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*Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums,  
Letters to the Editor, etc.*

Views and Opinions

Man and Religion

I AM returning to the subject of last week's notes for two reasons. One is that it is a subject in which I have always been very much interested, and the second reason is that everyone else ought to be interested in it. I am quite sure that if we thought evolution instead of merely doing it lip-homage, and if we had a scientific conception of "mass psychology" instead of identifying it, as many do, with a mass of people shrieking together the same prepared "slogan," we should recognize that the present really does grow out of the past, and that in physical structure, our habits, our ideas and our institutions the process is one of continuous adaptation of inherited structures and forms of thought to changing conditions. A tolerably sound recognition of these truths would awaken us to the fact that the tools we use, and must use, are none of the best. We are accustomed to established institutions and there is at best an unwillingness and at worst an illogical objection to their removal or modification. We do not say exactly that what always has been must remain, but we shirk their removal with all the fear that a timid man feels in passing through an unknown wood on a dark night. Our thought is saturated with superstitious implications that go back to the most primitive times, and the words we use, however we may intend them to mean one thing, most often convey a disguised hint of something quite different. I have been stressing these things for more than a generation, and, with regard to words at least, I am pleased to find in the opening of Mr. A. P. Herbert's new work, *What a Word*, the following:—

All day, and every day, words matter. Though you live in a barrel and speak to nobody but yourself, words matter. For words are the tools of thought, and you will find often that you are thinking badly because you are using the wrong tools, trying to bore a hole with a screw-driver, or draw a cork with a coal-hammer.

*Freethinker* readers will recognize here a counsel that has been said very often in these columns. The persistence of animistic language as a cause of the prevalence of muddled thinking will supply justification for the repetition.

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How Religion Lingers

Here is a good example of the way in which the wrong use of words, in this case backed up by a wrong idea, confuses, first of all, a teacher and afterwards those who are accustomed to look to him for instruction. It is a passage taken from an article by the Rev. Dr. Selbie in the *Christian World* for October 24. Dr. Selbie is trying to show that no matter what we say or do, no one can deny the "reality" of religion. That to begin with, involves enough confusion to furnish material for at least a couple of articles. No sensible person has ever disputed the reality of religion, even though millions have questioned its truth. But to call religion an illusion is not to question its reality; actually it admits it. An illusion is as much a fact as the Matterhorn. A vision of an angel is as much a fact as King George. Facts may belong to different categories, but all experience, no matter what its nature, comes under the general classification of facts. It is not on the existence of religion as a fact that gives rise to difference and discussion, but how it is to be interpreted. Dr. Selbie appears to take an enormous amount of trouble to misstate the case.

Accidentally, I think, Dr. Selbie states a truth which rests upon a sound anthropological foundation, and which has an important social significance. Working on quite the wrong thesis that man cannot deny the reality of religion, he says that:—

Driven out of one door, religion comes in at another. Fascism and Communism become religions for some, while others worship the world, the flesh and the devil, as men always have done.

This contains a truth, but it is not the truth that Dr. Selbie aims at stating. What he says is that man must have a religion; what he proves is that the religious frame of mind, and the religious interpretation of things are not easily got rid of. I said this last week when I tried to make it clear that it is only a few of those who reject formal religious beliefs and definite religious doctrines, who arrive at a completely non-religious, that is, Atheistical frame of mind. I am not sure if this is what Samuel Taylor Coleridge had in mind in a much quoted passage in a letter to Allsop, that there was not one man in a thousand who had enough strength of mind or goodness of heart to be an Atheist, but the statement is very true. Real Atheism, an Atheism that eliminates supernaturalism completely from philosophy, science, ethics and sociology, requires a clarity of mind that very, very few appear to possess. In more than one of my books I have given scores of illustrations of

how common it is to find a religious interpretation of something or the other with those who look with contempt upon the more definite forms of religious belief. Forms of thought persist long after the explicit statement of them have been consciously rejected. The man who does not see this with crystal clearness and who is not constantly on his guard with relation to it will never be more than a "fumbler" in the world of social and religious thought.

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#### Fact and Fallacy

In the passage cited, Dr. Selbie, probably without seeing it, certainly without noting it, states a pregnant fact, and one which has important intellectual and sociological implications. The truth here has already been stated, and it is, not that men cannot do without some religion, but that they cannot easily get rid of the frame of mind which has been developed by the prevalence of religious beliefs. Stated thus we have an actual fact which we must face and explain. The existence of the fact need cause no surprise. Mental habits are formed in the same way as physical ones, but they are more elusive in their manifestations. No one marvels that when an animal has been doing the same thing generation after generation a fixed habit is the result; nor is there the slightest cause for wonder when for thousands of generations mankind has everywhere been thinking along the same lines, and when the products of this thinking have been incarnated in institutions, that the mental habits so formed are as tenacious of existence as physical ones. Dr. Selbie illustrates this when he finds himself unable even to think of man without a religion. In others it is illustrated by the assumption that some sort of a religion man must have; and by others in the transference to non-religious fields of essentially religious tendencies and forms of thought.

This, indeed, is one of the outstanding dangers of to-day. For centuries there was going on a fight, first in a vague and fitful manner, later in a more settled and precise form against the claims of a Church—Christian or other—to control completely the actions and the thoughts of the individual. Substantially that question—so far as a Church is concerned—has been decided in favour of the individual. But late years have seen this question reborn in the name of a mystical entity called the "State"; and is not easy to see just wherein lies the essential difference between the claims of the Church and the claims often set forth on behalf of the State. The uniformity of belief insisted on, the complete obedience claimed, the estimated value of the individual in proportion as he blindly serves the "State" do not differ in any real sense from the attitude and aims of the Church. It is actually the same frame of mind that once functioned on behalf of the conception of an avowedly religious control of the social structure, now functioning on behalf of a theoretically (but largely theoretical only) secularized State. Driven by the sheer force of events to decline the expressed form of religious control, a particular, but common, type of mentality finds in the secular sphere that satisfaction which it can no longer get in the religious field.

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#### The Savage in our Midst

This is one example of a large number of instances in which one may trace the religious idea functioning in a professedly non-religious sphere. In politics we find men speaking of the "destiny of a nation" to do this or that, obviously beset by a conception based originally on the belief in some supernatural direction; we also have men who in private will be

strictly truthful and honourable, justifying falsehood and deceit on the ground of duty to the public—again a transference to the State of the same conception of duty that was once forced upon society by the Church. The Church has lost much of its coercive power, but the governing idea is only too often transferred to the State. Finally we have in ethics an attenuated supernaturalism shown in the dwelling upon "moral values" as though these belonged to a region inaccessible to natural science. In numerous other ways one may find the frames of mind induced by the long reign of supernaturalism continued in a disguised form. Psycho-analysis, which has for the first time established a scientific method of studying psychology, has taught us to look to the early years of the individual for an understanding of many of the mental states of the adult. It has also indicated that for the prevalence of individual traits, it is not enough to stop at infancy. We must go back to the early history of mankind, to racial history, for it is racial life that has created the institutions and beliefs which are operating on every child born into the world. The beliefs created in this manner are not easily displaced; they may be sublimated into something more useful and nearer the truth, but this is of necessity a process that takes time; and meanwhile the average mind continues to manifest inherited thought-forms in a way that prevents complete emancipation. It is not, then, because man is, as Dr. Selbie thinks, incurably religious that one can often find with avowedly non-religious people a religious mentality in operation. It is because religion is so old, and science is so new, because behind a few generations of comparatively scientific thought there lie the many thousands of generations of unscientific and religious thought, that so few men can say with truth that they are quite free from the influence of superstition.

Some of our leading anthropologists have called attention to the extent to which society is "honeycombed with superstitions," and the continuous danger this offers to the development of a genuinely civilized society. It is not merely the prevalence of crude superstitions such as fortune-telling, ghost-hunting, the belief in mascots, astrology, against which we have to be on our guard, but the danger of an outburst of many primitive feelings on occasions whenever society is subjected to unusual stress. It is then that the professional exploiters of the public, the short-sighted politician, the crude militarist, the highly-placed medicine-men, all find this sub-stratum of primitive thought and feeling an easy and profitable ground for exploitation. Scientific psychology should have killed for ever the belief that the mind works in watertight compartments. It does not. The human brain functions as a whole, and when that whole rests upon a mass of tendencies that may be so easily incited to activity in their most primitive form, the likening by Sir J. Frazer of society to a community living on the crust of a volcano that may at any moment break out into renewed activity, is full of deadly significance.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

After all, the most natural beauty in the world is honesty and moral truth; for all beauty is truth.

Shaftesbury.

In oratory, affectation must be avoided—it being better for a man by a native, and clear eloquence to express himself than by those words which may smell either of the lamp or inkhorn.

Lord Herbert of Cherbury.

## The Passing of Papal Power

"Man was once as a wild beast; he has become a moralist, a metaphysician, a poet, and an astronomer."

Shelley.

"The system which begins by making mental indolence a virtue, and intellectual narrowness a part of sanctity, ends by putting a premium on hypocrisy."

John Morley.

THE Pope of Rome must always be of interest to Freethinkers. For he is the ecclesiastic who addresses the largest congregation in the world. Compared with the Papal dignity other archbishops seem parochial. Using the abracadabra of his business, a Pope utters words which are heard from Bolivia to Bermuda, from Stockholm to the South Seas. The rhetoric may be enfeebled and the platitudes exhausted, but the Romish patriarch possessed, until recently, something of the tragic character of Tithonus, "immortal age beside immortal youth." And, now, the winnowing fan of time is affecting his unique position, and the voice at which monarchs once trembled has become a whimpering whisper of ordinary old age.

This is not the opinion of opponents only, but the considered statement of a brother ecclesiastic, and a distinguished member of his own Church. The Romish Archbishop of Westminster, the Most Reverend Arthur Hinsley, speaking recently at Golders Green, let the cat out of the bag. He was attempting to answer the pertinent question, "Why doesn't the Pope stop the Italo-Abyssinian War?" Here is the Archbishop's explanation of the Pope's failure taken from the *News-Chronicle*, October 14. "The Pope," he said, "is a helpless old man with a small police force to guard himself and the priceless treasures of the Vatican. His neighbour is armed with every modern instrument of force. Excommunication would not only make war with Italy inevitable, but lead to a fierce anti-clerical outbreak. The Pope is not a member of the League of Nations, to which, through Italy's express stipulation, he was not invited."

Such a confession of failure is absolutely astounding in the case of the head of the largest and most powerful of all the Christian Churches. The Pope's unique position with regard to the very large numbers of men and women who hold their rule of faith from the Romish Church is striking, but his pusillanimous conduct is in direct contradiction to the more manly attitude of his priestly predecessor in the far more troublesome days of the Great War, when a great part of the Christian world was engaged in wholesale murder. Unlike the leading ecclesiastics of the combatant nations, the present Pope's predecessor never made the silly mistake of including national flags and machine-guns among the sacred emblems of religion, nor did he sit on the fence like the present occupant of the throne of "St. Peter." On the contrary, he again and again deplored the awful waste of life among Christian peoples. That his warning was treated with scurvy contempt by Christians was not his fault, and the Pope was spared nothing that the energy of the militarist parties and the hypocritical indifference of the religious world could make him suffer. Publicly he stood, the King Lear of thankless and ungrateful children, a little shrill in his menaces, but keeping unimpaired the dignity of a paternity rejected. What a contrast to the undignified and cowardly Humpty Dumpty attitude of the present Pope, which shows more clearly than any words the ebb-tide of the political power of the Papacy, which once bestrode Europe like a Col-

ossus, and forced kings and princes to do its bidding.

The present paralysis of the once-powerful Romish Church has been a long and melancholy process. During many years the Papacy has been seeking the restoration of its temporal power, and the antics of its pious diplomatists are worth recording. As a means of rehabilitation, there was Cardinal Rampolla's prolonged flirtation in France with Republicanism and Socialism, which was later carried to Protestant England by Cardinal Manning, who, like a scarlet flamingo, fluttered the sedate doves of Trades Unionism. With the advent of the Great War all these alarms and excursions crumbled into nothingness, and in that terrible upheaval perished the hopes of the greatest and most powerful of all the Christian churches.

The decline and fall of this Church of Rome has been a slow process. There was a time when she was all-powerful. She once had her intellectual wing, her scholars, her statesmen, her thinkers, who found her borrowed mummeries and stolen creeds susceptible of mystical interpretation. The ignorant, bigoted evangelical party prevailed gradually over these, and exterminated them by fire and sword, rack and gibbet, leaving themselves always more ignorant and more bigoted than before. By slow and sure degrees the whole Roman Church was made over to their leprous likeness, and the period of decomposition had set in.

It required centuries to produce this dire result. The very triumphs of Freethought throughout Europe indirectly contributed to this end. Every Catholic who became a Freethinker assisted this disintegrating process. The more brains that were drawn out of the Great Lying Church the more did the huge mass part with its intellectual leaven, and tend to flatten down to a mere conglomerate mass of superstition and intolerance. What constitutes the obstructive character of the Roman Catholic Church is the wide abyss which now separates it from the highest intelligence around it; the live, alert brains of science, and the leaden, moveless stereotype of centuries-old dogmas. To-day the voice of the Pope, at which once kings trembled, is hushed to silence at the bidding of a mere political adventurer, who may be out of power before the next issue of the *Almanac de Gotha*. Even popes cannot fool all the people all the time, and onlookers may be increasingly reluctant to recognize Papal infallibility and temporal power in a situation which is far too reminiscent of a timid tradesman in the hands of racketeers.

In darkened and superstitious times the power of this Romish Church was very great, but her claws were cut by Voltaire and the Encyclopædists. At no time since the challenge of the great Freethinkers has the power of this persecuting Church been so unquestioned and unrestricted. There is a wholesome obstinacy in Freethinkers, and it always shows itself when the whip is cracked too loudly. France was rent in two by the degradation of Alfred Dreyfus, and the righteous indignation aroused by the shooting of Francesco Ferrer spread over the civilized world like a prairie-fire. Priestcraft can never do its worst again without instant challenge. Priestcraft has not had a safe seat on men's shoulders since the days of the French Revolution. It is less safe than ever to-day, when the chief Christian ecclesiastic appears to imagine that his principal concern in life is to safeguard "the priceless treasures of the Vatican," in the same way as a miser guards his gold. This happens, be it remembered, at a time when two Christian nations are arrayed for slaughter, and Europe itself is on the brink of widespread war. And the chief exponent of the "Religion of Love" is preoccupied with his

prayer book and his bank-book, especially his bank-balance. The amount must be considerable, for "Peter's Pence" have been collected for centuries, and priests have so many devious ways of exploiting innocent believers.

MIMNERMUS.

## A Naturalist and Immortality

(Concluded from page 684)

TOWARDS the end of his life Hudson wrote a book with the enchanting title *Far Away and Long Ago* (1918). It is a record of his youthful life, and it is enriched by the author's wisdom gained through frequent contact with the world in the open air. The last chapters are charged with deep emotional feeling; their sincerity cannot be denied, and although the subject of immortality takes up much space there is no definite affirmation of a belief in it. Mystic though Hudson was, he would not, in this question, allow his feelings to be the arbiter in a matter of speculation after prolonged contact with his own particular lovely facts of earth. A significant passage occurs on page 330,<sup>8</sup> and it must not be forgotten that this record is the transcribed thoughts of his own life at the age of fourteen: "Insensibly and inevitably I had become an evolutionist, albeit never wholly satisfied with natural selection as the only and sufficient explanation of the change in the forms of life. And again, insensibly and inevitably, the new doctrine has led to modifications of the old religious ideas, and eventually to a new and simplified philosophy of life. A good enough one so far as this life is concerned, but unhappily it takes no account of another, a second and perdurable life without change of personality." The word "unhappily" reads somewhat strangely coming from this writer, but we have given the quotation in full to avoid the charge of taking quotations from their context. We have already seen that at one stage in the *Odyssey* of Hudson, he cared for no other immortality than to be among natural objects as set down in *Hampshire Days*.

Our author's last work, *A Hind in Richmond Park*, is a case where, to recall a saying, the writer "sows not with the hand, but with the whole sack." There is in this final book a vast range of subjects, all treated with the characteristic independence of a man who relied always on himself. Somewhat relevant to the title of this essay is a passage on page 89,<sup>9</sup> which reads: "One must shake off the oppression, the curse of books, the delusion that they contain all knowledge, so that to observe and reflect for ourselves is no longer necessary." The coiner of this sentence was beyond the mesmerism by words from any source whatever. Further on in the book in a chapter entitled, "The Wilderness of the Mind," and with this we conclude our borrowing of light from a man who consistently followed truth, we find this illumination: "But I have long been convinced that there is nothing in this dim spot which men call earth, perhaps nothing in the entire universe, more marvellous than the mind in its secret doings; also that all the wonderful things, the apparitions, visitations and revelations, new and old, the messages and tidings of strange happenings in other worlds than ours, and in other states of being, are all, all to be found, if

properly looked for, in this same well-nigh unexplored wilderness of the mind."<sup>10</sup>

In a certain Japanese initiation the novice, towards the end of his probation, is sent on a journey up a steep hill, and on the path before he reaches the top there is a turning in which the climber encounters a mirror and sees himself. In a Greek initiation the candidate in the last stage is thrust into an empty dark room. Both these methods may have something to commend them, but whether Hudson knew of them or not in the passage we quote above, the naturalist had found himself, and it is just possible that he was aware of Max Stirner's work, *The Ego and His Own*.

Mr. Henry Williamson records in an article on Richard Jefferies how he visited the village of Broadwater in Sussex and went to the church at that place to find the grave of Jefferies. The gardener attendant, in course of conversation, stated that an old gentleman with a beard and the eyes of an eagle had told him that he would like to be buried near Jefferies when his time came. "In due course that old gentleman was buried here. He lies over there; you may have heard of him; his name was Hudson, and he came to Broadwater because his friend was buried here."

In the Naturalists' Library conducted by Sir William Jardine, and published in 1835, there is a series of birds, hand-coloured, beautiful to look upon, and a perpetual source of joy for the bird lover. This series is mentioned chiefly to record the thought of a hundred years ago of a writer on the elder Pliny. For an account of the prodigious works of this writer of antiquity, any reputable encyclopædia may be consulted, but in the series mentioned above, we find the following comments on an ancient student of birds: "In his religious principles he was above the grovelling and puerile superstitions of his age; but he was almost an Atheist, or at least he acknowledged no other deity than the world; and few philosophers have explained the system of Pantheism more in detail, and with greater spirit and energy than he has done, in the second book of his *History*. Notwithstanding his scepticism and his disbelief in the immortality of the soul, his morality, in so far as appears, was unimpeachable."

In what he wrote of visible nature and in his most intimate thoughts on life, there is, at least to the present writer, a strong bond of affinity between the classical Pliny and Hudson the naturalist. It is not possible with any pretence of intellectual honesty to assume dogmatic robes in pronouncing on an unprovable subject. Around the idea of living for ever in some other form are clustered many baneful influences which distort and destroy healthy mental life, and since at some time, all living beings will know as much or as little as those who have passed on, the thoughtful student will find help and good cheer from Hudson. He will almost imperceptibly lead the enthusiastic student to a wider and more considerate view of everything that lives, and at the same time teach the learner to stand on his own feet, and like Thoreau never to be lost. Against the unproven theory of immortality the naturalist in clear language puts forward the facts of life as he found them, and although his private life was not one of affluence, there is the steady beat of tranquillity throughout his work which gave him compensation and enabled him to leave the priceless heritage of earth wisdom to all who are content with one world at a time.

<sup>8</sup> *Far Away and Long Ago*, p. 330.

<sup>9</sup> *A Hind in Richmond Park*, p. 89.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, p. 237.

## Things Worth Knowing\*

### XI.

#### PATRIOTISM AND EMPIRE

LET us see for ourselves how the spirit called patriotism has always correlated itself with the forces of civic life. In the stormy generation in which we find Roman history taking something like clear shape among the receding mists of legend, we find on one and the same scene the play of egoism which shrinks from no extremes of tyranny within the society itself, and a vigour of patriotism which shirks no effort for the maintenance of the State against others.

Then none was for a party  
Then all were for the State.

So the great rhetorician makes his early Roman sing, confessing the stress of faction already in the days of decemvirs. But if the song were true, it could only be in the sense in which "all were for the State" . . . was one consistent with a constant readiness on the part of each well-to-do citizen to enslave his neighbours for debt. We see the poor farmer going loyally to war, along with or under his richer neighbour, helping him to defeat the traditional enemy, and returning to be cast into bondage for the debt he has been forced to incur after a previous campaign—forced, that is, by reason of the fact that his farming went to ruin in his absence, while the rich man's farm was tilled by his slaves and managed by his bailiffs. No enemy could have used the poor farmer worse; but the last thing he ever thought of—the one thing he never thought of—was to make common cause with his similarly mishandled congener in the rival State against the creditor class who beggared both alike. That grotesque acquiescence in a partnership from which the poor man derived only the passing gratification of a subterranean passion, while the rich man got that and his riches as well, is a sufficient proof of the strength of the habitual hallucination. The *nexus* could indeed resent his enslavement by his fellow-patriot; but nothing could alter his preconception of the sacredness of patriotism—that is, of the temper of enmity till death towards the whole of the other group, who at worst would but enslave him as a penalty for fighting against them, and who had never made any pretence of being his brothers. Such are the psychological roots of the fallacy we are considering. . . .

The last epoch of patriotic combination in our history is that of the war with France, begun in 1793, and carried on with intermissions till the final fall of Napoleon in 1815. And that epoch is still so near us in the spirit as well as in time, its affairs were carried on so much in the idiom of our own age, and by our own parliamentary methods, that it may specially well serve as test case. About its political outcome there is no question; it reduced to a small scope the play of intellectual criticism. Such a man as Coleridge, who in the early years of the war was on the critical side, but whose weaknesses steered him at length to that of convention and orthodoxy, could give thanks that the war had this unifying effect on the nation. . . . The one ideal was enmity to France, enmity to the Revolution, enmity to Napoleon; and whatever ways of thought were even dis-

tantly associated with the Revolutionary spirit and its French antecedents, were not merely discountenanced but defamed, and not merely defamed but forcibly interfered with, and wherever possible savagely punished; that is to say, the heightening of patriotism meant a heightening of domestic malice where any ground of strife remained.

This very suppression of the small minority, to begin with, is visibly a long stride in that backward movement which we shall see to be a normal result of prolonged war in a nation previously progressive. There is but one way, be it repeated, in which a whole community can be raised and bettered from within, and that way begins in the free play of criticism, of new thought as against the old. Right or wrong it must have a hearing; the alternative is not stand-still, but backing. And the sum of the rule of gag in the patriotic England of the Napoleonic age, whether we look at politics or at literature is just a lapse from a state of comparative advance and activity to one of paralysis and retrogression. . . .

It may be pleaded that these old judicial ferocities, infamous as they are, belonged to a period of intense strain and exasperation, in which the ruling class were in constant fear of such developments as they had seen in France, and that while their patriotism made them savage towards those whom they regarded as dangerous agitators, it did not stand for any lack of due sympathy with their fellow-citizens. Many people are ready thus to make excuses for cold British savagery on the part of the vowed guardians of pure justice, when they can see nothing but ground for perpetual vituperation in the savageries to which the French Revolution was driven by the very menaces and conspiracies of its enemies. But let the excuses pass and let us come to a crucial test. After the defeat of Napoleon, in 1815, all reasonable fear of the revolutionary spirit was at an end, in England above all countries. Yet when, on the stoppage of the war expenditure, and of the special demand for English products set up by the long disturbance of all industry on the Continent, a great distress fell upon industrial and agricultural England, it needed only the appearance of the suffering mass in the guise of famishing malcontents to arouse in the middle and upper class even such a hatred for their own poor as they had felt for the revolutionaries of France. Sympathy was their weakest sentiment, and those who felt it were as nothing in weight and numbers to the malignant well-to-do majority. Twenty years of nominal national union in enmity to another nation had left the wealthy not more but less capable of beneficent fellow-feeling for their own "kind" who had fought the fight with them. The English aristocrat had no more learned to care for his luckless countrymen than had Coriolanus in Republican Rome. The old psychological process had had the old result. A generation of indulgence for the principle of enmity, with the usual growth of militant fraternity *ad hoc*, had left society much less fraternal as regarded the works of peace and mercy and building-up than it had been a generation before.

The "Peterloo" massacre at Manchester in 1819 served to exhibit the measure of fraternity existing in the nation that had beaten Napoleon. When a vast meeting of unarmed and ordinary people had been brutally charged by cavalry, who sabred not only men, but women and children, Government and the Prince Regent applauded the act; and Lord Redesdale affirmed in a public letter that "every meeting for radical reform was not merely a seditious attempt to undermine the existing constitution of government by bringing it into hatred and con-

\* Under this heading we purpose printing, weekly, a series of definite statements, taken from authoritative works, on specific subjects. They will supply instructive comments on aspects of special subjects, and will be useful, not merely in themselves, but also as a guide to works that are worth closer study.

tempt, but was an overt act of treasonable conspiracy against the constitution of government, including the King at its head."

. . . The mere proof of the possession of superior power, a certificate which, as regards individuals, passes among civilized men as the ambition and the mark of the pugilist, or at best of the mere duellist or the mere athlete—this attestation made applicable to one nation as against another, is held to have in it something ethically ennobling; and the banal pride in it, dubbed "patriotism," passes for an incontestable virtue. Here is our ethical problem. . . . Tracing its psychological roots and connotations . . . we are already fully entitled to say that the whole *processus* is animalistic, and the associations vulgar. In the supreme case of Germany the vulgarity is fitly flagrant. The man of Blood and Iron, the strong man of the Carlylean gospel, the brutal wielder of brute force, was always a magnified flunkey, changing his livery thrice a day, playing the obedient giant to the King who signed the letters and made the moves the giant dictated. . . . It is perhaps not more vulgar than the phenomenon of royalism in England; that indeed could hardly be; but it is more gross and more primitive. . . . And patriotism gilds it all.

. . . Those who habitually make the assumption of the nobility and beneficence of the instinct . . . might be expected to acclaim it wherever it appears—in the affairs of other groups as well as in their own. . . . It is when we turn to Ireland that the ethical quality of the patriotic instinct reveals itself. If English patriots, so-called, had in them any pure sympathy for struggling patriotism, as such, any genuine moral inspiration for their own instinct, they would recognize in Irish nationalist aspirations the very virtue they profess to revere. These are the very circumstances in which from any point of view, patriotism must in justice be reckoned sanative. . . . But we know very well that the average Englishman had no more consideration for armed Fenianism than he has for unarmed Nationalism. The utter egoism, the unintelligent animalism of his instinct comes out the moment another man's instinct clashes with it. Patriotism for him means the hatred of another man's patriotism the moment they thereby incommode him, albeit they only ask him to give them in reality the rights he accords them in name. . . .

. . . Scratch the patriot and you find the pirate; test the devotee of freedom, and you find the insolent oppressor. . . . What other outcome should there be from the self-glorifying parade of a primeval instinct? If the braggart among men be an offence to the civilized moral sense, how shall nations satisfy the first moral principles of civilized ethics when they set to themselves the pose and the phrase of the braggart as a discipline and an ideal? Not from the thistles of the savage prime shall be gathered the fruits of international civility. If men, as constituents of nations, will not consent to think and reason for the whole as they do for themselves singly, they must fatally, as nations, sink to the moral level of the human animal, scientific only for the work of mischief, licensing itself to be brutal and irrational in mass while claiming to denounce brutality and to eliminate unreason in the individual. And the individual will all the while reflect the ideals of the mass.

*Patriotism and Empire* (1900), by JOHN M. ROBERTSON, pp. 14-20 and 25-31.

If I were an American, as I am an Englishman, while a foreign troop was landed in my country, I never would lay down my arms—never, never, never.—*Chatham*.

## Acid Drops

Some of our newspapers grow very indignant at the spectacle of the Italian army, furnished with tanks, aeroplanes, bombs, up to date guns and gas, fighting a people with few of any, and none of most, of these "civilized" weapons. We agree with the indignation expressed, but we wish it was more generally and more often manifested. For this method of conducting the military business is common to war all over the world and wherever it exists. There is not a nation in the world that does not try to get its enemy in a hopeless situation, outnumber it in men, use superior weapons wherever it can be done, and in general play the part of the big bully who does not give his opponent a fighting chance if it can be prevented. The avowed reason of this country for objecting to the abolition of military aeroplanes is that we need them for use on the "outposts of empire"—that is, for use against tribes that in relation to us are in the same position as are the Abyssinians in relation to the Italians.

So let us be intelligent in our indignation, and impartial in our condemnation. Modern war, as we have said hundreds of times, is a dirty, beastly, and an essentially cowardly business. It means, to-day more than ever, getting the enemy, if it can be done in a condition of hopeless inferiority in position with regard to numbers, equipment, position, and food, and then "go for him." In the words of one of our own admirals, the art of war is to get your enemy down and then "jump on his belly." If our papers would keep this well before the public they might do something materially to diminish the prospects of war.

It is good to learn from Mr. Baldwin that the increase in our armed forces is for defence. That is as it should be, and is on quite orthodox lines. For a country to arm for purposes of attack would be something quite unprecedented in the history of modern war. Before 1914 every country—even Germany—was arming purely in defence. To-day France is arming to defend itself against Germany; Germany is arming to defend itself against those who wish to keep her in subordinate position. Italy has armed to defend itself against Abyssinia, Britain is arming to defend herself against—? Everybody is arming for defence against everyone or someone else. But man is a reasoning being, and Mr. Baldwin evidently understands the kind of reasoning to which he is prone.

"A great patriot" was the expression generally used in the papers of the late Lord Carson, while his importing arms into Northern Ireland, and the drilling of bodies of armed men ready to oppose by force the will of the Imperial Parliament if it had declared Home Rule for the whole of Ireland, was announced as a "patriotic revolt." But in the case of Sir Roger Casement, who also tried to import arms into Ireland for the purpose of gaining Home Rule, and who also aimed at drilling bodies of armed men to resist the will of Parliament, the result was a trial and execution. "Patriotism" creates a queer and distorted sense of value. A fine illustration of this will be found in "Things Worth Knowing" in this issue.

The *Daily Sketch* has organized a committee for the investigation of Spiritualism. The Committee consists of Admiral Kerr, to represent the Navy, Ex-Superintendent Cornish to represent the police, Miss Clemence Dane to represent literature, Dame Sybil Thorndike, to represent the stage, Mr. Edward Shortt, to represent the law, and Mr. H. B. Lees-Smith with Dame Beatrix Lyall to represent "Public Service." The Boiler makers' Union, the Gas-Workers' Union, the Football Association, and others we might mention are unrepresented. Yet there is not a member of these bodies that would not be as well qualified to investigate Spiritualism as any of the ladies and gentlemen mentioned. For

so far as we know their qualifications for examining Spiritualism are absolutely nil. They will go into the investigation feeling that all they have to do is to see that no false figures are hidden under the sofa, and there are no bells concealed in the chimney of the séance. We shall be greatly surprised if they do not come out of the investigation beautifully and completely fooled.

It never appears to strike many people that in order to be able to investigate Spiritualism something about it should be known beforehand. In every other enquiry such knowledge would be taken as absolutely necessary. One must have qualifications to give an investigation value, and the qualifications must be relevant to the subject. Serving in the police-force, or at the bar, or performing on the stage, or being engaged in public service is of no value whatever. Previous knowledge of all that a particular subject involves would be required on every other subject. But this one which quite apart from fraud, involves questions of dissociation, of various kinds of automatisms, and of the nature of obscure, abnormal and pathological mental conditions, the most ignorant person seems qualified to "investigate." Still a newspaper must have stunts, and the editor of the *Daily Sketch* must have great faith in the stupidity of his readers.

It will be remembered by some that when Sir Oliver Lodge's son, Raymond, spoke from the spirit world to his father, he informed him that they had whisky and cigars in the "Summerland." According to the medium, Mrs. Estelle Roberts, this is not the case. She says that when a drunkard dies, he still longs for drink, but has to satisfy himself by getting near a drinker on earth, and "drawing from him the fumes that help him." Smelling a drunkard's breath must be a very queer sort of pleasure, but if Mrs. Roberts is right, as against Raymond, then we should imagine that public houses and distilleries must be chock-full of ghosts. The more one knows of the spirit-world the more one feels inclined to say, "Let's hope it isn't true."

We are indebted to the *Daily Express* for the information that the King dissolved Parliament in "sonorous and majestic" words. But the King's speech, as everyone knows, is written by his ministers. Still, we are quite ready to believe, so great is our faith in the "magic" of kingship, that even ordinary words when uttered by a King partake of that god-like qualities which have from the most primitive times clustered round a King.

We see that a book has been written about the King's dogs. We have not read it, but we should not be at all surprised to find that the King's spaniel has a dignified "yap" and his collie has a most majestic walk.

It is always a difficult matter to settle what is the criterion by which one book is judged worthy of publication and another ordered by a court to be destroyed. But the magistrate at Westminster Police Court has now provided us with one rule that may help towards a decision. In ordering the destruction of a book dealing with one aspect of the sex-question, Mr. Ronald Powell said that some parts of the book in question would "shock the conscience of those who have yet to be educated." Now we seem to be getting somewhere; for it is not likely that Mr. Powell used this expression in a sarcastic sense. Those who write for general reading should write for those who have yet to be educated. This was the rule that the late Lord Northcliffe laid down for his newspapers, and it is one that most papers, and a large number of writers, have found it profitable to adopt. Mr. Powell has at least clear ideas on the subject. Most writers appear to take the advice to heart. If authors want to be quite safe, let them write for the uneducated, but do not make the mistake of writing so that they will rapidly become the edu-

cated. Practice this rule and great may become thy banking account in a land where banking accounts are held in great honour.

The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool, and the Archbishop of Canterbury join hands in chiding those Christians who place sole reliance on faith-healing. Naturally neither like it to be practised on a wholesale scale by laymen, first because it tends to take business away from the Church, and secondly because it is more likely to expose the nature of the practice. Dr. Downey says that miraculous healing was something that was peculiar to some early Christians, and was never part of the mechanism of the Church. A Roman Catholic apologist is equal to anything in the way of the distortion of facts. The counsel that people should be healed "In my name," and the teaching of the New Testament that the "Prayer of faith shall cure the sick," has no local application whatever. It applies to all time. And considering the profit that the Church has made and still makes by the traffic in miraculous cures, one can only put such statements in that category that is covered by the term "Christian Truth," which to the amateur is not distinguishable from ordinary lies.

The following from the South African *Farmer's Weekly* :—

Archbishop Head, of Melbourne, has requested the resignation of the Rev. H. E. Hayes, vicar of Merida, twenty miles from Melbourne, in consequence of the publication of an article by him in the Christmas number of the *Labour Call*, stating that one of our greatest incongruities lies in our treatment of the so-called illegitimates. If Christian love be truly applied, he added, social life would be largely influenced by the fact that Jesus was actually an illegitimate child, and his mother's honour was saved by the love and grace of her husband, Joseph the carpenter.

Perhaps some orthodox Christian will let us know what is the matter with this statement by the Rev. H. E. Hayes? It states what every Christian—orthodox Christian—ought to accept as a settled truth. Of course, the truth is not usually stated in the Christian Churches in this plain way, but it cannot be expected that once now and again someone will not put Christian belief in plain language. And in any case, illegitimacy is the least of the faults that can be found with the New Testament story of Jesus Christ.

Glimmers of common-sense appear in the most unexpected connexions. Here is the *London Evening News*, in a leading article, reminding its readers that some things—defence expenditure, for example—is not to be met by prayer and fasting alone. And this in face of the teaching of Jesus that faith should move mountains and prayer work miracles. We suppose that even the editor of a newspaper has nowadays to be on his guard if he is to prevent common-sense creeping in where religion is concerned. In this case the editor must have been nodding. He should have said that prayer and fasting would do much, and then could have taken care that any letters asking "how much?" did not appear.

Those who believe that the Modernists have discarded anything in religion which is of importance should read the proceedings of the recent Conference reported fully in the *Modern Churchman* (October, 1935), Dean Matthews, who succeeded Dr. Inge as President, committed the M.C. Union to as much supernaturalism as the most ignorant Christian accepts to-day. God is still "the Creator," the Bible is still His "Revelation," the horrors of the Old Testament prove that God "in times past spoke to His prophets," and continues to speak to us now. We need not waste time wondering what more could a Fundamentalist believe.

In a glorification of Faith, the Rev. A. E. Whitham uses an unexpected flower of speech which Christians at least might leave alone. Memories of Christian torture chambers leap to the minds of those who read his words :

"Faith sees, and, when it sees, it cannot be deprived of the vision. Hot irons cannot burn its eyes out." It was Faith which inspired the Inquisition. Hot irons burnt out the eyes of heretics, but their heresy remains to convict fanatical faith of crime for all ages. Mr. Whitham, in the same address, is justified in denouncing what he calls "that uncleanest chapter of wrong in Christian history: the martyrdom of St. John," but wrong in his superlatives. The murder of Hypatia, the Atheist woman of Alexandria could scarcely be called "clean"!

The Rev. Principal Micklem, D.D., gives advice about Prayer in the *British Weekly*. Contrary to Christ's teaching the one uniform (Lord's) prayer to all who pray, Dr. Micklem says, "We are made so very differently that I suppose there can hardly be universal rules." This does not prevent his suggesting to everybody some general ideas as to how and what and when to do the praying. Sometimes, apparently, Christians get what the Americans call "the willies," or as the Principal puts it: "If you feel numb and unspiritual and like nothing on earth, by all means say—'O Lord, that is precisely how I feel.'" But in the end Dr. Micklem advises Christians to tell God: "Though Thou slay me, yet will I trust in Thee." An Abyssinian victim to Mussolini's poison-gas could not say more than that to Mussolini.

Mr. Emil Brunner, said to be "one of the greatest living theologians," has found out why the churches are under a cloud, and what the churches ought to do about it. The "Group" has converted him, and this is the grand secret of how to get back to the ages of big congregations (generally known as the dark ages):—

The world has lost faith in the Church because no miracles happen. The Church does not believe in miracles. The Oxford Group has given me a new faith in the body of Christ where miracles happen.

We are inclined to agree with this great theologian as to the value of a few miracles. Raising the late Mr. Spurgeon from the dead would do to start with. But we warn Mr. Brunner that it is much more difficult to "get away with" miracles to-day than in days when people believed in them. When people really believed in miracles, miracles were unnecessary, and now when people don't believe in them there are no miracles.

Mr. Chas. W. Hutchinson, in the columns of one of our very religious papers, voices his very great indignation at some of our shipping companies. It seems that he met someone on a cruise, who told him that "there was no provision made for the spiritual needs of the passengers. There was a magnificent swimming-pool, a superb dance-floor, a cocktail bar, but no altar and no Sacraments." No wonder Mr. Hutchinson is horrified. As for us, we congratulate the particular shipping company for leaving religion out of their arrangements. What about those passengers who want religious services so much, taking (and paying for) their own chaplain? We give them this hint gratis.

We positively knew it would happen. The B.B.C. has found a way by which BOTH sides in the religious controversy might be represented without danger that the wrong angle of the wrong side might occasionally be heard. Trust a Scotchman born in a Manse to combine efficiency with economy. On Sunday, October 20, at 5.15 p.m., the Rev. Donald Soper spoke a piece called "More Questions on Tower Hill." The Rev. Donald Soper answered every question with the utmost satisfaction to his employers. Why? Because the Rev. Donald Soper was the only person allowed to speak! He asked himself questions he had no difficulty in answering. To "add verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and (particularly) unconvincing narrative," Mr. Soper changed his voice and called his naïve questioner "Mr. Wilson!" The latter seems to be gifted with about as much intelligence as the former; he fitted his questions so admirably to his "Opponent's" range of thought, that Mr. Soper was never at a loss for a smart answer. We congratulate Sir John Reith—his "humour" is decidedly "pawky."

At a time when so many people in this country are not only out of work, but are actually on the verge of starvation, it would be difficult to surpass the impudence of the "South American Missionary Society" in advertising for funds "to wipe out our deficit and enable our work to continue." It seems that "350 Toba Indians regularly attend the service at Sombrero Negro, Chaco Argentina," and money is required to enable them still to come. Missionaries are the most unblushing cadgers in history, and they have so far—for the most part—lived pretty well out of the funds subscribed. But we would like to know what some of our badly paid workers or out-of-workers say when they learn that people can be persuaded to part with money to enable a few Toba Indians to attend the "services" instead of helping unfortunate people here? It is more than a tragedy.

In an account of Prebendary Carlile and his Church Army, it says that "curiously enough, the social work of the Church Army is most widely known in the present day." Why "curiously enough?" What good is the Grand Old Gospel to a man who is almost down and out, who has hardly eaten a decent meal in six months and starved most of the time, who is dirty, ragged and unshorn? Give him plenty to eat, good clothes and boots, and he is ready to listen to anything religious, no matter how weird it is. How much he believes is another issue. What success has a purely religious "army"—with no money, no food and no social service of any kind—ever had among the "down and outs"?

There are still precious examples of "Christian Unity" in Belfast. Apart from the recent riots which were nearly as bad as similar religious riots were 200 years ago, a Catholic journalist was nearly killed by his Protestant brethren at a recent Protestant League meeting. He was surrounded by a mob with shouts of "Kill him!" and "Throw him out!" but he managed to escape. The Chairman of the meeting said their object was to do away with Popery, whether it be at Stourmount, Rome or Dublin. Unfortunately, both Rome and Dublin will survive this attack—though the details of the riots which have trickled through make unpleasant reading; especially for those who still think Christian Unity is possible.

Anyway, one of the Catholic Bishops, Dr. Mageau, makes short work of those who declare the riots were political and not religious. He categorically declared that, "the trouble is due to the religious bigotry that has been instigated and fomented by designing men for their own selfish ends, bigotry raised at critical periods to white heat by the inflammatory speeches of so-called leaders." If the Bishop is right, what a splendid commentary this "bigotry" makes on Christians—for, of course, if Christianity is not responsible for the "bigotry," what in the name of heaven, is?

It should be put on record exactly what the riots did. 514 Catholic families, involving 2,241 individuals, were evicted from their homes. There were 430 of these homes. 73 houses were burned; and 638 claims for damage to persons and property have been lodged. And all because of religion!

When a prominent pietist gets a fat job (and he often does), the common press paragraphists always laud the "eminent Presbyterian" or whatever his sect may be, as if his religion made him an excellent administrator. President Roosevelt has recently appointed Mr. James Landis to what is perhaps the job of all jobs requiring absolute personal probity. As Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission he will have illimitable opportunities for "graft." Instead of telling the world that Mr. Landis is a Freethinker, the *New York World* in its otherwise admirable biography of him, says, "He is not a religious dogmatist, but he has a certain moral vigour that seeks expression in the realm of social realities." But then, that is a definition of a great many Freethinkers.



# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE,

EDITORIAL:

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- C. A. GREEN.—We do not expect that the "largest Church in Christendom" will stop war. We know the history of the Churches too well for that. Our case against the Christian Churches in this connexion is, first, that while they have done nothing to prevent war they have often done much to excite and embitter it; they have cast a moral and religious cloak over war in every country in which they have exerted influence. Nor is there any disputing the fact that in no country in the world has the Christian Church ever acted as preventative of war.
- W. A. WILLIAMS.—Quite a good letter. It is a pity the editor did not insert it. But it was probably not without its effect. The Birkenhead magistrates appear to be a nice lot of bigots.
- "AXON."—We cannot deal with anonymous letters.
- J. HUMPHRIES.—It does not follow that cuttings are not received because they are not used at the time they are sent in. They may prove useful later. In any case we are greatly obliged to those who take the trouble to send.
- I. HARTMAN.—Your difficulty appears to arise from taking causation to consist in a mere sequence, instead of taking an effect as being due to a synthesis of the factors. We have discussed the matter fully in our *Materialism Restated*, and it is impossible to restate the argument in an answer in this column.
- H. F. COX.—We can only say that when a man gives way to the prophetic mania argument is almost useless. The book is being sent you.
- S. NEWTON.—The pamphlet was reprinted from an earlier edition. Hence the fault you note. It is not, however, of great consequence, and a correction will be made in another issue.
- H. MORGAN.—We have never said that political work was unnecessary, only that it could be done, and usually is done by a different and commoner type of mind than is required for educative work. For that reason we have always held that the finer and rarer type of mind is wasted in the House of Commons. There is not the work there that it is fitted to do, and it nearly always fails to impress all but a mere handful of Members. Of what use was John Stuart Mill—a thinker and a teacher? And of what use there was that essential thinker and teacher, John M. Robertson? The man who is capable of the higher work should leave the lower to those who are willing to undertake it. Both teacher and legislator are necessary, but there are a hundred of the latter to one of the former.
- P. KENYON.—Your high appreciation of George Henry Lewes does you credit. If a great many of those attempting a study of philosophy—including those who write on that subject—would make a close study of him, they would all be the better for it. We hope that our note on Lewes will call attention to him. Sorry we do not know the lady's address. Have not heard from her for some years.
- J. V. SHORTT AND OTHERS.—Thanks for appreciation of notes on "Why?" Naturally we agree that it goes to the root of the subject, but it requires a little careful thinking, and that is a serious drawback to many.
- F. HORDAY.—Thanks for addresses, paper being sent for six weeks.
- Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4 by the first post on Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.
- Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.
- The "Freethinker" is supplied to the trade on sale or return. Any difficulty in securing copies should be at once reported to this office.
- Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London E.C.4, and not to the Editor.
- The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—  
One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.

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. Rosetti, giving as long notice as possible.

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All cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to "The Pioneer Press," and crossed "Midland Bank, Ltd., Clerkenwell Branch."

## Sugar Plums

The National Secular Society's "Social" will be held in the Caxton Hall, Westminster, on the evening of Saturday, November 16. It will greatly help those responsible for the arrangements—particularly on the catering side—if applications for tickets are made as early as possible. There will be the usual musical and vocal entertainment, and also plenty of dancing so that all tastes may be satisfied. There will also be opportunities for conversation between those present.

Caxton Hall is on the bus route from most parts of London, and within easy reach of Westminster and Victoria Stations, while St. James' Station is practically next door. The Social is open to non-members, who may be introduced by a friend. Tickets, including refreshments, 2s. 6d.

Next Sunday (November 10) Mr. Cohen visits Glasgow, and will speak in the McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow. His subject will be "The Savageries of Civilization." Admission will be free, but tickets for reserved seats may be obtained at the door.

Mr. G. Whitehead has just concluded four very successful lectures in Birkenhead. The audiences were good and the lectures interesting. Mr. Whitehead will be in Birmingham to-day (November 3) and will speak in the Shakespeare Rooms, Edmund Street, at 7.30, on "The Basis of Secularism." We hope that as many local friends as is possible will attend.

Recurring to my notes last week on neglected writers, a word may be said concerning one who should have taken a very prominent place in the history of English thought. This is Alfred Barratt, whose two books, *Physical Ethics* (1869) and *Physical Metempiric* (1883), issued after his death, have been for many years members of the gallant company that meet on my bookshelves. Had Barratt possessed a more attractive style, and a simpler terminology, he would have occupied a more prominent place in the mind of that indefinable personage, the general reader. But his thought was wide and deep, and it was fundamentally freethinking in character.

His books are now seldom met with, but I advise those readers who do not object to a little brain massage to get these books whenever they can pick them up. They are not likely to be placed at a very high price by any bookseller. Barratt died at the age of thirty-eight, and the remark of his wife in a brief biographical sketch pre-facing the "Metempiric," that "his religion, while of a different type from what is generally accepted, was real and deep," is quite enough to indicate his general heresy. I fancy that he too has been pillaged without being acknowledged. A good many reputations, of both big and little men might suffer if someone were to write a big book on authors who are—to use Lamb's phrase "Dammed good to steal from," and give illustrative material.

Sometimes the good things we do bring us rewards, sometimes the reverse. Our "Things Worth Knowing" have met with—so far as our correspondence goes—unqualified appreciation. But some of these friends have told us that before they appeared they used to read

their *Freethinker* and then pass it on to a likely subscriber. Now they are so anxious to preserve the articles that they keep their copy, either by preserving the whole copy or by cutting out the pages on which the articles appear. This is very flattering, but it is not profitable, and does not help us to meet expenses and so reduce our bothersome deficit. So we hope that appreciation of this new feature will show itself by as many as can, taking an extra copy and continuing the very important work of securing new readers. It will involve an extra outlay of threepence per week, and will often bring along a new recruit. We are able to do but very little in the way of paid advertising, but everyone will appreciate the importance of making the *Freethinker* as widely known as possible.

We were pleased to see a leading article in the *Birkenhead News* dealing with the action of the magistrates with regard to Sunday meetings. The magistrates refused to permit a meeting arranged for 7.30. Another application, brought before another bench of magistrates, but with the time altered to 8.15 was granted. The newspaper is very cautious in its comments on the subject. It treats the incident as two different interpretations of the law, but suggests that the first decision was due to the desire not to affect church attendance. On this latter point they are right. The magistrates could have had no other object than to stop all meetings going on during Church hours. It is a shameful exertion of authority in the interests of Church and Chapel.

But there is really no question of a different interpretation of the law. For the magistrates, unless they are inexcusably ignorant—a consideration that must be ruled out—have no power whatever to interfere with a meeting that is to be held on Sunday. That the meeting is to be held in a building that has a licence for music, etc., on six days in the week has nothing whatever to do with freedom of action on the seventh day. These magistrates simply marry religious bigotry to terrorism. They can threaten, by implication, that if the meeting is held opposition will be offered to the renewal of the licence. But no bench of magistrates dare refuse a licence for music or entertainment from Monday to Saturday if a meeting is held on the Sunday. It is time that some higher authority stepped in and prevented a few bigots using the power placed in their hands to threaten or penalize anyone for exercising their legal rights on Sunday. If the people who refused the hall will permit us to hold a meeting there on a Sunday, we will undertake to say that no magistrate in Birkenhead will have the impudence to prevent the meeting being held or to summons us afterwards for holding it.

The Leicester Secular Society dates back to 1852, and has during the whole of its existence done fine service to the Freethought Cause. It also has a very fine hall in one of the main streets of Leicester, which in itself constitutes an advertisement of Freethought. At present the Society is making an energetic attempt to raise the sum of £2,000 so that the Society may stand free from debt, by the end of the year. It will have to travel a long way to do this, but it could be done if some of the wealthier Freethinkers would bethink themselves of the constant anxiety and work involved in keeping Freethought institutions in being. We have had a fairly lengthy experience of what this means, and we hope to hear that this paragraph will succeed in producing a satisfactory flow of donations to the Leicester Society. Letters should be addressed to Mr. H. Anderson, Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester.

Mr. Allan Flanders, is doing some very useful work in the North Eastern area. He recently took the Freethought side in a debate in South Shields on "Has Humanity Gained from Christian Teaching?" The discussion was held in the Unitarian Church, South Shields, and Mr. Flander's opponent was the Rev. W. Beer. We have no detailed account of the discussion, but from what we know of Mr. Flanders we have every confidence that he upheld the Secular case with distinction.

## The Royal Society of London

WHEN Europe stirred from its Dark Age slumbers a few adventurous spirits began to cultivate the long neglected sciences and communicated their thoughts by means of personal letters and printed books. With the advent of the sixteenth century the experimental method became common and an interest in medical and physical phenomena gained ground. Even in the smaller cities of the Continent there were formed groups of adherents of the revived evangel. With these pioneers intuitive beliefs as well as the traditions of the Church were subjected to the test of observation and experiment. An illustrious representative of this daring band of innovators was Leonardo da Vinci, who anticipated many later discoveries in natural science. Nearly a century in advance of Galileo and Gilbert, and even before Francis Bacon's enunciation of the inductive method, Leonardo declared that: "We should begin with experimentation, and by that means discover the cause." With this end in view, he gathered around him a few reforming adherents and established an Academy of Arts in Milan.

Towards the close of the century several scientific societies were founded in Italy. The first of these appears to have been that of Naples (1560), whose president was Baptista Porta. But its career was brief, as it was viewed with popular suspicion, presumably encouraged by the clergy. In any case, the Society was denounced to the Papacy as an association of dangerous sorcerers, and its dissolution was decreed. Still, these bodies grew in influence and number, and at the end of the century 171 of these societies existed. Few survived for any length of time, but three are of permanent importance in the history of science. The *Accademia della Crusca* of Florence was founded in 1582 and still survives. A Roman body, *dei Lyncei* (1609), of which Galileo was a member, became the leading scientific society in Italy, while the celebrated Florentine *del Cimento*, during its very brief existence, was the theatre of many important researches.

From Italy the tendency towards the creation of academies spread abroad, and in the seventeenth century a few scholars formed a private assembly in Paris, and from such simple beginnings emerged the famous French Academy. Richelieu advised the Academy to enlarge its membership and to accept incorporation under a Crown charter. The Academy's main objects were, however, more literary than scientific, and its chief concern relates to the establishment of a refined taste in literature and the determination of a high standard in the Gallic tongue.

It was not until the Stuart Restoration in England that the world-renowned Royal Society received its Charter. About 1645, Wallis, the mathematician, recorded that a few friends assembled weekly either at Dr. Goldard's residence in Wood Street, or at a tavern in Cheapside, or more rarely at Gresham College to converse on scientific subjects. These private gatherings proved a solace to men who were gratified to obtain temporary relief from the turbulence of the times while satisfying their intellectual curiosity. Moreover, serious application in both Universities had been sadly incommoded by the turmoil of the Civil War.

The philosophy of Francis Bacon then exercised a great influence in cultured circles. Both in the *New Atlantis* and his *Novum Organon*, Bacon contemned the fantasies of scholasticism, while strongly urging experimentation by associated scientific research. When referring to the founders of the Royal Society, its earliest historian, Bishop Sprat says: "I shall

only mention one great man who had the true imagination of the whole extent of this enterprize . . . and this is, the Lord Bacon; in whose books there are everywhere scattered the best arguments that can be produced for the defence of the experimental philosophy, and the best directions that are needful to promote it." This contemporaneous judgment is confirmed by Sir Archibald Geikie in the preface to his *Record of the Royal Society* (1912), where he declares that: "The foundation of the Royal Society was one of the earliest practical fruits of the philosophical labours of Francis Bacon." Again, as Newton's latest and most reliable biographer, Trenchard More, remarks, "There is no doubt that Newton was greatly influenced by Bacon in his adoption of the experimental and mechanistic philosophy, and by his exclusion of hypothesis from science."

Informal meetings of scientists continued for several years, and a branch society arose in Oxford. Meanwhile, the London group flourished and attracted the attention of political and social notabilities, while its gatherings became a regular feature at Gresham College. On the eve of the Restoration, however, the men of science were ejected, and the College was utilized by the authorities as a soldiers' barracks. When the College was ultimately evacuated by the military it presented a sorry spectacle. Bishop Wren recorded in his *Memoirs*, that he "went to visit Gresham College, but found the place in such a nasty condition, so defiled, and the smells so infernal, that if you should come now to make use of your tube (telescope) it would be like Dives looking out of hell into heaven. Dr. Goddard keeps possession, which he could never be able to do, had he not before prepared his nose for camp-perfumes by his voyage into Scotland, and had he not such excellent restoratives in his cellar."

The times, nevertheless, proved propitious for the creation of a permanent scientific society. Charles II., despite his reckless extravagance and inordinate sensuality, showed himself a patron of culture, while his protection of Hobbes against that philosopher's many enemies must always redound to his credit. So, with its Charter of Incorporation in 1662, the Royal Society embarked on its mission of "substituting scientific knowledge for the delusions of superstition and witchcraft."

The King's approval ensured the Society's social standing, but although he promised lands and money no material aid was given, and the Society long enjoyed the pleasures of poverty. The papers now communicated at the Society's meetings are mostly technical in nature, but in its early days the Fellows assembled to witness scientific experiments conducted by Hooke or others acting under official instructions.

The Society had scarcely settled down to serious study when its meetings were perforce postponed by the prevalence of the plague which devastated London and Westminster in 1665. With the passing of this scourge its gatherings were resumed, when its experiments on blood-transfusion became the topic of the day. Then was witnessed the Great Fire of London in 1666, which naturally eclipsed everything else. Gresham's College escaped injury, but it was requisitioned for the shelter of the homeless, and as a storehouse for supplies. Thus, the Society's tenancy terminated. It removed to Arundel House, but it was for a time deprived of the services of Hooke and Wren—two of its most active members—who were planning the rebuilding of the burnt Capital.

The Society encountered many obstacles before its certain success was assured. As is customary in such cases its permanency depended on the industry and devotion of a small section of its Fellows who were

zealous in the cause of science. The merely curious and conventional attended irregularly and were unpunctual in their payments of the Society's dues. These were only one shilling per week, with an entrance fee of ten shillings. Indeed, the Society was on the verge of insolvency and the treasurer was on one occasion compelled to solicit daily payments. And these were not the only anxieties, as this "new-fangled body" was viewed with jealousy and misgiving by the orthodox community who suspected its leanings towards Atheism and infidelity. The Universities regarded it uneasily as a possible rival, and the clerical reactionaries naturally were in opposition. Also, the medical world, as a whole, was committed to traditional methods which the new science seemed likely to supersede.

Men of letters likewise derided the pretensions of those whom they stigmatized as solemn fools. And, although Cowley and Dryden praised the Royal Society, "Shadwell ridiculed it in his comedy of *The Virtuoso*, and Butler pictures, in *Hudibras*, the excitement of the learned members who thought they had discovered an elephant in the moon, but were chagrined by finding that a fly had lodged in the tube of their telescope. Addison and Steele satirized the Fellows as dull pedants, Pope included them in the *Dunciad*, and Swift bitterly caricatured them in the *Voyage to Laputa*." Swift's morbid mockery in his picture of the flying island and its inhabitants in *Gulliver's Travels* must have discouraged many seekers after truth. For Laputa's wise men devoted their lives to extracting sunbeams from cucumbers, softening marbles for pillows and other forms of folly.

Gresham College, the original residence of the Elizabethan merchant prince, Sir Thomas Gresham, remained the Society's headquarters until 1710. During Sir Isaac Newton's Presidency, the need for a permanent habitation became imperative and an edifice in Crane Court was purchased which the Society occupied for seventy-two years. Then, after a residence in Somerset House for a period, it migrated to Burlington House where it still remains.

The Society's importance as a scientific body is inestimable. Among its past services have been the aid afforded to travellers and scientific research-workers; in the greatly improved equipment of Greenwich Observatory; in promoting the expeditions of Cook and other famous navigators; while several invaluable scientific investigations have been more recently undertaken under its direction and advice. The Society has also been commissioned by the State to supervise inquiries which have led to a revolution in our knowledge concerning the nature of tropical diseases.

T. F. PALMER.

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## MIRACLES

When no one doubted the possibility or the frequency of miracles they abounded, we are told; that is, when by reason of their number and the ready credit accorded to them, their effect was the least startling, then they were lavished on a believing world. Now, when they are denied and insulted as the figments of a barbarous age, when the faith they might support is in such jeopardy as it never was before, when a title of the wonders wasted in the deserts of Sinai and the parts beyond Jordan would shake the nations with astonishment and surprise—when, in short, the least expenditure of miracle would produce the maximum of result—then miracles mysteriously cease.

J. Cotter Morison, "The Service of Man."

## The Way of the World

THE Government has decreed a General Election. This, on the following grounds:—

- (1) Because it has the whole of the nation solidly behind it.
- (2) Because after the Election the nation will be solidly behind the Government.
- (3) As the Government is certain as to the result of the Election, no better opportunity than the present one can be imagined in order to prove what it is said no one seriously disputed.

The Government is also determined to pursue its policy of a large increase in armaments:—

- (1) Because it has to be in a position to offer its contribution to the League of Nations in its efforts to enforce the decisions arrived at in Geneva with respect to Italian aggression in Abyssinia.
- (2) Because it has never had in its mind the use of military force in enforcing League decisions against Italy.
- (3) Because it is necessary for Britain to be strong enough to stand alone in order to ensure peace.
- (4) Because the only hope for European peace is collective action, which will make huge national armies unnecessary.
- (5) Because we must have increased armaments, anyway.

By the rule of all civilized countries any nation may, and does, sell weapons of war to all other nations that are able to purchase them. If any nation desiring to purchase arms has not the money to buy them, the manufacturing nation will lend it the money to do so. This is done only while peace exists between the buying and selling nations, because it is taken for granted that such arms will not be used against the selling nation by the buying one while peace exists. The nation selling is not therefore held to encourage war because the moment war breaks out with the buying nation the seller immediately stops selling and promptly denounces the other for using the arms bought. This is what is called the "Rules of the Game," and any nation that will not observe these rules is guilty of being called "No Sportsmen."

The right of Italy, and with Italy the right of every other nation, to expansion has been admitted. The nations that have admitted this have also pointed to lands, other than their own, that might be utilized for such expansion, provided they take them according to the "Rules of the Game." These rules of the game do not apply to the peoples whose lands are to be used for expansion, since they obviously do not need expansion. If the "Rules of the Game" are observed, war between civilized, that is, expanding, nations will be at an end. War could only come into being on one of the two conditions. (a) Where the people whose lands are used to satisfy the thirst for expansion forcibly resist; or (b) where such expansion threatens the interests of those who have already expanded. In the latter case it is clear that the "Rules of the Game" are not being followed, and those offending are "No Sportsmen."

*Apropos.* Newspapers were recently offering congratulations to the British public that the population was increasing, and that the falling birth-rate had been arrested. Other countries are also urging their women to bear as many babies as possible. It is clear that if they do not, the need to "expand" will not be urgent, and we shall be outside all the "Rules of the Game," even if we are not to be accused of being "No Sportsmen." For note; if we are to justify the claim to expansion we must have an increasing population, and the

more rapid the increase the better. But if we expand we must have an army to seize and hold the new territory which provides the means for expansion. This means that without a growing population we cannot have an increasing army which can hold the new territory into which we have expanded on account of the increased population which is necessary to support the large military forces which have become necessary to our expansion which has become necessary from our increased birth-rate, which is necessary to support the army without which expansion is nowadays impossible. It sounds like a sociological version of the House that Jack Built, but there it is!

In a country faced with two millions of unemployed and threatened with a world-war, along with various other trifles, it is gratifying to see that some of our newspapers are keenly alive to the existence of things that matter. Thus, we have to thank the *Daily Express* for October 24—thanks to the keenness of its "Special Representative"—making public the news that on October 23 the King and Queen paid their first visit to their new baby grandson. So unusual an event calls for special notice, so the lynx-eyed "Special Representative" furnishes the information, in separate paragraphs, that:—

- (1) The baby was asleep when the grandparents arrived.
- (2) His Royal grandparents tiptoed into his nursery.
- (3) As they were looking at him lying in his cot, his blue eyes (it is not explained that these were the only ones he had) suddenly opened.
- (4) The King and Queen leaned over and stroked his hair.
- (5) The King and Queen remained with the baby for about ten minutes.

This will serve to remind us of many things, just as the engagement of the Duke of Gloucester to Lady Alice Scott reminded the editor of *Burke's Peerage* that the Royal Family are flesh and blood, just like us. The visit reminds us:—

- (1) Of the remarkable behaviour of the grandparents who went to see the baby, just as other grandparents might have done.
- (2) The remarkable behaviour of the baby who rose to the occasion by waking up while the Royal couple were there.
- (3) The wonderful fact that the new baby should resemble its father.
- (4) That royalties are married, and beget children in the same way as do other people.

This is not derogatory of Royalty; it merely lifts the common person, temporarily, to their exalted heights.

Which helps to remind us that, as Frazer says, the priest was originally king, and that king-worship is one of the deeply rooted under-currents of primitive superstition that runs through modern Society. Frazer remarks that "kings were revered not merely as priests that is, as intercessors between man and god, but as themselves gods." And another writer thus sums up the matter:—

The (ancient) Peruvians believed that their Inca was descended from the Sun. . . . The laws of Manu lay it down that the King is created by eternal particles of Indra. In Japan the Mikado is regarded as a divine and mysterious personage descended from the sun-goddes Amatarasu Omikami. . . . In the course of his existence the King of Egypt exhausted all possible conceptions of divinity which the Egyptians had formulated for themselves. . . . Belief in the god-like character of princes and rulers prevailed in Europe until modern times. The Kings of England and France exercised miraculous powers of healing from the eleventh century onwards. They were able to do this because

they had for long been regarded as sacred persons. Their dynasties were descended from the ancient Germans, who considered Kings to be of divine origin, and hence endowed with special powers over nature with regard to such matters as harvests. . . . With the spread of Christianity the temporal ruler ceased officially to be a divine person, although a belief in his sacred qualities lingered. . . . But the sacred quality of the King was soon re-established by means of the religious ceremony of consecration, and in particular through the essential rite of anointing.

Primitive things die very slowly, because they are primitive. And the attitude of multitudes towards a King is strongly reminiscent of that of a savage before his visibly incarnate deity.

BYSTANDER.

## The Man Who Rationalized Turkey

WHAT a triumph over superstition and ignorance is that which has to be placed to the credit of Mustapha Kemal, the man who "defied the Allies, deposed the Sultan, defeated the Greeks, and turned Turkey into a modern Power!"

It is with the rationalistic side of Kemal's great work that I here propose to deal.

Born in poor circumstances—his father a Freethinker, and his mother devoutly religious—Kemal worked for some years as a peasant boy. Rises to increasingly important positions came swiftly. Then followed his break with the authorities of the day, and his heading of a successful revolution.

From the outset Kemal had no more time for Islamism than he had for Christianity.

The deposition of the Sultan—and the transformation of Turkey into a Republic, with a President (Kemal) at the head—necessarily led to the consideration of the question of the Caliphate. On this subject, Dagobert Von Mikusch—to whose life of Kemal I am indebted for the material for this article—says, "The Western idea of designating the Caliph as Head of the Church was not understood by the Mohammedan world. The Islamic Turk was accustomed to recognize in the Caliph his real constitutional ruler and secular lord, all the more as it was the legal heir to the throne that held the office."

Developments in this connexion soon revealed that Kemal was no more disposed to tolerate a Caliph than a Sultan.

"The demand of the Caliph that the Government and the official bodies of the State should enter into an alliance with him," he declared, "is a flagrant infringement of the independence of the Republic. The office of Caliph has neither material nor political significance, and has no justification for its existence."

Come, now, to the proceedings in the National Assembly on March 1, 1924.

"The opening address by Mustapha Kemal was a declaration of war against the Church. He dealt with a great deal more than the mere question of the Caliphate. He used the occasion to announce a thorough secularization of the State, and its complete separation from the Church. In a few days he achieved a result that had only been attained in Europe after hundred-year-long wars.

"The requisite measures, which were prepared by Mustapha Kemal, were discussed at a meeting of the Party on March 2. The following day they were submitted to the National Assembly, and passed in one sitting, at half-past six in the morning, after the usual debates lasting the whole night through.

"The Caliphate was abrogated. All the members

of the dynasty (including the Caliph) were interdicted from ever dwelling in Turkey. They were required to leave the territory of the Republic within ten days. All the ecclesiastical offices in the State were abolished, the possessions of the Church becoming the property of the State. All the schools hitherto conducted by the clergy came under the jurisdiction of the Minister for Education.

"Abdul Medjid"—the then reigning Caliph—left Constantinople on March 4. A few days after, he was followed by the thirty princes and princesses of the Ottoman House, who travelled to Europe by the Oriental express to join the numerous Kaisers, Kings, Princes, and Princesses living in exile there."

Such, indeed, was Kemal's fame that he could, at this stage, have become both Sultan and Caliph—a proposal which, put to him with the widest concurrence, he rejected with scorn.

There still remained a lot for Kemal to do.

Firstly, "the famous fez, hitherto inseparable from the Turk, was abolished." This led to revolts, fostered by the clergy. But the uprisings were quickly suppressed, with this result: "The Islamic clergy lost their last bulwark of defence. All the cloisters were closed and all sects, brotherhoods and dervish Orders abolished, their members being sent into banishment. 'Could a nation,' asked Kemal, 'be considered civilized that allowed itself to be kept in leading-strings by a lot of Sheiks, Chelebis, Babis, and Emirs, and entrusted its life and destiny to wizards, occultists, cheiromancers, sorcerers, diviners, and amulet-sellers?'"

Along with the fez, the veil and the traditional nun-like dress of the women were given up, and the last relics of the harem gradually disappeared.

Other reforms included the abolition of polygamy.

"Five or six years," proceeds the story, "were needed before a Turkish child could learn to read and write. A Latin form of the alphabet was introduced, written as among Occidental peoples from left to right, while, at the same time, the language was as far as possible purged of innumerable Arabic and Persian words. Adults were compelled to go back to school again. A decree was issued enacting that all men and women under twenty-four years of age were to learn the new alphabet.

"As the women did not wish to be thought older than twenty-four, a surprisingly large number of them obeyed the decree.

"The creation of a new script had been entrusted to a commission of experts. After deliberating for six months they had not been able to arrive at any acceptable conclusion. Finally, Mustapha Kemal set to work himself, and after sketching a new alphabet in a single night, he introduced it on the following day. He took part personally in teaching it, appearing in the villages, and examining the people on their progress in the new script."

Thus, in the foregoing, have we a very brief glimpse of the work of a truly remarkable man—the liberator and elevator of a nation, and a model in Freethought human endeavour; but for a full revelation of his achievements the reader must certainly be commended to the biography of Kemal, so ably written by Mikusch.

FRANK HILL.

Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

Only the worm of conscience consorts with the owl. Sinners and evil spirits shun the light.—Schiller.

A rich man is an honest man, no thanks to him, for he would be a double knave to cheat mankind when he has no need of it.—Daniel De Foe.

## I Should be a Christian . . .

I SHOULD be a Christian . . .

If Christianity were really what it makes out to be.

If the existence of Jesus Christ were definitely and historically proved.

If the Church did not teach absurd and useless dogmas such as, Heaven, Hell, Purgatory, and the Devil, which were invented to frighten the "poor in spirit."

If the fables about the Incarnation, Transubstantiation, Trinity and Virginity were not part and parcel of the box of tricks exploited by Priestcraft.

If a stop were put to ridiculous figures like the Pope, who pretend to be infallible, but who do nothing to help men's troubles.

If Christianity had not been the cause of so much blood-spilling throughout the ages.

If it had not caused the Massacre of the Albigeois, the Wars of Religion, the Extermination of the Vaudois, the Inquisition, the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and the ferocious attacks against the Jews, Freethinkers, Heretics and Unbelievers.

If the Bible were not simply a compilation of records of superstitions, of tales and folk-lore and of happenings of a few thousand years ago, records unreliable in themselves because it cannot be ascertained to what extent the imagination of the authors participated in their construction.

If I were not certain that humanity was capable of saving itself.

If we were not made to believe in the ghastly paradox of a crucified God.

If I could see that religious people were nicer and better than unbelievers.

If I had not seen that throughout history religion had been used to tyrannize over the masses and exploit them in every possible way.

If it were possible to put a finger upon any point in the history of the world and say, "Here God made himself known."

If the non-existence of a God did not strike me as being definitely proved in this sad world to-day.

If I could see what good it did.

A.H.B.

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**"By Their Deeds Ye Shall Know Them"**


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Now a loafer on the corner, "weighing form" as loafers do,

Idly read a fond scribe's item and was moved to air his view.

"Ain't it awful, 'Erb," he muttered to his bleary, red-nosed mate,

"'Ow these 'eathens worship idols in a bloomin' British State."

Said the grocer, leering lightly, as he slyly tipped his scales;

"Did you like the parson's sermon, Sunday evening, Mrs. Swales?"

"Yes," the lady answered warmly, "did you notice people stare

At that awful woman, Mason, and the way she's dyed her hair?"

Then the parson, wending homewards, met the local Catholic priest,

And the man of God was jealous, so he crossly muttered, "Beast!"

But the Papist hound was ready, able member of his tribe,

"Swine!" he countered, frocks drawn round him to give point unto his jibe.

At a local garden party the Archbishop was full of hope, And he gave them of his wisdom, incidentally slanged the Pope.

But His Highness was unshaken and he very regally said

To his bed-mate of the moment; "Silly blighter's off his head."

J.R.

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**SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.** (Gauden Hotel, Gauden Road, Clapham, S.W.4): 7.30, Miss Monica Whately (Prospective Labour Candidate for Clapham)—"Democracy or Dictatorship, Which is it to be?"

**SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY** (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, S. K. Ratcliffe—"The New Credulity."

**STUDY CIRCLE** (68 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, November 4, Mr. R. Harding—"If I were God."

**WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S.** (The Labour Rooms, 70 Grange Park Road, Leyton, E.10): 7.30, Paul Goldman—"Religion and Mass Mentality."

**WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.** ("The Laurie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.): 7.30, Debate—"Does Man Survive Death?" *Affir.*: Father Dunstan Pontifex, O.S.B. *Neg.*: T. F. Palmer.

**COUNTRY**
**INDOOR**

**BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S.** (Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane, Birkenhead): 7.0, Mr. W. Fletcher—"Instinct and Suggestion."

**BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S.** (Shakespeare Rooms, Edmund Street, Birmingham): 7.30, Mr. G. Whitehead—"Basis of Secularism."

**BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S.** (Market Tavern Hotel, Godwin Street, Bradford): 7.30, Mr. A. Ingle—"The Importance of Being Irrational."

**EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION** (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. Jack Thompson (Nelson)—"Instinct, Intuition and Intelligence."

**GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY** (East Hall, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow): 7.0, G. W. Tyrell, D.Sc., F.G.S., F.R.S.E.—"Geology." (Lantern Lecture).

**LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY** (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Joseph McCabe: Four Lantern Lectures on "The Evolution of European Civilization."—1. "The Sources of Greek Civilization."

**LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S.** (Cooper's Hall, 12 Shaw Street, Liverpool): 7.0, C. McKelvie (Liverpool)—"The Philosophy of Conflict."

**NORTHERN FEDERATION OF N.S.S. BRANCHES** (18 Churchill Street, Sunderland): 3.0. A meeting will be held. Co-operative Hall, Green Street, 7.0, A Freethought Demonstration. Speakers: Messrs. Brighton, Flanders and others.

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THE National Secular Society was founded in 1866 by Charles Bradlaugh. He remained its President until shortly before his death, and the N.S.S. has never ceased to live up to the tradition of "Thorough" which Bradlaugh by his life so brilliantly exemplified.

The N.S.S. is the only organization of militant Freethinkers in this country. It aims to bring into one body all those who believe the religions of the world to be based on error, and to be a source of injury to the best interests of Society. It claims that all political laws and moral rules should be based upon purely secular considerations. It is without sectarian aims or party affiliations.

If you appreciate the work that Bradlaugh did, if you admire the ideals for which he lived and fought, it is not enough merely to admire. The need for action and combined effort is as great to-day as ever. You can best help by filling up the attached form and joining the Society founded by Bradlaugh.

### PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

SECULARISM affirms that this life is the only one of which we have any knowledge, and that human effort should be wholly directed towards its improvement: it asserts that supernaturalism is based upon ignorance, and assails it as the historic enemy of progress.

Secularism affirms that progress is only possible on the basis of equal freedom of speech and publication; it affirms that liberty belongs of right to all, and that the free criticism of institutions and ideas is essential to a civilized State.

Secularism affirms that morality is social in origin and application, and aims at promoting the happiness and well-being of mankind.

Secularism demands the complete secularization of the State, and the abolition of all privileges granted to religious organizations; it seeks to spread education, to promote the fraternity of peoples as a means of advancing international peace, to further common cultural interests, and to develop the freedom and dignity of man.

The Funds of the National Secular Society are legally secured by Trust Deed. The trustees are the President, Treasurer and Secretary of the Society, with two others appointed by the Executive. There is thus the fullest possible guarantee for the proper expenditure of whatever funds the Society has at its disposal.

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