

# THE FREETHINKER

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Views and Opinions

How Christianity Works

I HAVE often dealt with the manner in which the work of Freethinking reformers is hidden in this country. The method is not that of direct and open lying. That is too bold a policy and would not be nearly so effective. A lie, a plain open lie, may invite a reply and so incite enquiry, and enquiry may result in enlightenment. We have another, one may say a more effective, way of dealing with radical reformers. We ignore them, and their physical burial is followed by an intellectual and social one. If the names of men like Paine, or Carlile, or Owen, or Hetherington, or Holyoake, or Bradlaugh, or Foote, must be mentioned, they are passed over very lightly, in a deprecatory fashion that is not likely to encourage the student to make enquiries as to what these people were or what they did. Thus pupils leave school, college and university more than ignorant of the work of Freethinking reformers; they are educated into thinking that the life and work of these men and women are not worth studying. Paine? oh, he was a man who attacked Christianity and died a drunkard—this of one of the most powerful influences in his day for humanitarian reform in England, France, and America. Carlile? a man who was engaged in the publication of radical works—this of one who did more for the freedom of the press and publication than any other man of his time. Bradlaugh?—a radical politician who had a row concerning the taking of the oath in Parliament; and so forth and so forth. It is a cowardly, a contemptible, method, but is in full force to-day. And it enables impostures of all kinds to be planted on the public. Existing dictatorships with their policy of rewriting history to suit themselves are no more than an elaboration, a more complete application, of this method.

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Truth and "Nature"

I recur to this old theme of mine because of a sample of this method which appeared recently in *Nature*, a well known scientific periodical. Noting the death of a distinguished Cambridge scholar, Professor Hickson

(born 1859), the writer of a lengthy obituary notice says that he was of "Unitarian stock with advanced social views." I do not know what Professor Hickson's religious opinions were, but bearing in mind that among the visitors to the Hickson household were Mrs. Besant, Charles Bradlaugh, Auberon Herbert, G. J. Holyoake, and Charles Voysey, four well-known Freethinkers, and an heretical clergyman of the Church of England, one feels safe in assuming that Professor Hickson's home was a Freethinking one. But this alone would not have called for notice, but for a remark that Holyoake was the last person in this country imprisoned for blasphemy. I do not blame the writer for his unacquaintance with the facts. I merely place him as an exhibit in support of what I have said of our method of lying by suppression and exaggeration. I hasten to say that as the world is at present while we make history lie in one direction the Totalitarian States perform the same form of lying in another. That policy will continue so long as history is written mainly with a view to propaganda, whether the propaganda is suppression or otherwise is of small consequence. I also add that but for a further incident, a mere line or two would have been enough to correct the inaccuracy of the writer in *Nature*.

Very properly Mr. Rosetti wrote *Nature* a very brief but adequate statement of the facts, pointing out the important case of G. W. Foote, and its aftermath. He also signed his letter as Secretary of the National Secular Society, and that, I suspect, was fatal. It might have set people enquiring into the work of the National Secular Society, and so disturbed the state of non-awareness of some important facts in British history. At any rate the letter was not published, and the editors wrote that

should any further reference to this point arise the editors will endeavour to bear this in mind. They do not think any useful scientific purpose would be served by referring to it in *Nature*

It would be too mild to say that this comment is unworthy of a scientific journal. It is more than unworthy, it is contemptible. One supposes that the editors are afraid that their readers might be led to enquire into the operation of the blasphemy laws in this country, and so on to the work of Freethinkers, and—who knows—might be then led to become Freethinkers themselves. These risks must not be run. But the justification the editors give—privately—is that "no useful scientific purpose would be served by"—publishing the truth. We challenge the editors to repeat that statement in the columns of *Nature*. In my simplicity I have always persuaded myself that the chief concern of science, first, last and all the time, is with truth, and if one gets a false statement concerning a very important phase of the historic fight for freedom of thought, that does prevent those who are guided by it from forming a scientific understanding of historical processes. Of course it may be that the

editors of *Nature* are under the curious persuasion that science and scientific research applies only to experiments that can be performed in a chemical laboratory. If that is so, it is really time that *Nature* was placed in other hands. But I cannot believe this to be the case. It would indicate a terrible misunderstanding of the nature of pure science. It must be that the editors offer a "terrible example" of the evil consequences of the way in which history is written under the influence of religion. Who was it said that history is nothing but a pack of lies we tell about the dead? The "nothing but" may be too extreme, but the lies—direct and suggestive—are certainly there.

\* \* \*

#### Blasphemy and the Law

As I have often pointed out, the continuance of the Blasphemy Laws is not merely a threat to those who offer a really serious criticism of religion; it has a much wider application. For the moment, however, I am concerned with the Freethought movement only. First as to the statement that Holyoake was the last person imprisoned for blasphemy. Holyoake was sentenced in 1842. One would have thought that anyone with a moderate amount of reading would have come across the case of Pooley in 1857. Extrinsic circumstances gave this case a notoriety; first, because Pooley was an obviously half-witted person, who was sentenced to 21 months' imprisonment; second, because the Judge who tried the case was the father of the lawyer who prosecuted; and, third, because of the way in which Mill, Buckle and others wrote about this particular case.

During the present century there have been at least five prosecutions for blasphemy, with several imprisonments. And going back to 1883 there was the prosecution for blasphemy of the founder and editor of this paper, G. W. Foote, with Ramsay and Kemp. That trial ended in Foote receiving 12 months' imprisonment at the hands of a bigot, Justice North, the other two received sentences of nine and six months respectively. But the reason why anyone who commented on blasphemy prosecutions ought to have known about Foote's trial is that it marked a very important stage in the history of the Common Law of Blasphemy.

Foote had to face two charges for blasphemy. The first has already been mentioned. The second he was brought from prison to contest, the case being tried by Lord Chief Justice Coleridge. The trial ended by the jury disagreeing, and the Crown threw up the sponge by withdrawing the case. There was a fear of an acquittal. Foote's defence was by far the finest defence ever made in this country in a charge of blasphemy. It drew the praise of Coleridge for both matter and manner. But the historic importance of the case is that it led to the Lord Chief Justice giving a reinterpretation of the Common Law of Blasphemy, which now rules wherever English law obtains. It is the consequence of that ruling which gave Foote's trial its historic value.

Lord Coleridge argued that in view of the changes of opinion that had taken place in this country it was ludicrous to still hold that any attack on the Christian religion constituted blasphemy. And he laid it down definitely, and as events showed, finally, that the fundamentals of Christian belief might be impugned, provided the deencies of controversy were respected.

Personally, I have always held that while this was a convenient ruling for Freethinkers, it was bad law. It is really absurd to assume that the essence of blasphemy did not consist in attacking Christianity. People were never damned for a manner of speaking, but for what they said, whether it was expressed in polished or coarse language. If God is no respecter of persons there is certainly nothing in his history that would lead us to believe that he was a specialist in polished

sentences, or had a strong preference for chaste language.

But the net result of this famous ruling was twofold. First it placed the "crime" of blasphemy on the level of a charge of "drunk and disorderly." The test was, what effect would certain expressions have on a particular class of people? And judges have taken care to point out to the jury that one must not consider that class of people to be men of education with well-balanced minds, but the ordinary man in the street. If this famous individual would be incited to create a breach of the peace, it was blasphemy. If it did not, then it was not. Blasphemy became, by the Coleridge ruling (and has remained since, at law) a difference between polished and unpolished language. As I have said, it places an offence against God on a level with being drunk and disorderly.

The second significance that arose out of the trial of Foote was of a different order. For many years the courts had ruled that a legacy to a society which aimed at attacking the Christian faith was not good at law, provided the next-of-kin entered an action against operation of the legacy. Many thousands of pounds were lost to the Freethought movement in this way, and a very much larger amount lost because no one could be certain that the testator's wishes would be carried out.

Foote saw that this new reading of the law of blasphemy opened a way of doing away with a long-standing injustice. And after some years had passed he launched the Secular Society Limited, and so challenged the bigots to test the question so soon as the sum at issue was large enough to tempt litigation. This opportunity came with the bequest to the Secular Society Limited of a residual estate of about £10,000. As was anticipated an action was brought against the Society, and it went through the usual legal stages right up to the House of Lords. I was with Foote not only during the formation of the Secular Society Limited, but during the hearings of this action in the lower courts. Unfortunately Foote died before the case came into the House of Lords, and it was left to me to see that the lines marked out were kept. At the last moment our opponents suggested a compromise, but I advised the Board of Directors that no compromise, even though it amounted to nineteen shillings and elevenpence halfpenny in the pound, should be accepted. It was a fight for a principle, and we would fight to the end. The Board agreed with me, and in the end the Society won. Since that date no demurrer has been raised in any court against a legacy to any Freethought organization. Thanks to the trial of Foote in 1883, money can be bequeathed with absolute safety to any Freethought organization, or to any paper for the purpose of advocating Freethought. These legacies will be enforced by British courts. The Blasphemy trial of Foote in 1883 led to the financial franchise of Freethought in this country. Highly moral Christians have no longer the legal power to rob Freethinkers and then twit them with their poverty. They no longer ask Freethought organizations, "What have you done with the money we stole from you?"

I trust readers will now appreciate why I have again dealt with this topic of blasphemy prosecutions. It is deplorable that the editors of *Nature* should have so completely an unscientific conception of history as to deny a letter of correction or an important chapter in our "island story." By refusing this correction they have converted a blunder into a lie. That is quite good Christian practice, but it is a very poor scientific one. We challenge the editors of *Nature* to print in the columns of their journal that no "useful scientific purpose" can be served by correcting a gross mis-statement of an important historic fact.

## Easter

### THE LORD'S DAY

EVERY festival of the Christian Church—apart from "Saints' Days"—was originally a pagan festival. Sunday, the first day of the week, was the festival of the sun-god—*Die Solis Venerabilis* of the Romans—as the other days of the week were festivals of the moon and five planets. Easter commemorates the vernal equinox, when the sun appeared to cross the equator, when the days became longer than the nights, daily increase in length, and the return of verdure and the bursting forth of seed takes place. It is by arrangement that the first Sunday after the full moon which happens upon, or next, after March 21; and if the moon is at the full on a Sunday, Easter Day falls on the following Sunday. "Easter," or "Eastre" was the name of the *Dawn* Goddess of the Vedic Aryans, "Eos"—"the mother of the gods," identical with the Hindu *Devaki*, the virgin mother of the "Saviour" *Krishna*, the Saxon *Ostnit*, and the Teutonic *Eostre*. The festival of Eos was that of the vernal equinox, the commencement of the solar new year, the first month of which (April) was dedicated to her. The festival came originally from the East as the name suggests, long before the Christian Messiah was born or thought of. From the East it spread over the whole of Pagan Europe; it being adopted by our Teutonic forefathers instead of the Greek and Roman *Pascha*. It was a seasonable one, denoting the death and departure of winter, and the renewal of life in the spring; the Teutonic word for which was *Lens*, from which the Christian "Lent" is derived, but which is now applied by that religious body to the forty days preceding Easter. As the egg was the symbol of birth, it became the symbol of Easter and Spring in connexion with sun worship, representing the triumphant sun. They were sacred Easter offerings among the ancient Egyptians, Babylonians and Persians, who presented each other with coloured eggs; and also among the Jews—who used eggs at the Passover; and the Chinese. A form for blessing Easter eggs exists in the ritual of Pope Paul V. The early Christians did not celebrate the "Resurrection," but made the Jewish Passover their chief, and only, festival; nor is there any mention of Easter in the New Testament; but there is a misrendering of the Greek word *pascha* (*paska*) in Acts xii. 4, which in the A.V. was fraudulently rendered *Easter*, but in the R.V. is correctly rendered. The Feast of the "Passover" had its origin in the fact that the firstling of the flock—in Persia a lamb, in Egypt, a ram (*aries*)—was sacrificed and its blood sprinkled over the gates of the folds and entrance to the tents, in order that the evil spirit might pass over. It was preceded by a forty days' fast broken by a week's indulgence in all kinds of sport before taking farewell of animal food, called the *carne vale* (to flesh farewell), from which the modern word *carnival* is derived. Among the Roman Christians a new tradition gained currency that Jesus had not eaten of the Passover before he died, but had substituted himself as the "Paschal Lamb," after which the "Resurrection" became a great Christian festival. But there were bloody feuds in the Church during the first century respecting the celebration of the new festival; one party taking their time from the moon, regarding her as a symbol of renewal, held that as a substitute for the Passover, Easter was a lunar celebration falling on the 14th day of the first moon; while the other—and ultimately victorious—party adopted the solar reckoning, maintaining that it must always be held on the day of "Our Lord the Sun." The final adjustment of the date sufficiently indicates the zodiacal character of the festival, which must be near

the vernal equinox when the sun appears to cross or pass over the equator after a full moon, and on the day sacred to the sun—*Die Solis*; i.e., on the first Sunday after the Passover. We thus see that the Christian compromise had no reference to alleged historical facts, but to the reconciliation of different views on nature worship. Had the festival commemorated the death and resurrection of a real personality, it would have been arranged for a special fixed day, and not on a movable date. The word *glory*, so frequently met with in modern religion is a relic of sun worship, and refers to the sun's glorious and effulgent nimbus which accompanies its rising in the East (see Ps. 1. 2; and lxxxiv. 11).

It is not difficult to trace some of the Zodiacal references in the Old Testament. Each sign of the zodiac had its god, as had each of the three decans of a sign. The sun was the chief of the Host of "Heaven," whose home was *Olympos*, he was the "Day Star on high"; and the "Lion of Juda," when in the sign *Leo*—who has thrown the Archer Sagittarius (half horse, half man, representing evil and good) into the sea (horizon). Miriam (Ex. xv. 21) sang: "Sing ye to the Lord [the sun] for he hath triumphed gloriously; horse and rider [Sagittarius] hath he thrown into the sea." The three decans were represented in Daniel by the three youths thrown into a fiery furnace (the summer sign *Cancer*), the fourth youth being the sun. The "Host of Heaven" were the fixed stars. In Job we read (xxxviii. 31) "Canst thou influence the Pleiades or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth [the twelve signs of the Zodiac] in his season." The god of the Psalmist is the sun, as he tells us in Ps. lxxxiv. 11 "For the Lord God (Yahuh Elohim) is the sun" and lxxviii. and civ., are distinctly songs to that planet. He is described as riding through the heavens (the sky), by his name Jah (Yah). In the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, we read in the prayers to *Osiris*: "I adore the sun in the happy west . . . a path has been made for me. Glory, glory, to Osiris." In another to *Amen-Ra*: "Hail to thee Amen-Ra; Lord of the thrones of the earth; chief in Ap-Ta (Thebes), sailing through the heavens in tranquility." The rendering of Ps. lxxxii. must be obvious, but not what we would expect from honest men of intellectual attainment, for it is nonsense: "God standeth in the congregation of God." It should read: "Yahuh standeth among the gods" or the mighty ones; "he judgeth among the gods."

It is easy to trace the connexion of sun-worship with the tribal god of the Hebrews, who has been adopted as the chief deity of the Christian Trinity, whose name was far too sacred for pronunciation. With the Ancient Akkadians he was *Al*, as memorialized in the mountain made familiar by the legends of that tricky Dictator Moses, dedicated to the moon goddess *Sin*. The sun-god had various names: with the Hebrews he was *Jhvh*, *Jah* (*Yah*), *Iao Yeho*, *Yahuh*, and *El-Shadai*—vowels being an arbitrary factor. A single god was *Al* or *El*, and the plural *Aleim* or *Elohim*—the gods of creation in the first narrative in Genesis.

In the fourth century, the imperial murderer Constantine—a sun worshipper—unable to obtain absolution for his numerous crimes from the pagan High Priest—the chief of which crimes were the murder of his wife, his son, his nephew, his two brothers-in-law, his father-in-law, and his old friend—was persuaded that by the adoption of the Christian religion he would obtain all that he desired. The cowardly Emperor, afraid of death—as all cowards are, took the bait thus offered, but deferred his baptism till his death-bed; thus leaving himself free to enjoy the pleasures of his nefarious life. A dream decided his course of life and the future of Christianity, which hitherto had been patronized by a few slaves only. He had a vision of a

fiery *tau* cross in the sky, bearing the superscription: "*In hoc signo vinces*" (under this sign go and conquer). His subsequent victory over his enemy Maxentius was fortunate for Christianity, but unfortunate for the progress of civilization and intellectual development in Europe! for he issued edicts against heretics (his old time co-religionists), made it penal to possess any writings against his new religion. He also ordered "Sun-Day"—"The Lord's Day"—to be a rest day from work except for agricultural labourers. This interference with the people's holiday was not popular, and the edict was repealed by the Emperor Leo in the ninth century.

Showing the intimate connexion of sun-worship with the popular religion of the present day, a curious incident occurred when the French Army under Napoleon entered Rome. An investigation of the Vatican discovered an *ancient zodiac* depicted on the back of the papal chair.

Incidentally, the ancient city of "Sumir" (pron. *Sumer*) in Assyria, is so spelt, and *not Sumer* as is so often expressed.

W. W. HARDWICKE

## Sixty Years for Secularism

Between two worlds, one dead  
One powerless to be born.—*Matthew Arnold.*

The future is not in the hands of Fate, but in our own hands.—*Jusserand.*

THE Diamond Jubilee of the Leicester Secular Society should be of interest to Freethinkers the world over. For sixty years, that is to say, for three generations, this Society has kept the claims of Secularism before the people of that part of England. It is an inspiring story of small beginnings, of struggles, and of ultimate brilliant victory. The origins of the story date back to the "stormy forties" of the last century. For the original Society sprang from a discussion class in the Leicester Mechanics' Institute, a leading figure of which was George Bown, one of the small band of heroes who carried the flag of Liberty in those dark days when pioneers were still pariahs.

Among the enthusiastic young men who gathered about Bown was Josiah Gimson, the father of Sydney Gimson. The intellectual subjects discussed in this class soon became the talk of Leicester, and the surrounding district. Afterwards a school was carried on during the week, with lectures on Sundays, and a lending library was formed. The advanced views of progressive thinkers were discussed, and Leicester had the opportunity of listening to new thoughts, and of widening her mental horizon. Out of this evolutionary institution, which so readily adapted itself to changing circumstances, was organized the Secular Hall Company, and the site of the present fine hall was purchased. In 1881, the memorable year of the birth of the *Freethinker*, the hall was completed from the designs of W. Larner Sudgen, a well-known architect, one of whose hobbies was the publication of effective little booklets of a Freethought character. The series included reprints from Ingersoll and James Thomson, the shy genius who wrote *The City of Dreadful Night*.

The opening of the hall, a handsome structure, on one of the best streets in Leicester, was a notable occasion. Freethinkers were present from all parts of England and Scotland. Thomson contributed a poetic address at the inaugural ceremony. A few lines are worth quotation, for they show the vigorous Freethought of the poet, whose talents have won for him an imperishable name in English literature:—

So, all the lands wherein our wandering race  
Have led their flocks, or fixed their dwelling place,  
To till with patient toil the fruitful sod,  
Abound with altars to the unknown God,  
Or gods, whom man created from of old,  
In his own image, one yet manifold,  
And ignorantly worshipped. We now dare,  
Taught by millenniums of barren prayer,  
Of mutual scorn and hate and bloody strife,  
With which these dreams have poisoned our poor life,  
To build our temples, on another plan,  
Devoting them to God's creator, man;  
Not to man's creature, God. And, thus, indeed  
All men and women, of whatever creed,  
We welcome gladly if they love their kind  
No other valid test of worth we find,  
Who loveth not his brother at his side,  
How can he love a dim dream deified.

Another very illustrious name associated with the Leicester Secular Society is that of Thomas Henry Huxley, "the Saint Paul of Darwinism," as he has been called. Not only was he in agreement with the objects of the organization, but he was one of its financial supporters. In enclosing a cheque in support, Huxley wrote that it was sent "in evidence of the full sympathy with the objects of the society." To a request for permission to publish the note, he replied: "You are quite at liberty to publish my note, and I shall be glad if it is of any service." This record is important, for it places Huxley in complete accord with the principles of Secularism, and should help to clear away any misapprehensions on that subject which have been fostered by the clergy.

In the hall are portraits of Charles Bradlaugh, George Jacob Holyoake, James Thomson, and Josiah Gimson. The Gimsoms, indeed, both father and son, can never be forgotten in the history of this society, or even in the records of the Freethought Movement, in England. Another name long associated with the Society is that of Frederick J. Gould, a lovable man and charming writer who made a big name for himself as an educationalist. He was Secretary and Organizer of the Society from 1899 to 1908, and for years afterwards graced its platform as a speaker. His remarks on the Society and its work are of such moment that they will bear repetition:—

I doubt if any hall in Europe, or America, or elsewhere, quite fulfils for its social environment just such a function, both intellectual and municipal, as this at Leicester. Perhaps it would be difficult now to establish another of like pattern. When it was founded movements which are now strong—labour, free libraries, Sunday lectures, and the non-theological press—were then relatively weak, and eager spirits discovered in the hall at Humberstone Gate a unique centre for learning and discussing new ideas on religion, history, literature, economics, and the rest.

The lesson to be drawn from the inspiring record of Leicester is that "Unity is Strength." Forgetting trivial distinctions in the face of entrenched and wealthy Priestcraft, these brave Freethinkers closed their ranks and stood shoulder to shoulder against the enemy. It is precisely because the hearts of the pioneers were steadfast that their work has had vital and lasting effect. They have deserved well of their country, for they have helped to widen the frontiers of Freedom. Such pioneers will be largely the architects of the new social order,

Leicester Freethinkers have a perfect right to be proud of their history. As the little "Revenge" earned an undying name by hurling herself against the great battleships of the Spaniards, so these Freethinkers have displayed extraordinary courage in attacking the heart of the far more formidable Armada of Superstition. The greater the perils, the finer the victory; and in the ripe years to come recognition must

be given to the courage and resolution, which disregarding any reward, was satisfied with the knowledge that their action would diffuse the inestimable blessings of Liberty. For in that happy time the stormy note of battle will be changed to the triumphant music of victory.

MIMNERMUS

## Germany's Descent to Darkness

ALL who treasure freedom of thought and expression now find these once almost universally recognized rights of man in jeopardy, where not completely abolished. In every totalitarian State these priceless possessions are treated as treason whenever they run counter to established authority. Refugees from autocracy, whether in Germany, Italy, Russia and other dictatorships are legion. Those who have fled or been deliberately rejected by their native Governments discover themselves in a world no longer available for unrestricted migration. In many instances they are regarded with dislike or suspicion in the countries where they have taken refuge. When the refugees are destitute and threaten to become a public charge or invade an already congested labour market, the problem becomes grave. Moreover, the spirit of nationalism seems to have become stronger in every part of the globe and prejudice against the alien is more pronounced than ever.

The persecution, pillage and expulsion of the Jews domiciled in Germany and Austria, presents an appalling spectacle. When Hitler attained supreme power in a country long regarded as a centre of enlightenment, the sole domination of the Nazi Party was proclaimed. The autocratic system steadily established from 1933 to 1938 in Germany was put into immediate operation in Austria at its annexation, and Czechoslovakia has since been subjected to the same despotism. The penalties imposed on Poland are already severe and worse may come. While frontiers remained open many fled in the earlier stages of National Socialist domination, but even in 1938, before Europe was replunged into warfare, neither men nor money were free to depart, while further complications seriously handicapped the intelligentsia anxious to escape to freer climes. Anti-Semitism has long disgraced Germany. As Sir John Hope Simpson intimates in his authoritative work: *The Refugee Problem* (Oxford University Press, 1939, 25s.) a survey conducted under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs: "Earlier anti-Semitic movements in Germany found their greatest support in the middle classes, amongst salaried employees, small business men and in certain intellectual groups—i.e., in those sections of the population in occupations where Jewish competition was most keenly felt. There was less anti-Semitism among industrial workers; because the share of Jews in industrial labour was relatively small, and because the influence of the Socialist movement in labour was strong—and Social Democracy definitely opposed anti-Semitism."

This antagonism, however, has long infected the ranks of the landowners and industrialists, and was, even in the time of the Kaiser increasing in virulence in legal, medical and journalistic circles. Nor was hatred of Jewry unknown in the Universities, despite the fact that Jews played a prominent part in the intellectual life of Germany.

Now that no criticism of the Nazi régime is permitted, the doubts and misgivings of the few Germans who venture to covertly express them are carefully restricted to a limited auditory. Also, the public is systematically deluded into the belief that the woes

of past and present Germany are mainly attributable to the Jews' international activities and innate malevolence.

In 1935 marriages between Jews and Germans became a penal offence. Under an earlier enactment some mercy was shown to the persecuted people, although the legal concessions were constantly disregarded. Jews have now been banished from the legal and medical professions, and those few doctors who were still permitted to practise in consideration of past war services could only attend Jewish patients. In January, 1935 there remained 6,000 Jewish practitioners, but three years later their number had fallen to 3,000.

As every unbiassed ethnologist admits, the Germans are composite in character, and are chiefly of Nordic and Alpine descent. Yet, they are artfully flattered and deluded by the impudent fiction of the purity and cultural superiority of their race. Religious and national prejudice, combined with economic enmity, have all conspired to strengthen the authorities in their determination to extirpate or exile the large Jewish population of the Reich.

Sir John Simpson states that: "Jews have been banished from universities and schools, and Jewish booksellers may sell only Jewish books. In the various departments of cultural life, in the press, cinema, theatre, radio, music, painting, architecture, literature, Jews have been excluded through the National Socialist Associations formed for each of these occupations. No one can practise his art unless he is a member of the relevant association, and admission is conditional on Aryan race and right thinking."

A general boycott of Hebrew trade and industry was staged on April 1, 1933, when every Jewish establishment was closed for the day. Then a brief respite was granted until 1934, for the authorities evidently feared a wide business dislocation. A further wave of persecution followed in 1935. Envy, hatred and uncharitableness were stimulated by the notorious Jew baiter, Julius Streicher, editor of the *Stürmer*. It is temperately stated that "Many Jews were driven from the villages and small towns where life had become unbearable to them, to the large towns, especially to Berlin. The humble people amongst them—most of the Jews living in the provinces were quite humble people—turned to small street trades, in which, however, they were not long left unmolested." In November, 1935, Dr. Schacht announced that irresponsible action against the Jews was forbidden pending the issue of new regulations. But the fleecing of the chosen people continued. Jewish undertakings were sold for a song to German buyers or permanently closed, and thousands of the victims were reduced to poverty and misery.

In 1937, the liquidation of Jewish concerns rapidly increased, and Jews were driven to surrender one business after another. Craftsmen and commercial travellers of the execrated race met insuperable obstacles when striving to obtain licences. The clothing industry, which was largely Jewish, received a staggering blow when no new business could be started unless there was a guarantee that Jewish dealers would not be permitted to furnish supplies of trade material. Bankers and stockbrokers of Semitic stock were also being eliminated.

In 1938, even Jewish ex-servicemen were thrust from the professions. Indeed, every undertaking with which Jews were connected was penalised to the point of extinction or passed into the possession of Germans of "pure blood." Sir J. Simpson notes that in the year above, "a decree was promulgated demanding the submission of particulars of all Jewish fortunes of more than 5,000 Reichmarks whether at home or abroad, followed by a ministerial circular

stating that Jewish emigrants could not control any property they left behind them in excess of 5,000 Rm. Powers were given to Field Marshal Goering to ensure that Jewish capital should be used for the Four-Year Plan for the development of Germany's military and economic resources." The property of Jewry was also greatly diminished by the increased flight tax. In 1933 when intending emigrants had paid this tax they were allowed the retention of 75 per cent of their possessions, but in 1938 this proportion was lowered to 10 per cent, while subsequently it became 6 per cent only.

Unless some unforeseen improvement takes place, the entire Jewish population of the Third Reich will be sentenced to exile or complete ruin. No wonder so many Jews have committed suicide in despair. Inhumanity most callous in character is also manifested by the grievous burdens thrown on the Jewish Welfare Societies at times when Winter Relief is given. These organizations have responded grandly, but widespread destitution and semi-starvation would have proved unavoidable apart from outside assistance.

The promises made by Hitler to respect the Weimar Constitution, like every other solemn engagement into which he has entered, were brazenly broken. So soon as a declaration of national emergency had been obtained the path was prepared for the conversion of the Republic into a Fascist State. In a few months the Communists were extinguished. Their leaders had either been executed or were in custody, save those who had taken flight. Then the Social Democrats were taken in hand, and in March prominent Socialists were imprisoned. Trade Union buildings were in military occupation, and in June Goering denounced the Social Democrats as dangerous enemies to the State. The publications of the Party were suppressed and its gatherings prohibited. The minor political groups withered away. The legal existence of one party only was recognized. All attempts to reconstruct the broken parties were declared illegal. The Trade Unions disappeared and their recalcitrant leaders liquidated or immured, while the union funds were confiscated as a preliminary to the establishment of the Nazi Labour Front. All pacifist associations were incontinently snuffed out.

Many distinguished Germans are living in exile, but the number of political and sectarian refugees is small, when compared with the huge exodus of Jewry which in 1939 was estimated at one-third of the total Jewish population of the Reich, who became fugitives owing to the loss of their livelihood or to their endangered lives themselves. No lover of his kind can any longer regard as civilized a community in which atrocities and injustices such as those recorded, remain naked and unashamed.

T. F. PALMER

#### THE GODS

Ye Gods, to whom an age-old universe  
Of peoples from a primitiveness prayed;  
Bleating as, with their sacrifices laid  
On your altars, they invoked a Heavenly curse  
Or Blessing; Now, ye Gods, are times the worse?  
Throughout the centuries what effort made  
To illumine your creation? Are ye afraid  
That Man may rival Gods, and so ye nurse  
Resentment, lest at length he comprehend  
The Loveliness of existence? Oh! then bend  
Olympian knees, ye Gods, and pray to Man  
That he shall fashion Heaven upon a plan  
Constructed of such senselessness that Hell  
Be the long-coveted Goal, and Evil well.

#### Topsy-Turvydom

THINGS are going to be very different when we die, say the Christians. Like the formulators of all Utopias they do not relish going into details. Very conscious are they that by so doing they are certain to limit their appeal, for it is a trite observation that people like different things. *Great will be your reward* they tell one, but they think it better for one to fashion one's own reward and hope for the best. No such diffidence was felt about Hell. Hell has inspired Christian eloquence above all other themes. But Heaven they have always been reticent about. It is not that Jesus was silent on this theme. It is because they are conscious that what Jesus said on this matter had better not be talked about too much. It raises doubts—and controversy. Therefore it has little propaganda value.

Jesus not only spoke in general terms such as *Great will be your Reward*; he was much more specific. In the Sermon on the Plain (Luke vi.), he told us what was going to happen to us in Heaven. There may be a different value to be attached to this famous discourse than is attached to the Sermon on the Mount, but although it can be admitted that an oration on a Mount should be on a loftier level than that delivered on a Plain, we cannot see any other reason for assessing differently the utterances of Gods on different occasions. They obviously knew what they were talking about on all occasions, and it is up to us to incline our ear humbly and reverently.

According to this particular speech, Heaven is going to be a place where certain peculiar phenomena on this earth are going to be reversed. One cannot say even "objectionable" phenomena. If one could say plainly that certain injustices suffered upon this earth were going to be righted, one would at least be saying a great deal. It would put the after-life on a basis which, although it would still leave open huge areas of speculation, would at any rate serve as a foundation for the edifice.

But the line taken by Jesus on the Plain does not emphasize Justice; it is devoid of any clarity, much less subtlety. Putting it plainly those who are hungry upon this earth are going to be filled hereafter; those who are rich have already "received their consolation." In Heaven it is going to be a case for the wealthy of *Woe unto them!* On the other hand those who are poor are going to have the time of their lives—after they are dead. And those whom men revile and hate and persecute shall in the happy land above "leap for joy," and rejoice exceedingly. Martyrdom on this understanding becomes a gilt-edged investment.

The justice of such treatment is far from obvious. Sympathy for the poor, for example, is a good thing but it does not imply a belief that some kind of virtue is inherent in the state of poverty. Such a belief cannot rationally be held if it is thought that a lifetime of poverty is worthy of some recompense, then indeed the question of justice can be made to enter into it, but such a simplification in the Sermon on the Plain is not permissible. Recompense without consideration of *damages* sustained—an eternity of bliss for a definite period of misery—is a conception which can almost have any description applied to it rather than that of justice. A similar criticism is valid in application to the *rich*.

The ideas of this kind contained in the Sermon on the Plain are just ludicrous. They are the ideas of those who are but the quick recipients of some emotion leading to an automatic reaction. Most elementary beings feel that way. A hideous crime suggests to them a hideous retribution. A piece of meanness

deserves a punishment in kind. That great novelist, Charles Dickens, in his knowledge of the "heart" of the man in the street was guilty at the expense of his art in trying to over-please that individual. Consequently Stiggins has to be dropped into a watering-cart, Silas Wegg into a cart-load of liquid manure, in the interests of this "rough justice."

Dickens knew that the automatic response of the average man would be "Magnificent! He has come to a good end," and he couldn't resist the temptation to play down or up to it.

Jesus, one is afraid, does not rise, on occasions, above this level, in spite of the percentage of God within him. Those who are basing the Christian religion on the Simple Gospel are apt to overlook such simplicities as are here called attention to.

The Gospel figure in the same sermon may have been a *great revolutionist*, but his post-mortem readjustments if one admits they sometimes could come from "sympathy," are still disfigured by such crudities. But there are cases where even "sympathy" is impossible, and where the judgment assigned is not only crude but ridiculous.

Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.

Woe unto ye that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

It would be waste of time commenting upon this absurdity. The fact is however worthy of emphasis, for alert modernists who are burying the *Man of Sorrows* because such a figure nowadays makes no appeal are trying to bury such utterances at the same time. The Rev. Leslie Weatherhead works hard to popularize a smiling Jesus; a Jesus who was a boon companion ready with a merry jest; smart at repartee; a blithe spirit over the gossip's bowl. He loses little time in exegesis over *What Did Jesus Say?* when he reads these passages in the Sermon on the Plain. There will be Laughter in Heaven, one is told, but those who laugh will not be those who laugh in this world. Mark Twain and Wodehouse have been engaged on this hypothesis in building up for their readers an eternity of grief. There will be Sorrow in Heaven for them. Of course, Mr. Weatherhead would say, Jesus *could not have meant that*. Could he not, indeed? It is the first purpose of revelation, surely, to put erring mankind right where they, unfortunately, have wrong ideas. It is surely not the function of erring humanity to put the Gods right when they condescend to do a little enlightening. Do the Gods not deserve respectful consideration?

Topsy-turvydom might have its advantages for a W. S. Gilbert. Where he saw the very marriage of pro and con, he called attention to it in order first to make people laugh—and, eventually, clear their minds of absurdity. Modernists who wish to keep the Gospel alive by adaptation are advised to make the attempt on Gilbertian lines. The simple gospel may indeed persist a little longer if approached from such an angle, and if we can be made to laugh by the modernists' skilful humorous treatment we may even appreciate their efforts. Certainly we'd "jump the life to come."

T. H. BOSTON

## The Christian's Dream

DEATH: You called me?

Dying Christian: Who are you?

Death: I am Death which comes to all.

D.C.: I fear you not. Jesus conquered you.

Death: No one can conquer me. I am supreme.

D.C.: The Bible declares you an enemy, "The last enemy that shall overcome."

Death: I am neither an enemy nor can I be overcome.

D.C.: I shall live on. I cannot die. My Saviour lives.

Death: You shall sleep in the dust. No one can save you from me, neither Jesus nor Jupiter.

D.C.: You know not the power of God. He will save me from you.

Death: Let your God come and save you if he can, ere it be too late.

D.C.: My God will take me to Himself.

Death: So will I, and soon.

D.C.: Leave me in peace!

Death: I bring you peace. Fear not. I shall neither torture you with hell nor bore you with heaven. Come now, the time of departure draws near. Make ready. Naught shall avail thee, neither God, nor prayer, nor priest. I have no sting.

"NORMAN NORTH."

## Acid Drops

There is nothing new to be said concerning the Russian attack on and defeat of Finland—we had almost written "conquest," but the Finns though defeated are not conquered. There is something in the spirit of the Finns that no country in the world would be able to conquer. But the end of the war has at least killed one of the most foolish, the most interested lies that has ever been circulated—even by Germany or by the Roman Catholic Church. This is that Russia attacked Finland to liberate the Finnish people and assist them in the struggle against the terrorism under which they were suffering. From the Russian occupied territory these Finnish people are fleeing as though from a plague. No local tie, no disruption of lifelong associations were strong enough to reconcile them to a foreign rule. The "People's Government" made up of a handful of Russian agents has disappeared, even to the Russians themselves, who in the end had to deal with the Government it refused to recognize. The impudence of the previous attitude could be equalled only by Hitler announcing that he did not recognize the British Government, that he was attacking Britain to liberate the English people, and would recognize and deal with only the British Union of Fascists.

Sir John Reith, that complete bigot who, while he was at the head of the B.B.C., began his questioning of all candidates with the query "Do you believe in Jesus Christ?" says that he believes in the power of the "simple truth." We have heard that public confession before, and it has generally been made by those who have some very curious ideas of the "simple truth." And from the man who had the case for religion so carefully arranged that no direct attack on Christianity was ever permitted, who was a master of so many faked scenes and situations, one ought to be quite prepared for Reithian exercise of truth. There is a way of telling the truth that is even more deceptive than telling a direct and open lie. The story of how a man with the intellectual equipment of Sir John Reith ever got where he was and where he is would be worth the hearing if it could ever be brought to the point of telling. But one would have to get the *whole* truth, not the "simple truth" only. Readers of Shakespeare know how many varieties of lies there are, and a study of political and religious life would display all of them in constant service.

There can be no real justice without liberty, no real liberty without justice. A much graver wrong is done to a man in unjustly depriving him of his liberty of action, of thought and of speech, than in unjustly depriving him of his material possession. The supreme injustice is coercion of the soul.—Lord MacMillan.

There used to be a saying that what Manchester thinks to-day the rest of England will think to-morrow. This is certainly not true of one thing, that of Sunday entertainments. Here the saying should be that what the more advanced section of English people have thrown over Manchester still clings to. The City Council—the majority of its members—are still back in the seventeenth century. They will not forego the pleasure of bowing before the most stupid of all superstitions, and so remain—religiously—on the intellectual level of our Lord Chancellor—the one time Sir Thomas Inskip. Still, one day, Manchester will wake up, at least we hope so.

Lord Redesdale, the father of Unity Mitford, says that his feelings are hurt when he is placed before the public as a sympathizer with Hitler and his gang. He explains that all he was working for before the war was a more friendly understanding with Germany, but that he lost his sympathy with that country when it began to bomb our fishing trawlers and merchant vessels. We agree with him that, *prima facie*, one ought not to consider Lord Redesdale's opinions identical with the almost insane worship of Hitler by his daughter. At the same time, and it also applies to others who have only raised themselves to the point of denouncing Germany since the war broke out, the bestiality and brutality of the German gangsters were quite well known for years before this war began. And the sinking of trawlers and unarmed merchant vessels, bad as these acts are, are not worse crimes than the raping of women, the wholesale robbery of helpless people, the torture and killing of thousands upon thousands of men, women and children, for no other offence than that they were Jews, or Communists, or did not believe in Hitler. The Hitler-Goebbels-Goering gang of Munich was the gang that has been in power since 1933. So have the people responsible for bombing trawlers. In some respects the German gangsters have been quite honest. They have never tried to hide the fact that they were always what they are; they have even gloried in it. It shows rather a curious conscience to be shocked by the machine-gunning of trawlers, and to be unaffected by seven years of robbery, rape and murder.

The Archbishop of Canterbury says that the deepest responsibility of the journalist is "to God himself." He was addressing a meeting of the Institute of Journalists, and as there is no mention of "loud laughter," one feels inclined to compliment the Archbishop on his impudence, and the journalists on the control of their facial muscles. The professional journalist of to-day works for the greater part to order, and his responsibility is to please those who employ him by writing down to those who read him. And among those who play the greatest part in robbing the journalist of his sense of personal responsibility are the members of the order in which the Archbishop holds a distinguished position. Remove the religious factor, and journalists might write far more honestly than they do. We do not mean that there would not be other obstacles to complete honesty, but the removal of the religious obstacle might well weaken the rest. Often we have been asked why we did not "go in" for journalism. Why should we have done so when there are so many other ways of getting a dishonest living?

More brilliant expositions from a Catholic journal to a puzzled believer:—

(1) The answer to the question, "Did God die on the Cross?" is "Yes." God the Son died on the Cross, because He died in his human nature, not, of course, in His divine nature. That is, He died as man, though not as God. Yet, because in the Incarnation, the two natures of God and man are united in the One Person of God the Son, all the actions performed in either nature are attributable to the Person. Thus, God the Son made the world (in His divine nature); and God the Son died for us on the Cross (in His human nature). (2) Yes, Jesus was frightened before His death. He experienced the natural emotion of fear and aversion from the prospect

before Him. That is why He prayed in the Garden: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

Presumably this means that every action done by either of the two natures in God is part of the one nature, because the two natures make one nature, but as the two natures are two as well as one, when God died he died as one—the son, and when God made the world, he did it as the father. But as the Father and the Son are both one it doesn't matter in the least which did which because they are both one, and one cannot be two, but they are two, therefore what one does is not done by the other, although as the two are one they each act separately, and—but as there seems no end to this we had better stop here. Still, we can see the vast importance of getting children to believe all this while they are young. They never will if they are allowed to grow up without it.

While the world is talking so much about freedom, and we are talking about the freedom that obtains in the Empire, it is well to remember that in Canada there are whole areas in which the Roman Church rules as much as it does in the Irish Free State. This influence extends, as we have noted from time to time, to the law courts. So all things considered, we are not surprised to find the Archbishop of Quebec issuing a statement denouncing Woman Suffrage as inimical to the family (this from a celibate priest who holds that celibacy represents the "higher" life), and would expose women to the passions of political contests. The Church runs true to form. It was Christianity that wiped out the freedom women had acquired in the later Roman Empire, and it was the Christian Church that fought hard against the modern movement for the enfranchisement of women.

*The Voice of Spain* for February 24, provides some useful additional items to the disclosures which it has given of the amount of money which the Church in Spain has in public companies. It says:—

Having published two facsimiles from Spanish newspapers showing Church acknowledgment of holdings in commercial enterprises, we do not deem it necessary to publish any more facsimiles but we shall continue to publish other details that fall into our hands. Below is a further list of Church holdings, with sources of acknowledgments:—

*A B C, January 26th.*—Bank of Spain. Bilbao branch. Security No. 1,735 for 10,000 pesetas dated November 18th, 1905, in the name of Don Martin Echevarria Olavarria, now at the disposal of the Bishopric of Vitoria. . . .

*A B C, February 1st.*—Bank of Spain, Bilbao branch. Security No. 1,655 for 7,700 pesetas, dated December 13th, 1904, in the name of Don Hermenegildo Luis de Urrutia y González-Sabas, at the disposal of the Bishopric of Vitoria. . . .

*A B C, February 1st.*—Bank of Spain. Barcelona branch. Securities Nos. 2,521 and 146,647 for 26,500 and 3,900 pesetas, representing fifty-three and six shares respectively, in the name of the Almarza Mass Foundation. . . .

*A B C, February 2nd.*—Bank of Spain. Barcelona branch. Securities Nos. 52,588, 77,797, 87,826, 140,840, 158,484, and 180,159 for 21,850, 25,000, 1,425, 26,125, 1,900, and 3,800 pesetas respectively, etc., etc., in the name of the Illustrious Penitentiary Canon of Barcelona, the Priest of Santa Maria of Igualada, and the Mayor of said city. . . .

*A B C, February 7th.*—Shares in the National Telephone Co., Nos. 53,061 and 83,765 in the name of St. Andrew's Hospital (worked by the Sisters of Charity): 23,198-99, 23,208-10, 440,563 to 74, 453,111 to 25, 477,124 to 31, and 688,415 to 28, in the name of Don Cruz Laplana y Laguna, ex-Bishop of Cuenca.

Millions of pesetas are hidden under private names but the items we are able to gather here and there more than prove the assertion that the Church in Spain was and is capitalist. It is only some enthusiastic foreign partisans who attempt to deny the fact. The Church itself no longer does so.

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# THE FREETHINKER

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FOR Advertising and Distributing the *Freethinker*.—George and Lilian Warner, £1.

E. SYERS.—We agree with your decision. There is both a wisdom and power in restraint that few recognize.

S. DAWSON.—One way and another a complete descriptive account of the now admitted forgeries and impostures set going by Christian advocates and by Christian Churches would make a very large volume. The German gangsters are mere amateurs at that game. A series of articles on that subject would be quite interesting, as you suggest.

D. DALE.—With many letters we have to either discard them on account of their length or abbreviate them (usually giving notice) or discard them altogether. Letter writers should bear in mind that there are only sixteen pages in the *Freethinker*.

A. W. R. COLE.—Very many of our readers share your appreciation of the articles by "Mimmermus." Your other suggestion will be borne in mind if circumstances permit our doing anything in the matter.

The "*Freethinker*" is supplied to the trade on sale or return. Any difficulty in securing copies should be at once reported to this office.

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Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connexion with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, R. H. Roselli, giving as long notice as possible.

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One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.

## Sugar Plums

We again remind all concerned that the Annual Conference of the N.S.S. will be held this year at Manchester. Bearing in mind that we are in the midst of a world-war, we hope that as many Branches as possible will be well represented. There should also be a good muster of individual members. Further information concerning the Conference will be made public as the arrangements near completion.

The Picture House in Manchester was well filled on Sunday last to listen to Mr. Cohen's address, and it was followed by a number of questions and some discussion. Mr. Taylor occupied the chair, and carried out his duties with ability. This was the last indoor meeting of the Manchester Branch this season, and we were pleased to learn that the Branch is preparing for a vigorous open-air campaign. We trust it will receive the full support of Freethinkers in the district. Mr. Atkinson will, as before, be the principal speaker, and he has established a reputation for himself in this direction.

Mr. Cohen will deliver his last lecture this season at Glasgow on March 31. The lecture will be delivered in the St. Andrew's (smaller) Hall. We have no doubt there will be the usual good gathering. On Saturday the 30th, the Glasgow Branch will hold its Annual Dinner, with Mr. Cohen as the guest of the evening. The function will be held in the Grand Hotel, Charing Cross.

## Freethinkers and the War

All men entering the Army, Navy or Air Force must answer a question as to their religion. *The official in charge is legally bound to record the answer as given*—Atheist, Agnostic, Freethinker, Rationalist or whatever the recruit may choose to call himself. Questioning by the official in charge is gratuitous, and unauthorized. The recruit should refuse to sign any document where his reply to the question of "Religion" is not accurately recorded. Those members of the forces who have been wrongly entered as belonging to some Church, or where they have changed their opinions since entering one of the Services, have the legal right to have the record altered in accordance with their views.

If any difficulty is experienced in securing recognition of these legal rights, the National Secular Society, 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, should be communicated with.

There will be the usual accompaniment of music, songs and speeches, and, judging by previous events, the evening bids fair to be a very enjoyable one. Tickets 6s. 6d. each may be obtained from the Secretary, Mrs. M. Whitefield, 351 Castlemilk Road, Glasgow. Those who intend to be present should secure their tickets as early as possible. Early application will add to the effectiveness of the arrangements.

Freethinkers will be pleased to learn that *Reason*, the organ of the Rationalist Association of India, after being suspended for several months, is now being reissued, and will in future be published on the first of each month. It is always interesting to learn that the series of talks delivered by the President of the Association, Dr. C. L. D'Avoine on "Four Pastors and an Unbeliever," broadcast from Bombay Station of the All India Radio Station, is being published by the Association. The address of the Society is 5-12 Queen's Road, Bombay. Evidently there is a greater sense of fairness in the All India Station than exists in this country with the B.B.C. But then it has lacked the control of a Sir John Reith, our present Minister of Information.

The formation of the Rossendale Branch of the N.S.S. adds another to the list of Branches in Lancashire. The local secretary is Mr. John Barlow, of 2 Oddfellows Terrace, Scoutbottom, Waterfoot, Rossendale, and he is anxious to provide details of membership, and application forms to all Freethinkers in the area ready to put their Freethought to practical use in propaganda. The new Branch is largely the outcome of work by Mr. J. Clayton in the district.

We are asked to announce that the West London Branch is holding a Social at the "Lamb and Flag," James Street, Oxford Street (opposite Bond Street Station), on Saturday, March 30th, at 8.0. There will be good entertainment and dancing, and buffet will be arranged. Tickets at 6d. each, can be had from the Secretary, Mrs. Buxton, 18 Cambridge Gardens, N.W.6.

*The Wellsprings of Liberty* (Hutchinson, 7s. 6d.), by Edouard Herriot, the distinguished French Minister and Freethinker, is not a big book, measured by the number of pages, but it is a very fine and inspiring one, particularly so when we are fighting a war which involves the maintaining of that ideal of individual liberty for which the great French Revolution stood. The work is written in commemoration of the one hundred and fiftieth Anniversary of the French Revolution, and the importance of the event and the brilliancy of the writing go well in harness.

Had a similar work been written by an English author, the book would have been four times the size, with about one fourth of the clarity.

The aim of the book is to make clear not only what the French Revolution meant to France, but what it meant to the whole of the world. Scientifically, as we have often had occasion to remark, the Revolution of 1789 was more than a French revolt; it was a European revolt that broke out in France, and it was hated by the old aristocracies as they had never hated anything before. That it was French in form was all to the good; it gave the event a clarity of view, a logical working out of first principles, such as no other revolution had quite accomplished. And if some of the ideas of the Revolution were checked in their development they were never completely lost sight of. Moreover it gave to France that sense of personal self-respect and independence which the French people have never lost. If it did not give the French the degree of political equality that might have been given, it did give a sense of social equality which in its working out has proved to be of greater value.

M. Herriot is quite definite in pointing out the underlying international character of the revolution, occurring as it did when the old and the new order stood most sharply defined. There is acknowledgement to other countries for their influence in creating the revolution, particularly to England and the United States of America. Paine and Priestley have a chapter to themselves, and others outside France have due mention. Our modern ideas—the care of the poor and the sick as part of the functions of the State, the education of the people, equality regardless of colour, sect, "race," or wealth, the right of a people to remove and to remake governments, the cultivation of science—all these and other reforms date from a period which brought from our own Wordsworth the tribute that great as it was to be then alive, "To be young was very heaven."

## Highways and Byways in English History

### II.—THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH AND THE END OF THE MIDDLE AGES

MEDIEVAL Catholicism was not only a body of dogma taught by authority. It was part and parcel of the feudal system. The most important result of the establishment of Christianity in England was not to improve the morals of the people (there is no evidence that the English after their conversion were more kindly, more chaste, more sober, or more peaceful than before) but to introduce into the English social system a new and immensely powerful feudal class in the shape of the Catholic clergy and monks. The very first years of Augustine's mission saw the foundation of the sees of Canterbury, Rochester and London, and their endowment with lands and possessions by King Ethelbert. In every Christianized kingdom one or more episcopal see was similarly created and endowed.

One theme runs like a *leit motiv* through the whole of medieval history as seen through the medium of contemporary monastic writers, namely the supreme importance attached by clerics to the conservation of Church property and the punctual payment of Church dues of every sort, together with the chronic failure of the same clerics to render services commensurate with the revenues they enjoyed. Bede, writing about 734, tells us of villages in his native Northumbria never visited by a bishop or priest, which nevertheless are forced to pay the bishop his dues, and of numberless monasteries where the monastic life is conspicuous by its absence. Alcuin, the friend of Charlemagne, writes later in the same century:—

Throughout the churches of Christ teachers of truth have perished; almost all follow the vanities of the world, and have in hatred the discipline of their rule.

Complaints of this or the like nature recur in century after century until they get monotonous. The answer of Richard Cœur-de-Lion, whether authentic or not, when reproved for his pride, covetousness and lechery, indicates the general reputation enjoyed by the monks and clergy:—

I give my pride to the proud Templars, my covetousness to the Cistercian monks, and my lechery to the prelates of the Church.

There were, of course, recurrent reform movements (Cluniac, Cistercian, Franciscan, Dominican), but they did not substantially alter things. By the time of Chaucer the worldiness of the religious orders is simply taken for granted.

The character given to rulers in medieval chronicles depends more on their attitude to Church interests than on anything else. To the chroniclers the Norman Conquest of England is good, not because it benefited the English people, but because it increased the wealth and power of the Church, and because William, though he "let man build castles and miserably swink the poor," endowed monasteries generously, and was "mild to the good men that loved God." From the point of view of the wretched people who lived under them, all the Norman kings were much of a muchness. All contemporary chroniclers represent the time as one of grievous taxation and recurrent famine. But William Rufus, because he was on bad terms with the Church and laid hands on ecclesiastical property, gets a bad mark, while Henry I., who from the point of view of the people was no better, but made it up with the Church, gets a good mark.

Admirers of the Middle Ages often insist on the part played by the Church in the abolition of slavery and serfdom. Contemporary evidence shows, on the contrary, that ecclesiastical bodies were most reluctant to liberate their serfs, and that such liberation was regarded as a culpable frittering away of Church property. William of Malmesbury writes of a certain Bishop of Wells and Abbot of Bath:—

He would not be dissuaded, even on his deathbed, from manumitting outright serfs on the abbey lands, thereby setting his successors an example not to be imitated.

We are often told, again, that the Church afforded a ladder by which serfs could rise to high distinction. Such cases occurred, but were quite exceptional. As a rule, the ordination of the sons of serfs without the consent of their lord was forbidden; and consent had to be paid for.

The avarice and corruption of the Papacy itself were of course a byword. The Church in fact stood to other feudal dignitaries of that day much as the great financiers of our day stand to smaller capitalists. She was the triton among the minnows. The comparison of the Church to a financial house is more than a metaphor. Though usury was forbidden by canon law, it was practised, at least from the thirteenth century on, not only by Jews, as is often supposed, but by Italian merchants with the connivance and for the profit of the Papacy. These merchants were known as Lombards, or Cahorsins from their colony at Cahors in France. In 1235, according to Matthew Paris:—

Roger, Bishop of London, a man well lettered and religious, issued a general anathema against all such, and charged them straightly to begone from the City of London, which heretofore had been immune from such a pest. But they, confident in Papal protection, besought the Court of Rome that the said Bishop

should be peremptorily cited overseas to appear before judges who were friends to the Cahorsins, and whom they themselves had chosen at their will, and there to answer for the wrong done to the Pope's merchants. However, the Bishop, choosing rather like Shem to cover his father's nakedness than like Ham to uncover it, let the hubbub subside quietly.

Such was the international racket which dominated the Age of Faith.

It is interesting to trace the slow emergence in the later Middle Ages of the forces which at last overthrew the Catholic Church in England. The beneficiaries of medieval Catholicism, the upper clergy and monks, could hardly be expected to avow disbelief in it. Those whom it exploited were for the most part too crushed and too deliberately kept in ignorance to question it. But there were exceptions. Those among the exploited classes, peasants, traders, and even poorer clergy, who retained some power of thought became the heretics of that day, and though not Freethinkers, forerunners of Freethought.

We do not hear of heresy in England till the reign of Henry II.; and then it is a foreign importation. In 1166 some thirty Cathari from Germany were arrested and brought before a synod of bishops at Oxford. The Cathari, also called Paulicians, and in France Albigenes, are said to have rejected the Old Testament, infant baptism, the eucharist, purgatory, prayers for the dead, prayers to the saints, and animal food, and to have preferred virginity to marriage. This last was made an excuse by the orthodox for attributing to them all manner of profligacy. Those arrested at this time were condemned to be branded on the forehead, stripped to the waist, and flogged out of the town. Orders were given that none should succour them on pain of death; and they perished miserably of cold and hunger. Catharism never cut much ice in England.

Interesting light is thrown on the claim of the Church to have promoted social justice, by a dispute in 1280 between the Abbot of Burton-on-Trent and his tenants at Mickleover, Derbyshire. The tenants claimed exemption from certain feudal services; and the matter came into court. The judges decided for the Abbot, who proceeded to punish the tenants for their presumption by sending and driving off all their cattle. The tenants appealed to the King, Edward I., who ordered the cattle to be restored. The Abbot not only ignored the King's writ, but evicted ten of the men from their homes. A second and third writ from the King were also ignored. Some of the men sued the Abbot for theft. He answered that what he had taken was his own, since they were serfs and owned nothing but their bellies. One by one the villagers submitted and craved pardon, and on solemnly acknowledging that they were serfs at the will of the Abbot, were given back their homes and cattle and let off with fines. Two, more obstinate than the rest, were put in the stocks and paid a heavier fine. It was a serious matter to sue an Abbot in those days.

There were also chronic disputes between feudal lords, above all Bishops and Abbots, and towns situated on their estates, of whose growing liberties the great men were very jealous. "Where there is a corporate town," complains one chronicler, "the people wax fat, the king fearful, the priesthood faint."

The real struggle began after the great plague, or Black Death, of 1348. The whole medieval order reeled under the blow. With the population reduced by plague, the lords of the soil suddenly found themselves short of tenants and labourers. Rents fell and wages rose. In such a situation lay landowners, to-

gether with the rising merchant class who were beginning to acquire landed estates, were strongly inclined to listen to the doctrines of John Wycliffe, who taught that an unrighteous clergy had no title to property, and that the civil power might lawfully take away the lands of Bishops and Abbots and give them to the laity. John Ball carried the argument further, arraigned the whole feudal system, and by his preaching contributed to the great Peasant Revolt of 1381. This was not only a peasant revolt, but a rising of the unprivileged classes in town and country against the feudal order. A special object of fear and hate on the part of the rebels was the Archbishop of Canterbury, Simon of Sudbury, whom they seized and beheaded at the Tower of London. To the Archbishop's threat of a papal interdict they replied that they feared neither interdict nor Pope—a notable sign of the extent to which the medieval Church had lost its hold on the masses. At the same time the townsmen of St. Albans and Peterborough took occasion to enforce on the Abbots of those places the renunciation of the feudal privileges which they enjoyed. After the suppression of the revolt, fifteen townsmen of St. Albans were hanged; and their fellows, who had taken down the bodies for burial, were forced by order of the King, Richard II., to hang them up again to decompose till they dropped.

The Peasant Revolt frightened the great lay lords out of any sympathy they may have felt for Wycliffe. But the idea of disendowing the Church took root among the smaller landowners and townsmen, and was not allowed to rest. The House of Commons raised the question again and again. We have a graphic description of a clash between the Commons and the Church in 1404:—

There arose a great dispute between the clergy and the laity, the king's knights affirming that they had often gone forth for the king, and with the king, against rebels and enemies, and had not only spent their substance lavishly, but also hazarded their bodies in many perils and labours, while the clergy sat at home at ease and helped the king not at all. To this my Lord of Canterbury answered, that the clergy had always paid as much to the king as the laity, and furthermore, their tenants followed the king to wars and perils in no less number than the tenants of lay fiefs. And besides all this, they offered masses and prayers for him night and day. At this the Speaker of the knights showed openly by his face and voice that he rated the prayers of the Church but cheap. "Now," said my Lord of Canterbury, "I see plainly whither the realm is going, when prayers, by which God is wont to be entreated, are discounted and rated cheap. Yet thou, who ratest cheap the profession of the clergy, think not that thou shalt rob the possessions of the Church unpunished, for if Canterbury liveth, thou shalt pay dear for aught thou takest of his.

This Archbishop was Thomas Arundel, chief author of the bloody statute *De Hæretico Comburendo*. He was supported by the King and Lords; and a few years later the Commons were peremptorily ordered not to raise the subject of Church lands again. Being then in a very real sense the Lower House, they obeyed. Nevertheless the old order was mortally sick. In the next article we shall see how it came crashing down at the Reformation.

ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON

(To be continued)

\* Knights of the shire, i.e., the House of Commons.

All reformations begin from the laity; the priests point us out the way to heaven with their fingers, but stand still themselves.—*Goldsmith*.

<sup>1</sup> "Communia plebis tumor, regis timor, sacerdotum tepor." I have tried to preserve the alliteration in English.

## David Hume

BORN 1711. DIED 1776

"THERE never was sich anither toon for whuskey and reeleejun as Edinbro'! Look at her Kirk-Steeples glintin in the sun! Man isna she graund?" said a Highland voice in my ear, nearly fifty years ago.

I stood, like Moses, viewing the landscape o'er, when I was thus addressed by a Guide, anticipating hire, on the top of Calton Hill.

Out of work, owing to a coal strike, and not being a stranger to Edinbro', I declined his offer.

But he, unengaged for days, pleaded—"Wunna ye let me gang roun' wie ye jist for ma lit meat an' drink?" I was alone and his offer appealed to me. But it held in it elements of danger! After parleying with him, however, I stipulated, if he could forget he was a guide, and speak openly and freely as a man and a brother, that I would agree to provide his food and 2s. 6d., at least, for the day. And that beyond my own desire to visit David Hume's grave, and that of Grey Friar's Bobby, I should leave the unveiling of the city to him. At my mention of David Hume a strange light came in my adopted brother's eyes which I failed to comprehend.

David's grave lay a few hundred yards away, in an old burial ground, on the eastern slope of Calton Hill. And there I began one of the most interesting days it has ever been my good fortune to spend.

A plain Roman tomb, with an inscription, similar to the letter-heading gracing this article. Only that and nothing more. I asked my friend if he had anything to add. He smiled and soon made me understand the strange light I had seen in his eyes. He made a very fine estimate of Hume, dealing briefly with "Immortality," "Miracles," "Animal Intelligence," and "Politics." And requested me, if I was interested, to ask him questions as we explored the city. I congratulated him on his address. He replied in a canny way—"Ye forget a'm no a bit Guide bodie the day!"

As we strolled between interesting places, rarely visited, I learned a good deal about my companion. He had been a soldier, an officer's orderly, in various parts of the world—Egypt, India, China, etc. His Captain, a Berwickshire man, an admirer of David, encouraged him to read Hume. "The Captain was an awfu fine fellow an' a' started reading Hume jist tae please him. But I got interested in Hume, and I kept on reading him tae please masel. I had the run of the Captain's library."

That young David Hume ever had any playmates is hard to imagine. He was certainly a peculiar child. In the opinion of his mother—"Our Davie's a fine goodnatured crater, but uncommon wake minded." To the first part of her estimate his whole life goes in support of it. He came as near perfection, said an accomplished lady, as human frailty would permit. His goodness "too good to be true," became a joke. "Saunt Dauvid," chalked playfully on the corner of his house, elicited from him—"waur men than me, Janet, hae been ca'd Saunts afore noo," to calm his weeping housekeeper. To the second part of his mother's estimate his whole life proves the contrary. Scotland never bore a stronger minded son.

Hume aimed at truth. And, being an honest man, he fearlessly told the truth to his fellows. He is very sceptical, not because he wished to be, but because scepticism is characteristic of truth. Of speculative comfort he has none to offer. Kant, a German of Scottish descent (said he was awakened by Hume from a dogmatic slumber) is credited with "positive results"—with centralizing the intelligence in the reason or soul, etc. But after reading *The Critique of*

*Pure Reason, The Critique of Practical Reason, and The Critique of Judgment*, what reward have we? Kant's metaphysical conceits, like the revelations of devout and learned, are all but stories which, awoke from "dogmatic slumber," he told his fellows, and to sleep returned. Speculative comfort is to be found in Kant for those who need it. Strangely as it may appear, to some, my friend told me that amongst Buddhists in the Far-East, Hume's treatment of "Immortality" interested them.

In the following observations I will try to give a faithful record of his address at the tomb and in conversation as we wended our way about the city, adding only a few quotations in support of it:

Before venturing (he said) to give you my brief sketch of Hume, I must ask you to excuse my dialect. I can still write good English, but I can think and speak best in my own dialect. For many years visitors have expected me doing it, so ma voice has got "subdued, like the dyer's hand"—ye ken th' lave! The following is a translation:—

First then: "Immortality." We call the sum of our physical existence, a body, and the sum of our mental existence, a soul. But we have no more reason in the latter case than we have in the former to suppose that there is anything beyond the mere name. Identity seems an everchanging thing here. Memory alone seems our only connecting link. And even it is a fallible one. Indeed Hume shows that all the subtle questions concerning personal identity can never possibly be decided, and are to be regarded rather as grammatical than as philosophical difficulties.

What impressed the Buddhists he met with, was Hume's argument, "What is incorruptible must be ingenerable. The soul, therefore, if immortal, existed before our birth, and if the former existence noways concerned us, neither will the latter." Many dread being unconscious after death. But according to Hume, whether we have souls or not, unconsciousness is like to be our fate.

Of miracles. Miracles may be anything wonderful inside the "Order of Nature." Of miraculous events outside the "Order of Nature," we have no evidence. "To Auld Davie, if a thing happened it couldna be a meracle!"

Of Animal Intelligence: says Hume—"no truth appears to me more evident, than that the beasts are endowed with thought and reason as well as men."

Every one familiar with animals will, I think, support him here. Hume perceived in his day the value of "Comparative Psychology." And Biologist and Comparative Psychologist, to-day, cannot deny him their support. Holding such belief that we still treat animals as we do is, to some of us, passing strange.

We reckon ourselves their superiors on account of our intelligence. They have only got instinct. But what are hereditary mental tendencies but instincts? What is the difference between a man of genius and a clever man? We cannot make genius by education. We can only educate the tendencies we possess. The strong innate tendencies of a man of genius, what can we call them but instincts? Our loose employment of the term instinct is to be deplored.

We speak glibly of the lower animals. Are they lower? Religions have lowered animals in the selfish interests of man. Hume understood animals because he loved all creatures great and small. He took his stand amongst them, gladly, as one of them, preferring their company to that of the angels!

Politically Hume was Liberal in youth, Conservative in age.

"The slaving poor," he tells us, "are incapable of any principles"; and that "gentlemen may be converted to true principles, by time and experience." In Hume's time Scotland held but two classes—gentle-

men of rank and the slaving poor. No Tory middle class like that of England.

Shall we wait for the conversion of gentlemen to true principles, or for the slaving poor becoming democratic enough to govern justly? Whichever it be "let moderation rule in all your political controversies," says Hume.

I agree with him. I do not wish to see the distant step. Hope deferred maketh the heart sick! The present time is ours. Let us make the most of it!

Let us drain deep the Cup while yet we may,  
For when the wings of Night veil kindly Day  
We shall be driven from the Tavern's warmth,  
To wander on our dark and lonely way.

So we came to the end of a perfect day! Necessity compelled me to leave the city at 5.30 a.m. next day. My friend said he would meet me in the Waverley Restaurant, and we would have a wee-doch-an-doris. He wanted to show me one of his greatest delights. He awaited me with a wee doggie which had a taste for lump sugar. An agreeable, intelligent little beast named Davie—after David Hume!

GEORGE WALLACE

### Prayer and Mr. Reckitt

MR. MAURICE RECKITT'S courteous letter about Prayer deserves notice. Freethinkers must be excused if, instead of accepting the *ipse dixit* of individuals they take their views of religious teaching from (1) Christ's alleged instructions; (2) the Christian creeds; and (3) centuries of Christian teaching and practice. Let me say that Freethinkers do not repudiate their principles as stated in our official declarations and exemplified in the public life and conduct of ordinary members of our societies.

Whatever views Mr. Reckitt may hold about Prayer, we are justified in claiming that "what Christian tenets really profess" (to use Mr. Reckitt's phrase) include much more than that Christians "should do the purpose of God." Also Christians most certainly do not confine their prayers to petitioning "for God's blessing on an enterprise." Nor did the alleged teaching of Jesus suggest such limitations as the only excuse or occasion for prayer.

Mr. Reckitt seems to forget that the model of what a prayer should contain (as given by Jesus in "The Lord's Prayer") not only says, "Thy (God's) will be done," it also asks for the most material of all earthly things: "Give us this day our daily BREAD": it also prays for "deliverance from evil," and for protection from temptation.

The Church Liturgy contains very many instances of prayers for specified material objects. Prayers for national victory and individual advantages have precious little to do with anything but personal desires. And where the prayers of opponents clash it is difficult to see where the "Will of God" is allowed for in such prayers. The phrase is mere verbiage at its best, if we believe that man's prayer is worthless if it asks God to do something God doesn't want to do, and only does it (like the Unjust Judge in the parable) because he is badgered and "importuned" by innumerable prayers.

But the Bible Promises give quite definite undertakings on which Christians have through the ages relied. For instance Matthew xxi. 21; Mark xi. 23-24; John xiv. 13 (this is the "Whatsoever Ye ask" text on which the Rev. Samuel Chadwick "claimed the promises," and was badly let down; see his *Path to Prayer*).

It seems from Mr. Reckitt's letter that things have changed since Bible days when man needed (and was promised) "Help from on High." Mr. Reckitt assures us nowadays it is man who must be on God's side, "not that God should be on his." This certainly is going a long way towards the truth, namely, that man is wasting his time by prayer.

Silent and powerless are all the gods;  
The Muses cease to sing when Homer nods;  
Yahveh's power wanes when Moses' hands sink down;  
When men cease at the pumps the sailors drown.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH

### "The Significance of Oscar Wilde"

THAT Oscar Wilde was "a wit, a scholar, a poet and an apostle of beauty" few will be concerned to deny; but the contention of Mr. Du Cann that he was "not a corruptor of youth," will hardly be accepted by those who recall his extraordinary career and the tragedy of his trial.

Mr. Du Cann states: "we have grown less cruel to homosexuals, and if Wilde were tried to-day at the Old Bailey, it is probable that he would not be sent to prison at all."

It does not, however, appear that this offence is regarded as venial, or is treated with less judicial severity now-a-days. In some half a dozen cases recently reported the offenders, all clergymen, received sentences ranging from four years' penal servitude to seventeen months' imprisonment.

That the Marquis of Queensbury should vehemently object to his youthful son's intimate association with Wilde was only to be expected; but parental remonstrances and injustices were unheeded. Lord Alfred was, no doubt, infatuated by his brilliant and cultivated companion, and I remember, apropos the paternal protests, his saying to Oscar: "You would not have me forsake my artistic perceptions?" To this the reply was:

"Surely not my boy." Queensberry, having failed to influence his son, attempted more drastic measures, he wrote defamatory postcards to Wilde and, in company with an old friend of mine named Frank Cobbet, was used to lie in wait for him in Albermarle Street, with the intention of inflicting personal chastisement.

Oscar was wary, however, and when on business bent reconnoitred from the convoy of a hansom-cab. Wilde's deplorable association with youths of low degree was a feature of his trial, and I recall the examination of one of these. The lad was diffident and embarrassed, and Carson said gently, "Now don't mind, just tell us what happened when you went to his home." The answer, which is unprintable, caused a shudder in court. The police were, no doubt, aware of Wilde's reputation, as they were of Alfred Waterhouse Somerset Taylor, the young man who was convicted with him.

The characters of the frequenters of this ex-public school-boy's luxurious flat in Carlisle Place, were sufficiently notorious; but the fear that proceedings might implicate people of social and political distinction was a deterrent to action.

Lord Alfred may have, it seems, been influenced by undesirable associates at Winchester, but in later life he disavowed, and became averse, to certain practices. It was owing to his refusal to permit *The Academy* to become a medium of propaganda for them that caused his rupture with Robert Ross, who was, probably, the original of "Arthur Wilmot" in *Sinister Street*.

Wilde's attitude to women was one of toleration; to the poet Theodore Wratislaw, he said, "Women are all very well for day-time conversation, but for the night, give me a beautiful boy whom I can hold in my arms all night and talk to intellectually in the morning."

I have written this brief "summing-up" as a sincere admirer of Lord Alfred's genius; his work is a delight to all lovers of poetry.

In conclusion it may be said that pederasty has not infrequently been associated with genius, and that in classic times it was regarded otherwise than now. The heroic Theban Legion of Epaminondas was united in its brotherhood, as were Harmodius and Aristogeiton, the first Athenians to be distinguished by the erection of public statues in their honour.

EDGAR SYERS

## Correspondence

THY SERVANT SAMUEL PEPYS

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—I was very pleased to read Mr. William Kent's letter to-day. I do not suggest for a moment that the Editor of *John O'London's Weekly* is not speaking the truth, but it seems an extraordinary coincidence that of the millions of letters that travel through the post without being lost, just one of the few honest ones that stood up for Atheism should get lost. I wonder where it went to! *John O'London's Weekly*, like all the others, ceaselessly attacks Freethought, directly and by implication. The only bright spot on a thoroughly rotten show was that the Editor allowed one letter to be printed in the cause of Rationalism, Science and Common Decency. If Lynd (the parson's son) is to be allowed to say what he likes about Atheists, however stupid it may be, surely it would only be elementary justice that Atheists should have the right to answer him? What amazes me is that while he was sufficiently ill-informed to produce the "matted muck" complained of, there was nobody in the Editorial department on that occasion with sufficient brain-power to stop it.

I also should have appreciated Mr. Kent's talk on Pepys very much, and should probably have heard it if it had not been for the antics of "Old Nasty." I know the prayer for Samuel Pepys quite well, and I also know something about Samuel Pepys' work for the Navy, but I cannot see a ghost of a connexion between Pepys' genius for Naval Administration and his beliefs about the supernatural. Pepys would have been just as great a Secretary of the Admiralty if he had been an Atheist; and Pepys was not quite so religious as some people imagine.

DONALD DALE

## THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE U.S.S.R.

SIR,—In your issue of March 17, Mr. Archibald Robertson says: "I will tell Mr. Kerr a secret: if he really wants to know why I put my money on Soviet Russia, it is because she has based her entire economic, political and cultural life on scientific materialism."

I presume Mr. Robertson means the same thing that he calls in his book "dialectical materialism." He there defines its principles as follows:—

"First, all things change. Secondly, Dialectical Materialism teaches that every change of quantity, when it reaches a certain point, produces a change of quality. Thirdly, ideas are the product of life and of material conditions. And fourthly, theory is always to be tested by practice."

The objection to dialectical materialism is that, like most phrases of Marxists, it may mean anything whatever. Mr. Chamberlain would probably agree with every word of the above.

In his book on *Power*, Bertrand Russell quotes with strong approval the following from Eugene Lyons:—

"Where there is only one employer, namely, the State, meekness is the first law of economic survival. Where the same group of officials wields the terrible power of secret arrests and punishments, disfranchisement, hiring and firing, assignment of ration categories and living space—only an imbecile or someone with a perverted taste for martyrdom will fail to kow-tow to them."

There is a paragraph that really does mean something. Let Mr. Robertson try his teeth on that.

R. B. KERR

This is true liberty, when freeborn men,  
Having to advise the public, may speak free;  
Which he who can, and will, deserves high praise;  
Who rather can, nor will, may hold his peace.

Milton (from Euripides)

## Obituary

WILLIAM POWELL RUDD

WITH extreme regret we have to announce the death of William Powell Rudd, well known in business and sporting circles of Luton, which took place on March 10 in his 69th year. He was one in a family of Freethinkers with a record of interest and usefulness in the cause which goes back for many years, and includes personal contact with leading lights of the Freethought movement who visited Luton in the past. Although suffering acute pain before the end, he never wavered in his beliefs or principles, and among his last conscious thoughts were his wishes for cremation and a Secular Service. The remains were cremated at Golders Green Crematorium on Thursday, March 14, and the ashes taken to Luton, and interred in the General Cemetery, where before relatives and a large assembly of local sympathizers a Secular Service was read by the General Secretary of the N.S.S.

To the surviving members of the family we offer sincere condolence in their loss.—R.H.R.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4 by the first post on Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

## LONDON

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KINGSTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place) : 6.30, A Lecture.  
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WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 12 noon until 6 p.m. Various Speakers.

## INDOOR

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Lamb and Flag, James Street, opposite Bond Street Station) : 7.0, Mr. Archibald Robertson—"Obstacles to World Peace."

## COUNTRY

## INDOOR

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, corner of Islington) : 7.0, Messrs. G. Thompson and J. V. Shortt.

## OUTDOOR

BATH (The Fountain) : 6.30, Monday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.  
CHESTER-LE-STREET (The Bridge) : 11.0, Sunday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Bigg Market) : 6.30, Sunday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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