

Darrow-Case  
Debate

on

*“Has Religion  
Ceased  
to Function?”*



Clarence S. Darrow

Darrow-  
Case  
Debate

“Has  
Religion  
Ceased  
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Prof. Shirley Jackson Case

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DEBATE

“Has Religion Ceased to  
Function?”

Yes: Clarence Darrow

No: Shirley Jackson|Case

GARRICK THEATER

Sunday Afternoon, January 30, 1921, 3 o'clock P. M.

Under the auspices of the  
Workers University Society

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## “Has Religion Ceased to Function?”

The Chairman: Has Religion Ceased to Function? Mr. Darrow will speak first in a speech of twenty to thirty minutes; he will be followed by Professor Case, who will make a rather longer speech. They will then divide the rest of the time between them in some sort of proportion, doing very largely as they please. We cannot afford to let all debaters do that; but these gentlemen are very well able to take care of themselves.

I shall now ask our good and esteemed friend, Mr. Clarence Darrow, to open the discussin in the affirmative.

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### MR. DARROW'S FIRST SPEECH.

Mr. Darrow said: This question should have been stated the other way, Does Religion Function, and that would have relieved me from trying to prove that it ever did function. Any how, I am not going to attempt to prove it. If Professor Case takes that view he will have me beaten before I start.

A great deal of time could be spent with a definition of religion. I looked up the definition in the dictionary, but then, I know that Professor Case will not stand by the dictionary, so what is the use of that. Religion is mixed up with the idea of God and future life; original sin and the immaculate conception; the atonement and a lot of things like that which are fairly well understood. Of course it may be mixed up with other things, too; but we will let the Professor tell about that.

Now there are many religions in the world, but I shall not take time to talk about the curious and foolish and absurd religious and religious views that have been believed in and held by various people in the world. I shall not talk about Mohammedanism and Buddhism and Brahamism and Christian Science. I shall confine myself to the true religion,—the religion of the Pope and John Wesley and Billy Sunday. And

I think you will agree with me that if this has not ceased to function it is time it had anyway.

That the religious idea has done some service in the world, if in no other way, to act as chloroform, perhaps is true; but does the Christian religion function today and, if so, how far? To settle that we must first give some attention to what the Christian religion is, and, unfortunately, there are a good many kinds of Christians. Not many **Christian** Christians, but a good many of the other sort. And I don't know just what Professor Case will say Christianity means, but I put in last evening reading the New Testament to see if I could find out. Of course I had read it before, but that was a long time ago and I thought I would gather something from the New Testament as to what Christianity really is. I know it does not necessarily follow that there is any relation between the New Testament and Christianity, but anyway, it is a common idea that there is some relation between them. Then, too, I have read some sermons of John Wesley and Billy Sunday and other distinguished divines so that in a general way I do know what Christianity, in the popular mind, is supposed to stand for. And the question is how far do these ideas,—which may be said to be Christian,—how far are they functioning in the world today.

I read in the New Testament that one of the prime doctrines of Christianity is non-resistance. If a man smites you on one cheek, turn the other! Of course it is evident that this one does not function. The rule today is if you smite a man on the one cheek, swat him on the other. Christ laid a great deal of emphasis on non-resistance. Many preachers and theologians and quasi philosophers have laid a great deal of emphasis upon the theory of non-resistance. Certainly it was a fundamental part of the Christian religion—one of the most fundamental doctrines of the Christian idea. That this does not function today is perfectly evident. When the world has just come through a war where every Christian nation was specially involved and where the Christian nations managed to coax in a great many heathen nations to help them kill each other,—it is very evident that the doctrine of non-resistance, which is a prime factor of Christianity, no longer functions. If it ever did function, it is worn out.

Now amongst those who advocated the war the strongest in every nation, was the Christian preacher. I presume if the Christian preacher had not been in favor of war it would



not have happened, because, in spite of the fact that they are not all powerful, they still have some influence in the world. It has been a long, long time since the doctrine of non-resistance had any force in life, and you scarcely ever hear of it in the churches, at least, I never do; that may be because I don't go, but anyhow, I never did. It has ceased to function because it is utterly unscientific. It takes no account of the emotions and the make-up of man. It takes no account of the life of man, which makes it utterly foolish and impossible,—a dream and a delusion; better no doubt than some dreams and some delusions, but still a dream and a delusion which cannot possibly function with the human race as the human race is, or the human race as it has been, or ever can be, unless it changes its structure, which I fancy it cannot.

The Christian religion lays great stress on love, but the world is not made up of that. Love your neighbor as yourself has always been one of its strongest precepts. It has no place in the world of today. The only business we have with our neighbor is to "skin" him. There is no pretense of carrying the doctrine of neighborly love into life. And as far as I can find out, it never has been carried into life.

Christ, and the Christians, have always taught that prayer was one of the safest and easiest ways of getting what you want. If you need anything you should pray for it. Of course Christ said, quoting from the New Testament again, that you should go into your closet and pray secretly, but the preachers never followed that part of it. They pray openly, if at all. But anyhow, it was very powerful, and amounted to more than anything else in the conduct of life; and yet nobody with intelligence expects to get anything that way now. Nobody would ever resort to it, excepting in the case of the direst need, then they would lose. This world is not made up of prayer. Everybody takes every precaution he can for his life and his safety and his fortune, and amongst those precautions prayer has no place whatever. Yet it had a strong place in the early Christian religion, and probably in all the other religions, although I am not so familiar with those, not having been privileged to live with them.

The doctrine of forgiveness of enemies is a common doctrine of Christianity, but nobody today works at it. No one ever did work at it, at least to any extent. The old commandment, let him who is without sin cast the first stone, has not been heard of in recent days. Especially since the anti-



crime wave that is so industriously boomed by every Christian pulpit in Chicago and the United States. It has been changed in practical life to, let him who sins do all the stoning. That is the law of life, the rule of human conduct. The other has been entirely lost sight of, if it every had any meaning anywhere, and it probably never did have any meaning, except amongs a very few who were made up of such sensitive natures that they and all their descendants were soon annihilated, and the world was left to the Christians and the other hard-hearted bigots who believe in punishment for other people.

Another of the prime doctrines of Christianity was, "lay not up for yourself treasures on earth". Sounds almost funny, doesn't it? "Lay not up for yourself treasures on earth", and yet the strongest Christians in the world are the militant business men who, not only use every trick possible to get money from any one who has it, but who use the Christian religion to help them overreach their neighbors.

When Billy Sunday came to Chicago you will remember that every captain of industry in Chicago was on his list. He was invited into all the swell houses, and they raised "tainted" money with which to put up his tabernacle. Why? Was it because they were Christians, or because they believed the doctrine, "lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth"? No! It was because they thought it was cheaper to pay workingmen in religious dope than to give them money. Nothing else.

Christianity functions as a sop to keep people satisfied, and almost nothing else.

In looking over the book I really found nothing that did not seem strange and weird in this Christian civilization. There was one little story which I thought had some kind of a meaning in the present day. It was about the ten virgins. I believe it was ten,—there were enough of them anyway,—five of them wise and five of them foolish—just girls. That is a pretty good average, too, for girls. They started out late in the day to meet the bridegroom,—I suppose they were afraid he might, in some way, sidestep them in the dark, and so they carried lanterns with them. The five wise ones had oil in their lamps. The lamps were trimmed and burning. But the five foolish ones forgot the oil. So when they got an S. O. S. call, about midnight, that the bridegroom was coming, the girls that had oil in their lamps got ready and the foolish ones discovered that they had no oil, and they asked the wise ones if they might borrow a little oil, and the others said,

"No; not on your tintype! There is not enough oil to go around," or enough bridegrooms to go around—so the wise virgins hustled out and got the bridegroom for themselves.

Now I think perhaps that this story functions more or less; but this is about the only thing I did see that I thought was working. That has been rather a useful hint to girls; but the bridegrooms haven't profited from it as much as you would think they might.

But these things which stand for Christianity: Love, Charity, forgiveness, not judging others, turning the other cheek, non-resistance, dividing your money, selling all you have and giving to the poor, all of these things are just dreams! And there are tens of thousands of Christian preachers who are talking every Sunday and not one of them practicing these doctrines, or having any respect for any one who does. They are using their pulpits and their voices and influence, with such learning as they have to keep the poor contented while the rich are pocketing their profits.

It is idle to talk about Christianity having any relation to daily life. I mean the daily life that is the daily life of the people who do things in this world. Of course most of the people who teach Christianity and practice it have long since given up any literal belief in its doctrines. There are many non-Christians who believe more in some of the doctrines I have spoken of than do Christians.

John Wesley said that unless you believe everything in the Bible you cannot believe anything. And there is some logic in that. You have got to believe in original sin and salvation by grace and the immaculate conception and all the other impossibilities that it teaches or you cannot believe it at all.

Mencken says, and quite truly, that the only people left who believe the Bible literally, are reactionary preachers, silly old women, and people about to be hanged!

What are the moving forces of this world anyhow? Let us see. I do not think there can be any doubt about what is the greatest force in modern society, and in modern Christian lands. Beyond all question the greatest force in life is getting money. It engages the attention of almost every man of power. And politics, morals, literature, the newspapers, religion, all are called into the service of the money kings.

Do you find this ambition in any religious doctrine? You

cannot find it in the Christian religion, at least not as taught by the primitive Christians; and I doubt if you can find it in any of them, and yet this great modern greed for money has not only entirely conquered the Christian religion, but has managed to harness it and use it in this service, which is wholly anti-Christian.

The Christian religion does not function in business; but it functions for business! And is used by business!

Automobiles are not Christian institutions; the telegraph and telephone lines, the railroads, everything that makes up the materialistic society today—which is the most materialistic society the world has ever known. The real doctrines of Christianity, the primitive doctrines of Christianity, were anti-materialistic, wholly so. Whether right or wrong they were that. They made no account of this world; they set no store by property; they made no account of business. Religion glorified poverty; it emphasized a righteous heart; a loving nature; kindness; forgiveness; spirituality—whatever that is—it is used directly and non-resistance. These Christian virtues Neitzsche characterized as a **slave** morality. The morality of the weak and the poor. Perhaps it is, perhaps it is not. But it has been overwhelmed by the crass materialistic civilization of today.

Neitzsche says that the only reason that the Christian countries have accomplished anything,—is because **in all Christendom there is not a single Christian.**

The Chairman: Professor Shirley Jackson Case, of the Divinity Department of the University of Chicago, will make his bow to the Garrick audience, which welcomes him and hopes to hear him many times in the future.

## PROFESSOR CASE'S FIRST SPEECH.

Professor Case said: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I must confess at the outset that it is with much fear and trembling that I make my first appearance upon this platform. There are two particularly terrifying factors in this situation. The first terror is my opponent. I came here with full knowledge of the fact that he is a seasoned warrior of the forensic arena. I had heard of his reputation and was quite prepared to feel the plunge of his worthy dagger today as he maligned the preachers.

Yes, I have known for some time of his far-famed ability—ability to make the worse seem the better cause. Nor, am I unmindful of the disasters which have overtaken some of my predecessors upon this platform. The early demise of our beloved friend, Professor Foster, undoubtedly was hastened as a result of these encounters. And where is my colleague, Professor Starr, today? Apparently in order to save his life he is hastening as fast as he can to the distant land of Japan. It would seem, ladies and gentlemen, as if I must be an illustration—a glowing illustration—of that old saying, "That fools rush in where angels fear to tread."

But I am here today, perhaps taking my life in my own hands, to stand for the negative side of the question. It does not matter much what the question is, for everybody knows that it makes no difference to my opponent on which side he debates. He spares not his victim, whether his victim may be on the right or the wrong side of the discussion.

And there is still another terrifying factor which confronts me today. It is my audience. I have been introduced as a professor in a divinity school, a teacher in a theological seminary. And I do not deny the charge. In view of this fact I am not to expect this audience to entertain any violent prejudice in my favor. However, while not endeavoring to cover up my past—reputable or disreputable as that may be—I have shown a measure of respect for your feelings by refraining from gowning myself in clerical garb. And insofar as possible I shall avoid using any of the technical language of Zion. But I readily own to the fact that I am engaged in what may seem

to you to be that nefarious business of launching upon society every year larger and larger numbers of that species of incubus known as "the preacher". Yet I trust that no germ of sanctity that may go off from my reverend presence this afternoon will in any way contaminate any of you, or inoculate any of you, with a too severe case of that malady known as **piety**. I think I can say no more by way of justifying my presence here, or apologizing for the possible impropriety of coming into your presence bearing even the name of one who is a professor of divinity.

I suppose it is proper and fitting that I should say something about the arguments of the previous speaker. I feel that I must compliment him upon certain things, such as the charming seductiveness of his logic and the ease with which he can make an argument seem to be true. Why we could not help admiring his logic if it were not for any other reason, and sometimes perhaps it is not for any other reason, than simply its charming perversity. Of course there is one other feature of his argumentation which appeals to me, and that is his delightful humor particularly where the preachers are concerned. I so thoroughly enjoy his facetiousness that, really, I am almost glad that I am a preacher just so I can be laughed at by my friend. But I must not tarry to praise him too long; because, as Shakespeare would say, "I come to bury Ceasar; not to praise him."

When my opponent uses the New Testament he is not quite so fortunate. He could have used it to better advantage to obtain his definition of religion. He did not read quite far enough. There is in the New Testament a very specific definition of religion from which I can easily prove that religion still functions even in his case. You will find this definition in the Epistle of James, Chapter I, verse 27, where religion is defined in terms of just three things, which are said to constitute pure religion and undefiled. Those three things are: To visit the fatherless; and to visit the widows; and to keep one's self unspotted from the world. Now, let us be grateful for the widows; for they enable us to affirm that, so long as they are with us, at least the male members of the human race probably will continue to be religious to the extent of thirty-three and one-third per cent. And I think you will agree with me that, judged by this definition, even my opponent is not an irreligious man.

In regard to non-resistance he seems to me to have quite



misunderstood the facts. The Bible nowhere advocates the theory of non-resistance. To be sure, it says that "if a man smites you on the right cheek you should turn to him the other also"; but it does not say what you are to do when a man smites you on the nose or on the chin! The New Testament is not against war, but has much to say in its favor, such as fighting for the good faith. I could cite numerous passages where, if my friend wants biblical justification for my views, he can find them authenticated.

Another unfortunate feature of his speech was the fact that he did not discuss the subject. Does Religion Still Function? Has religion ceased to function? What does a question of that sort mean, if one proposes to discuss it scientifically, to discuss it honestly, to discuss it fairly, facing the whole question? What are some of the problems involved?

Religion is a complex, and a very comprehensive, factor in the history of mankind. Even if you were able to prove that Christianity does not function today, you would still have to answer the question, Does Religion Function? What is religion? That is the fundamental issue. And what is it for a religion to function is another crucial problem. And neither one of these matters has been discussed at all adequately by the previous speaker.

Now let me call your attention to one fact that you should not forget. The issue today is not whether religion functions well or ill; it is only the question of whether it functions at all. My opponent proved in a brilliant way, well worthy of his famous name, that Christianity today is functioning along lines that he does not like. He called our attention to Billy Sunday and what the latter did in connection with his propaganda. At such times Christianity functions too easily for some of us who don't like the way in which it functioned on that particular occasion. But it is not necessary,—it is not pertinent to my task today, and you would be offended if I should divert the discussion in that direction,—for me to consider the question as to whether Christianity is functioning well or ill at the present hour. But that it is functioning in the way in which the people who are adherents of Christianity today want it to function, is a fact that you can ascertain for yourself with a very small amount of observation.

Whether or not you like the way in which it is functioning is another question. I am free to confess that I do not always like the ways in which Christianity is functioning at the pres-

ent time, and I am engaged in the business of trying to make it function in a better way. But that it is functioning is a fact of which there cannot be the slightest doubt. If you want a confirmation of that fact I could bring you a letter which I received only yesterday from a gentleman who lives out on the Pacific Coast. I had been guilty of what seemed to him to be the great impropriety of writing for a magazine an article on the historical method of studying religion. He had read the article and his righteous indignation, which is a part of the functioning power of his particular kind of Christianity, got busy, and he wrote me a letter—two large pages single spaced—that was so hot it fairly burned itself into the paper. In fact, I looked at the paper after I read it and said to myself, "Is this asbestos?" I didn't see how one could have written that stuff on ordinary paper.

The real issue, let me remind you again, is whether religion still functions in the experience of the human race. Whether in the history of humanity we have arrived at a stage where mankind, taken in the large, is ready to discard that phase of its historical experience, commonly known as religion, or whether the rank and file of humanity still stand in need of that form of activity and interest known as religion?

What do we mean when we say a **religion** functions? There are two different ways in which religion may be defined. One is the old-fashioned, pre-scientific way which represented religion as a kind of heavenly essence let down at some specific moment in history, and in the form of an insert from without is essentially a fixed quantity of ritual and doctrine, which functions just because it is a purely other worldly deposit in the life of humanity. On that definition it is easy to understand how a religion could be outgrown in the course of a few years unless the Almighty kept it up-to-date by making new deposits all along the line.

Now it seems to me that my opponent was rather inclined to define religion in that old-fashioned unscientific way. He was speaking about Christianity in the terms of the New Testament as though when the New Testament was made Christianity was completed. Does he believe in the divine verbal inspiration of the New Testament? Why, I am shocked at the idea that he should believe any such thing. When he talks about the functional significance of Christianity in life, does he mean to say Christianity cannot function at any period in its history unless it reproduces exactly those things that were



created by a group of people that at first did not so much as call themselves by the name Christian? It is quite true that they held certain distinctive opinions and convictions, and sought to mold or fashion their own generation in terms of these convictions. But what happened in the next generation, and the next, and the next? If their beliefs and practices were a deposit, once for all fixed, I am free to say, as a student of religion, that the deposit was very quickly outgrown. You cannot think of religion, if you are a scientific person, in terms of any such static definition.

What is religion in terms of a scientific approach? Religion is a fact of social history, the result of a gradual growth. It did not make its appearance at a particular moment in history, full-fledged, like Athena sprung from the brow of Zeus. Religion has been made by people all down through the ages and is still in the making.

Now a religion is made in accordance with the desires and the interests of the people who make it, and in succeeding generations it is remade in accordance with the desires and interests of people then living. And why do they make it so? Because religion if it survives must work, and when it stops functioning it is remade so that it will work. That is, to say that a thing functions is simply to say that it works, for if it does not work it is discarded or transformed. That is why the Christianity of today is in various respects different from the Christianity of the New Testament. I agree with my opponent that the Christianity of the New Testament does not always work today. It worked in its day, but he complains that it does not work today. But in the course of history's evolution was it not inevitable that primitive Christianity should give place to later forms of Christianity better suited to the necessities of later generations? If religion originates in this historic fashion, to say that religion exists is equivalent to saying that it functions. Otherwise it could not exist. If religion is inseparably connected with man's social experiences, then society will retain a religion just so long as it functions, and when it no longer functions society will discard it.

If I had the time I could carry you over the history of religion and show you numerous instances in the past where religions have ceased to function and new religions have taken their place. The old religion of Greece ceased to function, the

old religion of Rome ceased to function, and a religion from Asia came in to take their place, which was Christianity.

Christianity was not the first of the religions that were appealed to in this quest of the ancients. There were the cults of Adonis, of Osiris, of Attis, and of various other divinities that came into the Mediterranean world where people were seeking certain satisfactions which the old religions did not furnish. Where new desires and interests arise and the old religions did not meet the demand, what was the result? The old religions just naturally died, the way one of your hairs falls out when you have no further use for it. But a new hair is not so easily got as a new religion. The whole process is the process of the vital function. And the very fact that there is a process at all proves my contention today that religion functions. When religion ceases entirely to function there will be no more religion. That is a fact as evident to the historian as any fact in the universe can be.

On the contrary, today we are surrounded by religions in general and it is no concern of this debate whether one particular religion, such as Christianity say, functions ill or well. I would be perfectly willing to discuss this question with my friend under proper circumstances, but I say it is not a fair turn of the subject to confine ourselves to one religion, and that, by no means, the oldest religion which still survives in the human race. There are other religions still functioning, whether well or ill, let me say again, is not the problem under discussion. There are religions still functioning in Japan, and in china, and India, and Africa and throughout the whole broad extent of the globe.—religions that are still alive. What right has he to call them false religions? What right has he to call them suprious religions? Must I stand here today in the presence of a man of his scholarship and learning and defend the faith of my non-Christian brother? I am ready to do it if needs be.

I have too keen a sense of human brotherhood to insist that a man cannot have a genuine religion unless he happens, say, to be a white man. From the standpoint of the devotees all religions are what people think they are, and so may be said to be genuine when they satisfy the needs of the people who entertain them. In this sense one might say that every religion is true, because it is true to the wants of the people who make it and adhere thereto. It is true to them because it functions and it will function in their experience in various

ways. It is quite improper for us to be so provincial,—I think I need not emphasize that fact upon this platform,—to be so provincial that we cannot see anything in the world but the particular religion to which we belong—or do not belong.

Thus the very fact of the existence of a religion is proof of its functioning power. In view of this fact, I want to cite a few statistics which I have taken from the best authority available. These figures were compiled before the war and they might be different if compiled at the present time, but probably not so very different. They are from Dr. Zeller, of the Statistical Bureau of Stuttgart, and are as follows:

Of Christians, there are in the world, 534,940,000; of Confucians, 300,000,000; of Brahmanists, 214,000,000; of Mohammedans, 175,290,000; of Buddhists, 121,000,000; of Jews there are 10,860,000. If you will add up this list you will get as a result 1,356,000,000, the number of people who still adhere to religion. And the very fact that they continue to adhere to religion of course, is proof that it still has some measure of functioning significance for them.

You will notice these figures do not include all the religions, but only the religions with the greater number of adherents. Now the population of the world, estimated at this same time, was 1,544,510,000. Thus you have this astonishing result—I will admit it was astonishing to me—that of the people who profess allegiance to religion, and who find religion functioning in their own lives to whatever extent they choose to have it function, out of every fifteen persons in the world there are thirteen religionists—thirteen out of fifteen. And if you were to include the peoples of what we commonly term less culture, the savage peoples of Africa and the Pacific Islands, no doubt you would find the proportion increased. Nor do these figures include such religions as Taoism, which has a considerable following in China, and Shinto, the national religion of Japan. If these figures were included I have no doubt we should learn that religion today is professed by fourteen out of every fifteen people in the world. And I may say furthermore that I have not included in these figures the adherents of the Darrow cult who are assembled here this afternoon; and let me add, among whom I fain would be counted as one of the humblest of the devotees!

The Chairman: Mr. Darrow will now continue the debate.

## DARROW'S SECOND SPEECH.

Mr. Darrow said: Please let me see those figures a minute?

Professor Case. All right.

Mr. Darrow: Of course if Professor Case would establish one of his churches here I don't know but what we could all get in. I ought not to have undertaken to discuss religion with my friend. I ought to take a man—well, a man who is a Methodist or Presbyterian, or something. In Mr. Case's quoted statistics I am counted as a Christian, I am sure. And I was speaking in the language of a Christian when I called all of these other religions spurious. Of course I know in my innermost soul that Confucius was as great a philosopher as Billy Sunday and that as a thinker, Buddha was the equal of Billy Bryan. I know that. But still all orthodox people know that Confucius and Buddha were spurious, and the Billy brothers are genuine.

I really ought not to debate with Mr. Case. Of course it is common for all of us to say that his opponent did not discuss the question. I will not say this of him. It is rather evasive to say that a thing functions because it exists. There is such a thing as a Christian, therefore, Christianity is functioning. In a sense everything that ever existed is right for its time and place, else it would not be there. Of course the professor is right about that—everything has come to fill a need in life; but it dies, gives place to something else, as my able opponent has told you. But it is like the tail of the snake; the tail wiggles a long while after the snake is dead.

And so I presume there must be a considerable number of people calling themselves Christians, after all intelligent men know that the word no longer means anything.

My friend I think said, he didn't know just how his statistics were made up. Well, I know. I never saw them before, but I am used to handling figures. Dr. Zeller is probably all right; but I can tell you what he has done. He has put all this country down as Christians, all except the Jews—they are put in as Jews. These he puts at ten million. That is all the

Jews there are on the earth, and, according to Henry Ford, it is enough. Five hundred thirty-four million nine hundred forty thousand Christians! Well, now, that is all the people who live in Christian countries. And we are a Christian country, although we have no Christians. These statistics were not taken during the war, as he says, or most of the Christians would have been away fighting. Confucians here were put down at 300,000,000. That includes everybody living in their territory. The same is true of the Brahmins, Mohammedanism, Buddhists, and, of course, Jews. These latter are put down at 10,860,000—whether that is correct depends upon whether Judaism is a religion or a race. If it is a religion I think I am safe in saying that not over one-third of them should be there. If it is a race, why, perhaps none of them should be there.

Now, just to make sure; these figures make a grand total of 1,356,000,000. And the total population of the world is 1,544,000,000. Mr. Case says some of the lesser religions are left out. If they hadn't been everybody would have had a religion wished on him. Of that 1,544,000,000, the population of the world, half of them are under ten years of age, practically, we will say fifteen, to make sure. Then, of course, they haven't any religion, except what they inherit, neither had their parents, for that matter. And, of course, these figures are valueless. It means on a broad classification of religion you put so many down here and there,—this is a Christian country, and we are Christians; you can tell that by the way we fight.

Now, of course, this question is like various other ones that I have debated here. The professor is quite wrong in saying that I am perfectly willing to take either side of a question. That might apply to lawsuits; but not to debates. I never debate the side of a question I do not believe in, unless possibly the last time when I told the audience that I thought it was a very doubtful proposition, and possibly this time when the question of whether religion functions is a question of the meaning of the word "functioning". And it can very well be put in the way Professor Case puts it; that a thing that is living is functioning, which I do not call functioning. Otherwise, I always insist on taking the side I believe in, because when I take the side I believe in, I know I have got the right side.

Now, the Professor did not give me so very much to answer. This does not mean at all that his talk was not a



good talk, for it was. I have the very highest regard for Professor Case's ability, his scholarship, and his integrity in the examination of any question, and I suppose it was largely through my stating this to Mr. Lewis that you have had the pleasure of hearing him. As to the discussion of any question of religion, of course, I am wise enough to know that I am a child compared to him in knowledge, but the trouble with it is this: That we are discussing it from a different standpoint, as to the meaning of the word "function". And I rather think that if we got to thoroughly understand what we were talking about—I rather fancy it would be like debating with Professors Foster and Starr, we would pretty nearly agree!

I am not interested, as I have often told you, in undertaking to show that on the strict construction of a question, I have won. I don't care anything about that. I am interested simply in giving you a good time, and, incidentally, a little to think about. So, I would not, under any circumstances, want to take a position here that I did not think was justified. Of course, I like to discuss it on broad principles. Of course, we lawyers are supposed to be technical, but I must confess the Professor here has got us lawyers beaten. I do not know but that I misunderstood his joke when he said that teaching, that one hit you on the right cheek, you should turn your left to be swatted, that did not mean if one "biffed" you on the nose you should not hit back. I guess he was joking. If he was not, he is too technical for me!

Now, for a few minutes, I am going to discuss this question. I could not very well reply to the Professor because if the word "function" means "exist", why, there is nothing to it. There are Christians, you can tell by this statement, as there are everything else. And, if a fellow belongs to a religious organization, and is a Christian because he says so, or the census enumerator says so, there is nothing left. If a thing functions because it finds its place in the census, why, there is nothing to that. But I presume the word "function" has a very much broader meaning, at least it does to me. It means to my mind, at least, that it affects the activities of men; that in some way it gets into the daily life of the people; that it is one of the motive forces of human conduct. I cannot imagine it meaning anything else. And, in this sense, as to that part of the world that is enumerated as Christian, I think it has ceased long ago.

Why do we say Christians? Why the word? Of course, it has some reference to Christ. The word had its origin very soon after the period that Christ was supposed to have lived—and perhaps did live—and it had some reference to the doctrines that were either taught by him or his immediate disciples, or by the early Christian church. Now, Professor Case says those doctrines have all disappeared; that the Christian church today has an entirely different idea than is contained in the New Testament. Well, we agree, and there is nothing more to that. So far as any meaning of the word Christianity is concerned, that has any reference to its early history, and Jesus, if it is conceded that he lived, and his early disciples, it has no relation to the present day life; although men still hang onto the name, like a commercial concern that makes soap gets up a name, and then changes the soap, but still goes on selling it under the old name.

Not one of the doctrines are a part of the Christian world. Now, I think the Professor is not quite correct in saying that the evidence that Billy Sunday could get a crowd of people here and raise considerable disturbance was evidence that Christianity was functioning. What he taught may or may not have been Christianity. Perhaps it was. It was nearer to primitive Christianity than my friend Case's is, and a good deal nearer nothing than either. But was it Christianity that was functioning? Or was it capitalism that was functioning, by the aid of Billy Sunday? There is no use of misconceiving terms. Who got up Sunday's meeting on the north side, and who paid for it, and why? It was gotten up by big business, engaged in exploitation, and the money that went into it was paid by it, and these men knew nothing about religion or Christianity. They are in business, and they hired this word peddler to come here and parade as a Christian for their own purpose. That is all there is to it.

Does that mean that Christianity was functioning? No. It is not what is functioning today. Is it functioning in any church? It is true there are Christian churches in Chicago. That is, churches that are called Christian. That is true. But is Christianity functioning? Why, who goes there? As far as the Protestant churches go, I have been told that they are made up of women and children mainly; once in a while some men. Sinclair Lewis, in his wonderful story about "Gopher Prairie", when he makes his main character say, "Well, I don't go to church, but I believe in it all right; it keeps fellows from striking". That is the kind of men that go. Now,



as to the women, they don't go entirely for that, but it is a social thing with them, that is all. It has not the slightest relation to any doctrine that Jesus taught. It is a social organization, nothing else. In every small town, that is the society, the church; and in every big town, it is more or less the society, the church. They belong to it as they belong to a club, nothing else. I belong to a number of clubs here. I don't know as I ever read their by-laws, if they have any. I don't care anything about them. I go to them because for certain purposes I want to go somewhere. And they go to church because it is the thing, and neither their lives, nor their beliefs, nor their habits, have anything to do with the doctrine which we call the Christian doctrine.

I think the Christian church does stand for something today. I think throughout the whole world, it stands for the conservation of things as they are. There are almost no exceptions to it. Once in a while, somebody who calls himself a Christian, does what I did, quotes something that seemed to come from Jesus to prove it, but he is outlawed in the Christian churches. In every nation in the world, the Christian church, as a church, is engaged in maintaining existing things. Now, are they doing it as a church? Not at all. If they were, I would say they were functioning. But they are not doing it as a church. They are doing it because they are controlled and used by the part of life that does function; namely, the commercial part of life all over the world; that is what is functioning. It is like a politician running for office, calling in men of all kinds of political opinions; men who belong to all kinds of clubs; men of all kinds of nationalities, and using all of these for his own purpose. But as an organization, the Christian church no longer functions, it seems to me.

Now, I wonder if there can be any question about this? Take the Y. M. C. A. What is it? What relation is there between a gymnasium and a belief in the immaculate conception? What relation is there between a swimming pool and believing that you will be saved because Christ was crucified? There is nothing that I can see. Why, a Jew can join a Y. M. C. A. and so can anybody else. A sort of a muscular, advertising Christianity. And I think, perhaps, the man in Chicago who has given the most to the Y. M. C. A. is Julius Rosenwald. I don't believe he is a Christian! I think he has been counted on this list of Jews. It is one of the many institutions that is used to bolster up the strong interests of today. The strong, you know, use certain catch words.

They use the word 'Christian' just the same as they used the word "one hundred per cent American". And it means just the same—nobody knows what it means. But they know how to get people with it. And they know what to do with them when they get them.

Now, to function, to my mind, means to have a real influence; perhaps a controlling influence upon the life of the day.

The Professor read us St. James, I believe it was—one James, twenty-seven. He doesn't seem to adopt St. James' idea as to what constitutes religion. It looks simple—there are only three things you have to do—one is to visit the fatherless; another is to visit the widows. You can do both of them with one visit. Then, the third is to keep oneself unspotted from the world. Visit the widows, and keep oneself unspotted from the world! Some job.

## PROFESSOR CASE'S SECOND SPEECH.

Professor Case said: I have not been left very much time by the previous speaker. I should like to give him a bit of advice, that he might have used to advantage, about the length of a speech. This is a rule we preachers practice, and I hope he will not be offended at the source from which it comes. But with us it works very well; I have observed that it functions. The rule is this: A sermon or an address or a speech, in length, should be like the length of a lady's dress. It should be long enough to cover the subject; but short enough to sustain interest!

As for his criticism of my arguments I think I can say, again with Shakespeare, "My withers are quite unwrung", which in modern parlance is: "I should worry." I do not happen to have a copy of the program at my hand, but as I read the subject for debate it did not specifically mention Christianity, but was concerned with religion as a whole. Now you may talk about some religion when you are talking about Christianity, and again you may talk about Christianity and not talk about much religion at all. And most of the things that he said about Christianity, I will submit, had nothing to do with religion.

Now as for his soap! Do I care whether the cake of soap that I wash myself with—when I do wash—was made by the original firm whose name it bears or not? Does its functioning significance have anything to do with the name on the label? You can answer that question yourselves. Of course it has not.

I may have laid myself open to a misapprehension when I said that a thing functions because it exists. This is what I should have said: A thing functions because it keeps existing, which is a very different matter. Religion functions because it still exists, in spite of the misinterpretation of those figures which my opponent borrowed from me. What would he have done without those figures? How could he have made his second speech?

Yes; religion functions because it keeps existing, because it is not concerned for example simply with doctrines. Doc-

trine is only one phase of religion and emerges at only certain specifically developed stages in religion. Whether the ultimate origin of religion is primarily an intellectual one I very much doubt. As we study the history of religions in their most primitive forms they are seen to concern themselves very rarely if at all with the intellectual phases of life. They are almost wholly concerned with the social phases of life. And when my opponent said that Christianity today functions in terms of social life he hit the nail on the head. In this respect it does function, as all religions do. We see man, who has lived upon the earth in various ages, and in various environments and who has a gregarious instinct, ever desirous of getting into a herd. Of course, when he gets intellectual like my friend over here, he wants to be all alone, he is an individualist. But while he is still religious he wants to be in the crowd, and he makes a religion that will function; that will work to satisfy the instincts of his social self.

In its primary forms one of the outstanding characteristics of all religion is the social side of the religious assembly. And if you were to go through the land today you would find this to be one of the outstanding features in connection with any religion that you might observe. The people who go to church do not go there primarily because of their intellectual prowess—and it might be safe to surmise that when they have too much intellect they don't go. But it is a fact that the social function of religion is still in operation everywhere.

There is another feature characteristic of all religions. I don't know whether you will like it or not, but at present we are not concerned with the question of likes or dislikes. I must simply describe in a scientific and objective way what the facts are. Another phase of all religion is its conservatism. Every organization is conservative. Organization tends to produce the conservative attitude. Take even the most spontaneous movements of society and you will observe, as the membership grows large enough to need more formal organization, that the movements become conservative. It is the inevitable process of evolution that organization will create conservatism. Now the two oldest organizations in human society are the political and the religious, and the religious organization is the older. In proportion to their age they are conservative, and in the very nature of the case they must be. It was out of the conservatism of religion that politics drew very much of its conservatism. If you study the history of the political institutions of this country you will readily see how

Christianity away back in the early days of New England, where many of our ancestors lived, contributed very largely to the making of our conservative institutions.

We heard a great deal about patriotism a few years ago. What was it? Fundamentally, it was religious conservatism, and it was functioning so powerfully that in very many churches,—and I know some of them in Chicago.—ministers who professed to adhere to the doctrine of non-resistance, in opposition to the will of the majority who were zealous for society's safety, were sometimes required to leave their pulpits. This was not because Christianity was not functioning, but because it was functioning too severely in the form of a social conservatism that was characteristic of religion from days of old. When Christianity became a religion of the majority it, too, adopted the typical form of social compulsion which has characterized religion throughout all its history.

There are other fundamental interests of society which today seem to have no semblance to religion, and which one unacquainted with the history of religions might think to have no religious connections whatever. Why, take my friend here, who is thoroughly well acquainted with history, and if he will reflect upon it for a moment he will recognize that his own profession arose from a religious source, and that the authority which attaches to it, even today, is nothing more nor less than a survival of the old religious ideal of the divine right of law. Is it functioning?

The intellectual element in religion is often regarded as the characteristic feature of a cult, and of Christianity in particular, so it has sometimes been imagined. I submit that is not so. Christianity from the very outset, if you must have it as it was originally made, made the central thing in its propaganda not intellect but faith. Now faith is a conceding of the fact that you do not know. It is a compensation to our ignorance, supplementing your ignorance by trust in the great unknown. Now that trust may be foolish, or in time prove to be absurd, but the religious attitude, as religion functions in this respect, is to transcend the limitations of knowledge with faith. Whether the limitations of knowledge can be properly supplemented in this way I do not care at this moment to say, nor is it pertinent to the discussion of this subject that I should say; but I do wish to describe, and shall describe in perfect candor, the fact that faith, belief, comes in from the



side of religion to supply that great yawning gulf between us and the unknown.

We are intellectual in this twentieth century; we pride ourselves on our intellectuality. We pride ourselves on our science—and I would not that we had less, but I wish that we had a great deal more. Yet how far does our science carry us into this world of the great unknown? You take your stand out there in an observatory, let us say, on some clear night and look through the most powerful telescope man has yet been able to devise. You see a tremendous universe reaching out beyond your grasp. You try by the strength of your imagination to throw yourself out into that vast expanse of space in order that you may comprehend it, and what is the result? After a few hours' effort you will be compelled to draw back to this old planet, just this little speck of star dust that goes whirling on and on through space, and you will feel yourself to be merely a fly upon this speck of earth, a fly blinded by the very blaze of immensity.

Now I do not know how to go beyond the limits of the known by my intellect. And if I choose not to go by any other vehicle I shall not go. But there are those people, and they are vastly in the majority, for whom religion is functioning at just this point. And when their intelligence carries them to its limits then they lay hold upon their faith and it carries them out to infinity!

Yet I shall say again that religion, in the large, religion interpreted in the historical and social sense of the word and not in terms of any formal moral creed, which, after all, is only a by-product of organized religion, is still functioning tremendously in the world of today. Whether it is functioning for good or ill, I shall not pronounce. But I do—and, perhaps in closing, I might make just this remark—I do believe that religion will be with us for a long time to come, and if it is to function well, somebody must give himself to what may seem the thankless task of making it function still better in the future than it does today.