches down into his insides and intuitively reaches that opinion, and I leave it to any rea-

sonable person that it is completely without validity.

Now, Dr. Jenkins mentions Kant's moral law. As I said before, I was surprised that he didn't bring up that argument. There are several other good arguments for theism that you have neglected, Doctor. I was looking for some of them. But this moral law also has gone through the storm and also has no standing. It takes the position, as I understand Kant, that because there is injustice and evil and unhappiness in this world, there must be some sort of balance, in the end there must be a balance. And so there must be immortality, there must be a God to right these wrongs and give us justice, love, righteousness and good for evil. I think that is expressing his moral law, isn't it?

DR. JENKINS: Pretty well.

MR. HALDEMAN-JULIUS: Well, that is based on such a flagrant assumption that it was soon laughed out of court. It could not be accepted. That appeared in one of Bertrand Russell's passages. I notice Dr. Jenkins refers to him as the most learned thinker in England today. He is, perhaps, the most learned philosopher in the world today; he is also an atheist. He says that this life is the only life we know anything about. And if this is a fair sample of life, and this life is unhappy and there is injustice in it, why isn't it safe to assume that the continuation of life is where it left off? It is just the same thing. Don't you see the point? The moral law, if we had a knowledge of any other life, we could then make comparisons, but if we say life is continued and then say at the end of our life there is a change, that is the assumption. The logical thing is to say it is a continuation and if there is another life it must have all the pains and unhappiness we have. That was Bertrand Russell's argument. He said, suppose you get a crate of oranges from California, you open it and find that all at the top are rotten. He says that, according to Kant's moral law, you say that since the top layer is rotten it must follow that all the rest of the oranges are good. That is exactly what Kant taught, and it had no validity for that reason.

Now, as for beauty in nature, that, of course, is the argument for design. That argument was very good for a while. That argument was very good for a while until Darwinism appeared. The botanists gave us that idea. You find this flower, they say, it is wonderful!

DR. JENKINS: No, it was Paley, a theologian, an English preacher.

MR. HALDEMAN-JULIUS: I take that correction. But the botanists were fond of quoting it. They stole it from the theologians. It appears that one argument for theism did come from the theologians; and that, like the others, is very bad.

If there were proof of creation, then of course the created thing would have its beauty of design. No question about it. But life is an evolution and the ideas as propounded by Darwin are accepted—and most intelligent people do accept them—evolution is not a theory any more; it is a fact. We speak now of the truth of evolution, not of the theory. If organic matter is the product of its environment, in adjusting itself to its environment it takes on the shapes that are possible within its conditions, its fortuitous existence, the accidents of temperature, of soil, the general accidents; and immediately nature will produce an animal of one color here and of another color in another place; we will see the white polar bear in the arctic zone and a different animal at another place. Then of course it doesn't take into consideration all the things that are ugly. We consider a germ an ugly thing. Some people consider spiders ugly. I don't. Some people consider mice ugly. I don't, but I do consider rats ugly. We don't consider beauty to be an independent reality. Beauty is the effect that an object has on us. When we look at a sunset, we would not say that that sunset was beautiful, but we would say that the effect it has upon our esthetic sense is pleasing, and therefore it is beautiful. And to get a God idea out of that is stretching it beyond all reason.

It seems to me what the religionists should do is to forget about all these arguments about God—this effort to prove that their faith is founded on the rock of reason—and go back to their original position that they have faith and it is not necessary for them to produce arguments for a God. And if they would take that position, we would just consider them a little psychopathic, and possibly humor them.

The Ridiculous Tyranny of Movie Censorship

Continued from last week.]

In Old Virginia

The tale of screen censorship varies in detail among the states—the censors of Kansas, for example, will be caught napping and let a scene slip by that is promptly expurgated by the guardians of stupidity in Virginia. And sometimes a detail is passed as pure enough in Virginia which is regarded as menacing to morals in Kansas. There are no clear principles which determine the workings of censorship in any state; naturally not, since the character of a scene or a plot or an action is judged according to the whimsical, idiosyncratic, unpredictable moods of the individual censors; the makers of pictures cannot absolutely read the minds of these censors—although they make an anxious attempt and thus do a lot of preliminary censoring in anticipation of the official censorship, hoping to forestall the latter.

After all, the fate of this or that feature of a screen drama depends upon what Miss Emma Viets happens to think about it (or feel about it, as it would be flattery to speak of thinking in this connection) in Kansas and how Evan R. Chesterman happens to look at it in Virginia and, in short or in long, how every pretty-minded and mentally distorted censor in any of the six states (Kansas, Virginia, Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York) with a censorship law chances to look at the work of Hollywood.

Two things are certain: The cut-

tings of the censors will be, with scarcely ever an exception, unintelligent and lacking in artistic or realistic sanction. And the scissors will be kept impressively busy, regardless of the quality of the pictures offered, because these state censors have a very definite, selfish interest in their jobs. Just as preachers are interested in keeping the image of the Devil alive in the minds of their supporters, so are the screen censors alert to prove the necessity of their jobs by cutting here and slashing there. It would be fatal to their economic interest if they were to admit, by their inactivity, that the screen productions in any year were perfectly safe and unobjectionable. Perhaps, too, the censors have a sense of duty; maybe they feel that they must earn their money; so they keep the shears flying.

The Virginia censors, indeed, commend themselves in a report to the governor of the state on their quantitative activity. They are elated to show that they have been busy. Ernst and Lorentz (in *Censored: The Private Life of the Movies*) quote from the Virginia censor board's official report this paragraph which was entitled significantly "Pruning Knife Busy":

Never before in Virginia have there been so many deletions, either of scenes or subtitles. This means that the pictures which did offend, in many cases were objectionable or offensive in several particulars. Some were subjected to six or eight cuts, others to even more.

Censoring is a business—it pays

the state and it affords good political berths for the censors. Intelligence is not essential, but on the contrary is a positive disqualification for the job of screen censoring. This is best demonstrated, as in the case of Kansas, by a few instances of actual censoring. A German film, *Homecoming*, with an Enoch Arden plot was a bit too realistic (though it seems to have been rather subtle for all that) for the Virginia vigilantes of virtue, who ordered: "Reduce to a five-foot flash a scene in which the hero stands with evident desire and looks toward Anna's room . . . also reduce to a three-foot flash scene in which Anna lies in bed with cover restlessly thrown off and shows her desire for Karl by gestures and facial expressions." One wonders if the Virginia board really thought it was protecting morality by that odd feat of censoring. Probably the censors didn't regard it from the standpoint of morality—and certainly they didn't regard it from the standpoint of art. It was a part of the day's work, conveying the notion that the day's work was "necessary." Ernst and Lorentz summarize as follows the plot of this picture which was subjected to the "pruning knife" in Virginia:

Homecoming was a beautiful and simple German movie based on a story of two comrades separated by the war. One comrade returns home, friendly, hungry, penniless. He believes his friend to be dead. He goes to the wife of his friend to explain this. She is almost penniless, is equally lonely. She feeds the man, lodges him. He explains her husband has been captured, probably killed by the Russians. The two people are subsequently torn between a logical desire for each other and the memory of their mutual friend. After days of severe discipline, they consummate their desire. The husband returns home, discovers

the relationship, understands the circumstances, and when he sees the wife prefers his friend, leaves home and gives them his blessing. Yet it looked bad in Virginia; the evil head of desire was crushed to a three-foot flash.

The moral seems to be that the mind of a censor—whether in Virginia or in Kansas—just naturally looks for evil and, imagining evil, is sure to find evil. And it all keeps the "pruning knife" busy and by the same token insures the continuance in employment of those who flourish the "pruning knife."

Every little bit helps. Cuts, be they slight or tremendous, must be made. Thus from *Moulin Rouge* a feature of dancing girls (bare-legged and therefore just too attractive for moral integrity) was slashed: the objection officially given was that the girls "indecently kick." A *Woman of Affairs* (the screen title for Michael Arlen's *The Green Hat*) was altered in two significant points. Virginia cinema patrons were not permitted to know that the dead husband of the heroine committed suicide on their wedding night because he was a victim of syphilis; the substituted explanation of the tragedy was that the husband had been guilty of embezzling.

Is it reasonable to suppose that the Virginia censors hoped to keep all Virginians from learning that there is such a disease as syphilis? Again, there was a scene in which the heroine dropped her ring after having said that "the ring represented a barrier to her honor, or words to that effect, and that when it slipped, so did she." The Virginia censors ordered: "Shorten to flash of five feet scene of Diana and Holderness on couch, embracing and kissing—and eliminate view of Diana's hand except after she has dropped her ring."

So does virtue—and the joy of

censorship—find itself well protected in Virginia. It is not at all surprising to learn further that Eleanor Boardman could not be shown brushing her hair (on her wedding trip via Pullman) in *The Crowd* and that the following comment was solemnly offered by the censors in their rejection entirely of the film, *Unwelcome Children*: "This film is a photograph with a clearly defined, well-acted plot, but it involves such delicate questions as *eugenics*, *birth control*, and *abortion*, *contraceptives*, and the like. It is the unanimous opinion of the members of this division that these questions, whatever their merit, are not fit material for exploitation on the motion picture screen."

Could there be a more ridiculous tyranny than this, which vests in a board of narrow-minded censors the power to decide what social, moral and artistic themes are "fit material" for the screen?

(To be continued next week.)

One objection to a bad temper is that it instills a sense of perverse obligation. A man comes to feel that it is his duty to become angry on certain occasions.

There is a certain pathos in the situation of the dull man who can't tell whether the mentally superior person is instructing him or "kidding" him.

A Christian—a real, orthodox, believing Christian—is one who has not outgrown a childish susceptibility to fairy tales.

Distance of time confers the enchantment of tradition upon many foolish notions.

Theology is a guide to nothing but the worst aberrations of the human mind.

Have It My Own Way

By John W. Gunn

CLEARING THE GROUND

I was first mildly interested, then intrigued, then worried and at length just about hopeless when I read the following paragraph in a sketch of Philip Snowden, Chancellor of the Exchequer in the British Labor government, written by Harold J. Laski for the April *Harper's*:

What manner of man, in sober fact, is Philip Snowden? Certainly he has little of that combination of idealist rhetoric and Parliamentary dexterity which have made MacDonald the natural leader of the party. He has little of that art of manipulating men which has made Arthur Henderson the supreme political organizer of modern England. He lacks altogether the suppleness of mind and vivacity of temperament which have made J. H. Thomas not only an incomparable trade union organizer but also the personal friend of those whom, otherwise, he might have feared. He does not seem, like Mr. Baldwin, the authentic voice of traditional England, capable of endless fairplay within certain limits of which he is completely unconscious. He has nothing of that genius for improvising passionate sincerity, of being all things to all men for at least the length of a deputation, which, at one time, made Mr. Lloyd George so formidable a figure. He has neither the natural ability of Lord Birkbeck, nor does he possess the supreme power of eloquent debate which has made Mr. Churchill the predominating figure in the post-war House of Commons.

A little more, and I should have begun to doubt the existence of such a person as Philip Snowden. If the list of "he is not's" were extended too far, it must follow by sheer destructive logic that the subject of the sketch couldn't be anything and

that, denied all possible qualities, he simply couldn't exist.

I was reassured by the position of this paragraph in the middle of Mr. Laski's article. I always know, when an apparent solution of a murder problem is given in the middle of a story, that it can't be the true solution. Half of the story is yet to come: something must remain; further information and action may be counted on confidently. And so it was that Mr. Laski could run the hazard of all those negatives and yet say a great deal positively about Philip Snowden. I was a bit flustered for a moment, but I knew that it would all turn out right in the end.

Christianity isn't logical: one can admit its reasoning only by denying facts in the premises. Christianity isn't interesting: not intelligently interesting as a theory of life, although it is amusing in a way to the student of folly. Christianity isn't important: that is to say, it offers no helpful nor sound ideas about life, although it has an evil kind of importance in deluding the minds of men.

The process of education is not that of putting knowledge into an empty mind. Knowledge is something that is acquired by the active mind. Such an active mind also acquires a view of comparative wisdom, a standard of values, a habit of thoughtfulness.

God, say the theologians, is the greatest and most inspiring subject that men can dwell upon. Yet this subject of God has called forth the least intelligent—even the least intelligent—and the least inspiring expressions of the human mind.

It is the mark of a slave—or tyrant—to respect an unjust law.

Around the Table

By E. Haldeman-Julius
Chats Among the Editor and His Readers

A LETTER FROM SENATOR BORAH
Last week I told my readers about Peter Ochrenko, the Russian translator of *Dust* (now also translating *Violence*) and Hendrik Van Loon's *The Story of Mankind* and other American books, who wishes to visit America for six months with the object of renewing his personal familiarity with the language. It seems that the permission to make this visit has not been easily obtainable from the Russian government, and I requested my readers to write, as I had myself written, to Senator Borah about the case. I have just received the following letter from the Senator:

Mr. E. Haldeman-Julius,
Girard, Kansas.

Dear Sir:

I have your letter of the 14th, with reference to Mr. Peter Ochrenko, who desires to leave Russia on a visit. It is very difficult to deal with matters of this kind, owing to the fact that we have no diplomatic relations with Russia but I will look into it and see if there is anything I can do and shall be glad to help if possible.

Very respectfully,
WM. E. BORAH.

This letter recalls our attention forcibly to the folly of our government in refusing to recognize the Soviet government of Russia. It is responsible for innumerable difficulties and embarrassments; and it can be seen how it handicaps a man like Senator Borah in such a matter as the desire to put in a friendly word for Peter Ochrenko. As the Senator has persistently held himself in favor of the recognition of the Russian government, he is favorably regarded by the Soviet officials and may be able to help Mr. Ochrenko. But how ridiculous it is that our government should hold itself aloof from one of the important governments of the world!

Our business men have extensive commercial relations with Russia. There are, of course, social relations between Russians and Americans. Neither country can avoid contact at many points, social and commercial and political, with the other. Yet our American government, which recognizes the monarchy of Japan and the dictatorship of Mussolini in Italy and the corrupt government of Spain and the imperial kingdom of Great Britain, refuses to have diplomatic dealings with Russia because it dislikes the Soviet and Communist ideals of government in Russia. Our relations with one of the world's greatest countries are senselessly obstructed and confused because the narrow-minded politicians in charge of the American government are hidebound by a sentiment of economic-political bigotry.

The case of Peter Ochrenko reminds us how incompetent our governing politicians are. It is to the credit of Senator Borah that he has always opposed this foolish policy of pretending to ignore a government whose form is not agreeable to politicians whose party has included such "honored statesmen"

as Harding, Daugherty, Fall, Hays, Mellon, Grundy and Bingham.

HE DOESN'T LIKE ATHEISTS

One impression is conveyed quite clearly in a letter from J. T. McDill (Colorado)—namely, that Mr. McDill doesn't like atheists. For the rest, his letter is very befuddled. It is about the kind of letter we should expect from a man who is writing under the spur of smarting impatience. Reason has no part in it. Truth—in stating the position taken by atheists—is overlapped in a wild hurdle. The nicest thing to conclude is that Mr. McDill wasn't feeling well when he wrote this letter. Judge for yourself:

I note in a recent issue that you are considerably "het up" over the way certain atheists have been persecuted in free America.

I would remind you that these same atheists have been seeking martyrdom for the sake of their religion. And they should not complain when they find it.

You have furniture in your house. It is composed of rags and sticks and stones and sentimental values. Suppose some roughneck should try to throw that furniture out of the window—pictures and relics which are of no use. You would make a martyr of him p. d. q. It is much the same with sentimental values which are not sticks and rags. I have known a good many atheists. They are all alike. They break up my mental playhouse and pet superstitions. Atheists are simply religious fanatics in reverse gear.

The religion of atheism is merely the ancient phallus worship revamped. New names have been invented for Hermes, Aphrodite and Bacchus. Brain-drying cigarettes have been added to the flowing bowl. The new mythology bristles with scientific terms.

But it is the same old religion with not a new idea in it. Its devotees do the same old things in the same old way with the same old results.

The guff about intellect is bunk. What is the use of an intellect in a universe without a purpose? To the average man "September Morn" is more beautiful than Einstein's theory.

In seeking pleasure you might as well try to compare a jumping toothache to a wedding feast as to try to compare all other forms of pleasure with sex. As for Duty, Human Brotherhood, Love of Neighbor—forget it. Get a big car. The man with the big car is an only son. He has no brothers. If you can't use your friends, discard them. All the world is a lemon. Squeeze it. Bunk.

Can it be that Mr. McDill is spoofing me? Experienced as I am with the mind-wrecking possibilities of bunk gladly embraced, I find it hard to credit that any man who is capable of putting one word after another in an intelligible order can be so unintelligent in his meaning. Take Mr. McDill's opening "argument"—can he really mean it in all seriousness? I don't know. There are persons who cannot see the difference between a man pitching one's furniture out of one's house and a man attacking one's ideas. The presumption is that Mr. McDill is

among those foolish persons: he has placed himself on record: he would surely not seek the reputation of a mentally incompetent person and present himself as less intelligent than he is.

So I must take the fellow's mind as he reveals it. And it occurs to me that he wouldn't be a desirable neighbor—not if he should proceed faithfully upon his theory. He attacks my ideas; therefore, wouldn't he find it just as easy for his conscience to come into my house and hurl my books out of the window and smash my music records and pitch out chairs and carpets? He argues that the one thing (opposition to a man's ideas or "pet superstitions") is comparable to the other thing (breaking up a man's furniture): so I repeat that, on the strength of his own statement, he would be a neighbor to bear suspicious watching.

Atheists, we are told, have been "seeking martyrdom." How tricky words are! Here is a man who expresses certain ideas: here is another man who doesn't like the first man's ideas: therefore we are told that in expressing his ideas the first man is "seeking martyrdom." Why should an atheist be accused of "seeking martyrdom" more than a defender of Christianity? Atheism is not so popular. Does it follow, then, that any man who utters ideas that are not popular is "seeking martyrdom"? If that is true, all the advanced thinkers in the history of mankind were "seeking martyrdom"; and it is implied that they were not sincere or, at any rate, that they were not genuinely interested in their ideas—that they were not interested in self-expression nor in the advancement of their thought so much as in the martyrdom which was their chief object—that, paradoxically, the only men who have a real interest in ideas are those who merely echo the popular notions.

Whether "seeking martyrdom" or not, it is a fact that progressive thinkers have often experienced martyrdom. Apparently Mr. McDill blames these victims of intolerance rather than the real crime of intolerance. I trust this sort of "reasoning" will amuse you a bit—otherwise Mr. McDill's letter will be quite wasted. What he says about the "religion" of atheists is illustrative of the well-known attempt to discredit a man's ideas by libeling the character of the man himself. Mr. McDill doesn't show the slightest cleverness in this foolish, dishonest mode of attack. It is to be noted that he does not discuss atheism. Ideas—what can really be called ideas—are conspicuously lacking in his letter. "What is the use of an intellect in a universe without a purpose?" he asks. I might answer that briefly enough: *The use of an intellect in a universe without a purpose is to get along intelligently in this universe.* But, jumping from his letter, Mr. McDill seems to have no intelligent purpose—at least not in his letter—and we can understand why he feels the uselessness of an intellect.

Atheist Poetry

SELECTED BY CHARLES SMITH

FUNERAL INSTRUCTIONS

When o'er my cold and lifeless clay
The parting words of love are said,
And friends and kindred meet to pay
Their last fond tribute to the dead,
Let no stern priest with solemn drone
A formal liturgy intone,
Whose creed is foreign to my own.
Let not a word be whispered there
In pity for my unbelief,
Or sorrow that I could not share
The views that give their souls relief.

My faith to me is no less dear,
Nor less convincing and sincere
Than theirs, so rigid and austere.

Let no stale words of church-born song
Float out upon the silent air
To prove, by implication, wrong
The soul of him then lying there.

Why should such words be glibly sung
O'er one upon whose living tongue
Such empty phrases never hung?

—J. L. S.

THERE IS NO GOD
About the turbulent pandemonium
Of this obtuse insensate age, one
song

Truth lifts, with steady roll of encouraging drum,
And trumpets blowing sky-wide and sky-strong:

"There is no God!" (Hear it!)
"There never was God,
Except in the sick fantasies of men.
Men grew of some blind virtue in the mud,
Not of prevision, not of will nor plan.

And all their clamor" (Hear it!) "to the wraith,
Their selfish goalless prayers, their patterned psalms,
Waste the brief hours measured them before death,

Pander to dark fevered deliriums.
And for man," (Hear it again!)
"let him stand proud,
That he can see at last there is no God."

—Clement Wood.

BELIEVS OR BURN

God published a tale of a girl and a ghost,
Of devils in pigs and his son on a cross,

And ordered our race to believe it or roast—
For his mercy endureth forever.

In the World of Books

Weekly Reviews and Other
Literary Ruminations
Isaac Goldberg

OVERDONE AND UNDERDONE

Lope De Vega. Monster of Nature. By Angel Flores. Brentano's, \$3.50.

I looked forward to this book, but I had not gone very far in it before I knew that I was to be disappointed. Lope De Vega was, as Cervantes called him, a prodigy of nature. He is in the high tradition of Spanish creativeness, whether you take this word in the sense of artistic or of carnal fertility. He was a Don Juan, a man of the cloth (and of the bedsheets), a soldier, a sailor, the author of some twenty-five hundred plays and, one may well believe, of unnumbered children. The life of such a man, if it be anything, is versatile. Every moment is filled with love or hate. A book about him should be dazzling, breathtaking, with moments of repose to set off the brilliant action. I have not counted the plays that Lope wrote; I even wearied, years ago, of keeping track of those that I read. If we remember Lope today, it is for his position in Spanish literature, and not for his martial or amatory exploits.

The emphasis of contemporary biography, however, is upon the gossip elements of a man's life. As a result, we find that Mr. Flores has badly overwritten his narrative, and has concentrated not upon Lope the dramatist, but upon Lope the profligate. The book is but 214 pages long, yet it produces the effect in many places of artificial padding. A few examples:

"Curtains hung in calm, lifeless frigidity, the carnations in the flower pots listened drowsily, in blushing expectancy . . ."

"Lope felt again the softness of his pillow, and the mattress, and the red smell of sex. He placed his hand once more on Elena's burning breast. His volcanic blood boiled with passion and he tried to crush Elena's beauty in the orgiastic embrace of his voluptuousness." (Are we reading a dime thriller?)

"Gall boiled in the marrow of his bones and bile in his soul. He exploded in venomous verse."

"They wrangled and they wrestled and their nails left venomous hieroglyphics on each other's faces. . . . Lope sensed the danger and, pushing her into a corner he fished for it (i. e., the letter) in the warm ocean of her breast. It was there like a poor sleepy butterfly nesting between two ripe and luxuriant apples."

The Spaniard's universe, our author tells us, is emphatically phallic. After reading this book we may well believe that Senor Flores is a Spaniard. The real Lope is too far in the background. Page after page of history that is easily to be got elsewhere halts such narrative as we have. The essential prodigy of nature that Lope was—the man I had looked forward to reading about—has been sacrificed to make a biographer's holiday.

THE DIRTY LITTLE SECRET

Pornography and Obscenity. By D. H. Lawrence. New York. A. A. Knopf. \$1.

This short essay of some eight thousand words is one of the last things that Lawrence wrote before he died. Almost at the moment that he was writing it some humorous smut-bounds of our Congress were undertaking an investigation into certain books among which was *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, by Lawrence. In later debates this "very" pamphlet was referred to by a rare, enlightened member of the body. Too bad it could not be read into *The Congressional Record*, for that organ of unintentional humor could very well stand an occasional dose of common sense.

Lawrence, I believe, was one of the cleanest minds that ever lived. He thought too much of sex to make of it what he accused civilization of making of it—a dirty little secret. In this dirty secrecy he found unhealth, disease. What we have been trained to call purity he found foul. There is a story that the women of the Middle Ages covered their leoprous breasts with beautiful silk lace. Modern purity is the beautiful silk that covers the leprosy we have made of sex.

Although there is nothing in this pamphlet that will be new to an enlightened mind, Lawrence dignifies the subject by the beauty of his language and the unashamed nakedness of his thinking. The essay is well worth owning.

Fear is what prostrates men before their imaginary Gods. Knowledge brings courage and a constructive dealing with life—in which religion, which constructs only unrealities, has no part.

It used to be said: "Cleanliness is next to godliness." Now cleanliness is placed a long way ahead of godliness.

One should not be so serious that one cannot enjoy the humorous trifling and indignities of life.

A Smashing Attack On Christianity

The Antichrist

by Friedrich Nietzsche

Nietzsche's Fighting Purpose

"This is the undying denunciation of Christianity which I shall write upon all walls, wherever there are walls. I have letters that will burn even upon the eyeballs of the blind. I call Christianity the one great curse, the one intrinsic depravity, the one black impulse of resentment, for which no subterfuge is too vile, or too furtive, or too underhand, or too mean. I say this thing is the one indelible blot upon the achievement of man."—From *The Antichrist*.

A Book That All Should Read

"It was a beautiful edition of *The Antichrist* from which a group of us read aloud. But when we read the translator's comment that this was an essay for the few, E. H.-J. exclaimed in impatience: 'It is not. It is for the many.' Because of this conviction and of the high mood the reading of it stirred in us, E. H.-J. is printing the entire essay. May you find, also, as you are borne along by the clean wind of Nietzsche's thought, a long, revealing lift in the fog."—Marcel Haldeman-Julius.

A Popular Edition of This Great Classic

As a great liberating work, Nietzsche's *The Antichrist* should be read by millions. It is an intellectual loss to the world that only a few should know this masterpiece. Such a work is an immensely stimulating message of civilization. It is an inspirer of bold, free thinking. It is destructive of the superstitions which stand in the way of true, civilized values—and at the same time it is constructive in its vision of lofty, progressive knowledge. *The Antichrist* is one of those books which are essential cornerstones in the building of an intelligent society. Here is a book that should belong to all men—why, then, should it be reserved for the rare appreciation of a few individuals here and there?

This masterpiece by Nietzsche is known by name to many who have not read it, and it has an uncontested place among the best classics of free-thinking criticism and controversy. Everyone who is familiar with modern literature has heard of this work. It is a strange paradox that *The Antichrist* is a recognized classic of world literature—known to be one of the greatest works of modern controversy—yet has not been read generally. This fact is not so strange, however, when one reflects that there has never been the popularization which this book so notably merits. It has not been called to the attention of the mass of readers. It has reposed securely on library shelves, glanced at only by a few students specially interested in Nietzsche—and, even so, many

admirers of Nietzsche have not read this most sweeping and militant of all his works.

But now a popular edition of this great classic has been printed by the Haldeman-Julius Publications, and Nietzsche's mighty labor of cultural emancipation will at last serve its intended and its full purpose. Its exposure of a supreme fraud—the fraud of Christianity—can now be widely effective. Its strong, clear, daring, and sham-blasting scholarship can extend itself throughout an immense field of action. In particular, freethinkers can now enjoy the supreme, devastating criticism of Christianity which Nietzsche, dealing in the plainest language yet with all the equipment of assiduous scholarship, wrote in the very spirit of one doing battle for the precious values of civilization.

This book will be a valuable addition to the library of every freethinker. It is really indispensable for anyone who would have a thoughtful view of the Christian religion, who would realize the significance of Christianity in the history of mankind, who would have a true analysis of Christian "culture" and a noble vision of that culture which is above and beyond Christianity.

A wide and true appreciation of Nietzsche's *The Antichrist* would be fatal to continued belief in the superstitions of Christianity—in this amazing, reason-defying, anti-civilized scheme of superstition. Because it is an educational work second to none in importance, we want *The Antichrist* to have a large, popular, vitally influential circulation.

A Masterpiece of Noble and Flaming Words

It is a misconception to imagine Nietzsche as an esoteric scholar, writing in language comprehensible or interesting only to a few. He was, indeed, a fine scholar—learned in languages, in history, in philosophy, in the art of thinking. But his scholarship appears most lucidly in *The Antichrist*, in a style that must prove fascinating and impressive to the average reader. Strong words are in this book. Noble words are in this book. Words that burn, words that crash with a thunder of denunciation, are in this book. These words are the fitting instruments of ideas that are powerful, that are majestic, that are inspired by a vision of greater humanity.

Nietzsche was tremendously in earnest when he wrote *The Antichrist*. The reader cannot fail to be impressed by the flashing, challenging ardor of this book. Here is Nietzsche's most careful, most completely and powerfully phrased indictment of an institution and a scheme of life-distortion that he hated above all other things. Here is the most vivid statement of Nietzsche's philosophy—a philosophy which has been subjected to much misrepresentation. Like other great thinkers, though in his own unique way, Nietzsche performed a mighty intellectual labor for the advancement of civilization. And he saw Christianity as the virulent and treacherous foe of civilization. He recognized it as a gigantic curse. He perceived in this mess of religion the most sickening denial of true, living values. Delivering fearlessly his message of truth, Nietzsche declared that mankind could not progress toward

a strong, happy, intelligent life save as it threw off the gross and heavy delusion of Christianity.

The sum of Nietzsche's message has been more and more keenly realized by thinking people. All culture, all scholarship, all progressive thought goes to support the indictment of Christianity which Nietzsche made in *The Antichrist*. Yet nothing can equal that compact and vivid attack of a great scholar upon the world's greatest curse. Nietzsche was in a fighting mood when he wrote *The Antichrist*—and that is why every line of this book burns its way into the mind of the reader. And with all his militancy, with all his graphic and unreserved style of denunciation, Nietzsche was still judiciously the scholar. His message was carefully weighed and prepared, and every word of it—the strongest and the most startling word—is backed by a sure, critical scholarship. In *The Antichrist* the reader can see Christianity utterly stripped of all its pretensions.

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