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

Views and Opinions

Bishop Barnes and God's Plan

I BELIEVE in evolution. There is nothing very startling nowadays in making such a confession of faith. Most people with any pretence to education, or even intelligence would be with me. But there is a very great difference between *thinking* evolution and merely professing a belief in something which one understands as evolution. Modes of thinking die very slowly, and even when particular ideas have been formally rejected they can be seen still at work influencing one's general outlook. Often a belief in evolution implies no more than a belief that all forms of animal life, including man (consider the significance of having to interject that!) or when it is not so sharply limited, there are found imbedded in sociology and ethics implications that belong to a pre-evolutionary, even to an animistic age. It is, for example, said that evolution makes for progress. But evolution does nothing of the kind, and the belief that it does is no more a lingering on of the belief that there is a God who has planned things, and that we see his plan in what takes place. As I have so often had to point out, all that nature presents us with is change, and evolution does no more, and scientifically claims to do no more, than to express the "law" of the change. As Dr. Marett says, it is man who converts a cosmic process into a progress. The distinction is neatly put, and it is vital in distinguishing the genuinely scientific view from the muddled half-theological and half-scientific one. The conception of high and low, better and worse, good and bad, progress and deterioration, applied to nature are just remnants of the "Lord said" type of mind. It is man who creates values and then measures things according to standards of his own convenience.

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The Savage and the Bishop

I have been reminded of the rarity of the genuinely liberated in intelligence by an article (probably a syndicated one) in the *Glasgow Evening Times*, full of

the customary religious meandering, by Bishop Barnes. Bishop Barnes, it may be remarked, is one of the few bishops who have a fair knowledge of science, but whether he has a very much better *understanding* than the other Bishops of the significance of scientific generalizations, one is justified in doubting. Take for example, the following, merely as an illustration of the persistence of the animistic type of mind. After running over the evolution of the earth and its flora and fauna:—

What does it all mean? What Force or Power has shaped it all? To what end? On earth man is certainly the crown of the process. Why was he made? His mind is a far finer instrument than anything that had appeared earlier.

Now what is all this but the equivalent of the Bishop saying, "Much of what I do is done with a purpose. I shape many things? I make many things. Therefore there must be another 'I' who has made the things that I see around me; another 'I' who works to an end as I work to an end. And as I cannot make or shape a great many of the things I see around me, therefore, everything must have been done by 'the creative activity of a being transcendent in wisdom and power.'"

The last sentence belongs to the Bishop. But what is it all, when plainly expressed, but the purest and most primitive animism? Divest the Bishop of his modern dress, place him in a primitive forest clearing, and knowing nothing whatever of "natural" forces, and he would repeat in crude terms exactly what he has said in more sophisticated language. He might not have said quite so confidently that I am certainly the crown of creation, for primitive man appears to have felt more at one with the animal world than does his modern descendant; but in every other respect there is not the slightest difference between the intellectual value of the conclusions of our most primitive ancestors and those of the Bishop of Birmingham. The only distinction between the two is that the mental attitude of the savage is inevitable, that of the Bishop is contingent upon a particular education and an induced inability to think in a genuinely scientific manner.

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God, Man, and Immortality

Bishop Barnes' chief topic is what will happen to man after death. Pursuing his representation of primitive man thinking in terms of "I," he says that God would not have gone to the trouble of making man if it was all to end in his death, that would be "mere foolishness"—that is, the Bishop would never have acted so foolishly. God has not made man for a mere whim—that is, the Bishop would not have made man for a mere whim. The Bishop would not, and therefore God would not make man and "throw

him in the end like a discarded toy on some dust-heap of forgotten things." It is astonishing how alike God and the Bishop would act. Each one does exactly what the other would have done. If one were a reflection of the other, the identity could not be more precise. Whatever God does is right and wise, and by some strange coincidence, whatever God does, the Bishop would have done; or if one prefers it, whatever the Bishop would have done God has actually done. I do not wonder that the Bishop marvels at the greatness and the goodness and the wisdom of God. This may, of course, be due to the fact that God made man in his own image, or it may be due to man having made God in *his* image. But, whichever it is, the singular truth remains, that the Bishop ruminating in the *Glasgow Evening Times* in the year 1935 is in his conclusions in complete agreement with the uncivilized man of thousands and thousands of years ago meditating upon the why-ness of things. On nearly every other matter this primitive ancestor of ours was demonstrably wrong. On this "great problem" of the meaning of existence, and the ultimate destiny of man he was, apparently, absolutely right.

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#### Man and a Future State

But let me remind the Bishop of one or two things. He says we have been made with powers and talents that come to fruition on earth. "They will be wasted unless there is an after life in which they can be used." But the use of "powers and talents" are related to circumstances. That is, they must bear a more or less precise relation to the environment in which one is living. The ability of a fish to walk on dry land would be quite useless; the ability of a man to live in water would be comparatively useless if his environment remained as it is. The quality of family love would be of no avail where the family had no existence. Patriotism would be useless in the absence of country, honesty meaningless where dishonesty had no chance to express itself. Toiling after truth would be without meaning where the truth is already known, and so forth. So that if God had given man the talents he possesses, it would seem that if they do not come to fruition on earth they cannot come to fruition in any other state of existence, unless the other state of existence resembles this one. But if the other state of existence resembles this one, then there must be the same frustration of powers, and the amount of unexpended talents there that exists here. Therefore, when man reaches this other state of existence in which he is to find scope for his unexpended talents he will find himself either in exactly the same state that he is here, with exactly the same problems and puzzles, or he will find himself in a state of existence in which he will be altogether out of place and will find no scope whatever for the powers and talents that he has been painfully developing here.

It may help the Bishop to understand God, or God to understand the Bishop, if I venture to hint that the elements of human history which the Bishop admires so much—that of progress and the acquisition of knowledge, and the development of character are not due to the perpetuation of the individual at all. Clearly it is not due to the individual on earth; for whatever becomes of him after death it is clear that earthly men are done with when death takes them. If they live here, it is only in the sense that what they have done or taught remains after they are dead. And that, if I may venture to advise a Bishop who should be much better acquainted than I with the "plan of creation," is exactly how mankind grows. Note I say *mankind*, for man the individual grows but very

little, and his personal talents are exhausted and his powers are expended during his own life. To say that a man might have done more than he does is no more than saying that if circumstances had been different the outcome would have been different also. That no one denies, but that is different from talking of progress as being due to the individual, and so arguing for another state where the conditions of progress do not exist.

But human progress, as we know it, and I am not concerned with it as we do not know it, is not in the least degree dependent upon the continued existence of the individual. It is due to the continued existence of the social medium. The individual contributes something to the stock of social ideas and feelings. He does this whether he is prince or pauper, criminal or saint, wise man or fool. These contributions are merged in the social sum, they are handed on by language, by custom, by education, and receive additions in their turn. It is the race that progresses, the individual does so to a very small extent. Somehow or the other the Bishop has managed to confuse two very different things—which is a slip quite as common with bishops as with other folk.

The Bishop concludes that "We can ask a thousand questions about the after-life and answer none of them save by a guess." That is a rather tame end to an article that promised so much. The Bishop does not know. But what is he a Bishop for but to know? No one imagines that Bishops are paid because in an earthly sense they are better than other men, or wiser than other men, or that they know more about this world than other men. Theoretically the Bishops are where they are to act as our guides with regard to this future life. And if they can do no more than guess, it follows that we have a whole body of guessers in the House of Lords, and many others outside the House, who, as bishops, are merely running a guessing competition in which they award themselves all the prizes.

Really I like the Bishop best when he plays the part of an understudy to primitive man. When he folds his arms and looks sorrowfully thoughtful and gazes into the heavens and says, "There must be some mighty Mumbo-Jumbo who made all this. There must be some purpose that is good and wise in all this, because after all it has produced me and the rest of the Bishops"; when the Bishop acts thus, then I feel that he is one with those men who lived in remote ages, and who formed and expressed similar beliefs long before science was heard of or philosophy was born. Our museums supply nothing but the bony remains of these primitive thinkers. It is the Church that take these bony structures, covers them with flesh, and gives us an everyday exhibition of the ideas that were developed by this far-away humanity. Perhaps it is in this sense that man will never die so long as religion exists.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

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Charles Henry Twain lived during the latter part of the seventeenth century, and was a zealous and distinguished missionary. He converted 16,000 South Sea Islanders, and taught them that a dog-tooth necklace and a pair of spectacles are not enough clothing to come to divine service in. His poor flock loved him very dearly, and when his funeral was over they got up in a body (and came out of the restaurant) with tears in their eyes, and saying to one another that he was a good tender missionary, and they wished they had some more of him. *Mark Twain*.

## Gluttony and Godliness

"The ordinary pre-suppositions of evangelical Christianity are utterly absurd, and every one of us must have felt their unreality."—*Rev. R. J. Campbell.*

"Solemnity is of the essence of imposture."

*Shaftesbury.*

THE Christian Religion has frequently been described as ascetic, but there is a considerable amount of gluttony associated with its principal festivals. The stage-managed austerities of Easter are mitigated by hot-cross buns, but Christmas is the realization of an alderman's dream in the way of eating and drinking, especially drinking. The latter festive time is a veritable orgy to-day, but a generation ago it was a period of absolute licence. Thomas Carlyle wrote in his diary: "On looking out of the window this morning I noticed that my neighbours were more drunk than usual, and I remembered that it was the birthday of their Redeemer."

Hereby hangs a tale. The convivial features of Christmas Day, which is supposed by Christians to be the birthday of the "Man of Sorrows," have been noted frequently to the evident discomfiture of the clergy and their satellites. For it is one of life's little ironies that the birthday of their "Prince of Peace" was fixed in December from the urgent necessity of fighting old Pagan rituals, already ancient at the inception of the Christian Superstition. Like all human institutions, the various contending Christian Churches and their feast-day have had to fight in open warfare for survival. The festivals of Pagan Rome were as numerous as plums in a pudding. The public holidays were so frequent that they became a nuisance, and the Roman Emperors, especially Marcus Aurelius, found it necessary, in the public interest, to curtail them. It was to counteract the attractions which these Pagan holidays exercised over the light-hearted Roman people that the astute leaders of the Christian Churches sanctioned and incorporated some of these Pagan feasts in the new religion.

It was in competition with the feast of Saturnalia, one of the chief festivals of Ancient and Pagan Rome, that Christmas Day had its date fixed in December. The anniversary of the god Saturn, and his wife, was held from December 17 to 24, and the Emperor Caligula generously added a fifth day of public rejoicing. On these five festal days of Ancient Rome, prior to the birth of Christianity, the schools were closed, no punishment was inflicted, the toga was replaced by undress garment, distinctions of rank were laid aside, servants sat at the same table with their employers, and all classes of people, rich and poor alike, exchanged gifts. The natural propensity of converts from the older Paganism to cling to custom, proved invincible, and the wily Christian ecclesiastics bent before the opposition. If these apostates, and their money, were to be retained in the fold of the new superstition, it became very necessary to incorporate the old under the mask of the new. The struggle with Paganism did not end here. As in ancient Rome, so in Britain. In the far-off centuries, white-robed Druid priests cut the sacred mistletoe with a golden sickle, and chanted their hymns to the frosty air. These Druidic features were absorbed in their turn, and the sacred mistletoe and the carol-singing still play their minor, if amusing, parts in the celebration of the birthday of the "God" of the Christian Religion.

This is the simple explanation why "God's birthday" is associated with feasting and merriment. Why "God," who is described as eternal, should have a birthday at all, is a matter for Christian theologians to settle among themselves in their ample leisure.

Non-Christians, who form the majority of the world's inhabitants, regard Jesus Christ as a purely mythical personage, like all the other saviours and sun-gods of antiquity, who were generally born miraculously of virgin-mothers, and whose careers, like that of Christ, were marked with the most marvellous happenings. Whether there was an actual man called Jesus, who lived and preached in Galilee, is a matter of microscopic importance. Christians of all denominations worship the non-human figure portrayed in the four Gospels, and not the Galilean carpenter, and have done so for near two thousand years.

Indeed, "God's birthday," was not observed regularly until many generations after the alleged date of the birth of Jesus Christ. When first observed, it was held on varying dates. The precise time of his birth, like that of James de la Pluche, was "wropt in mystery," but it was certainly not in December, even according to the romantic priestly legends. The reasons why innocent Christian people observe Christmas Day on December 25 is a capital piece of Christian evidence, and exposes one of the cleverest tricks of the Christian Priests, who always have proved themselves the finest showmen in the world. Christmastide is a veritable Salmagundi of Paganism and Christianity, and, as may be seen, has as many diverse ingredients as a Christmas pudding, and is quite as indigestible.

This legendary Eastern story of "God's birthday" is pretence and make-believe, and its hypocritical priestly professions of peace and goodwill are discounted by the very priests themselves, who christen battleships, and bless the regimental flags. It is the paradox of paradoxes that the Christian world to-day bristles with bayonets, and all the horrible apparatus of wholesale murder, and yet professes to worship a deity who commanded his followers not to kill, and to obey his commands of non-resistance and forgiveness until seventy-times seven. To such a sorry pass, after two thousand years of the Christian Superstition, has the Western world come. The merry birthday of the "Man of Sorrows" is an organized priestly hypocrisy, a fitting ironic celebration of an event that never happened. The Christian clergy themselves are not deceived. They have squeezed countless millions of money from their innocent fellow-men for nearly twenty centuries; and have collected tithes and coal royalties, in the name of a religion alleged to be without money and without price. And, to-day, they have the supreme audacity to pretend that they are starving, in order still further to stimulate the offerings of the faithful. The clergy are fit representatives of the "Great Lying Church."

MIMNERMUS.

## The Early Days of Australia

WITH the exception of annexed or mandated territories in Africa and elsewhere, the overseas possessions of Britain at the accession of Queen Victoria were geographically very much what they still remain. Apart from these additions, India, Canada, the West Indies, Australia, the Cape have undergone little change. Outside India, these far-flung lands were very sparsely settled. The important base of Hong Kong was taken and utilized for the China trade, although the entire continent of Australia had been annexed as the menace of French seizure precipitated hasty English settlements both there and in the neighbouring island of New Zealand, yet, the only regions in real occupation were the coast adjoining Sydney Harbour, Tasmania, then Van Diemen's Land, with some rude settlements which were

to develop into Victoria and South Australia, as well as the inception of the Swan River Settlement which after many vicissitudes evolved into Western Australia.

Whig, Tory and Radical alike, then viewed with disfavour what they considered as colonial encumbrances. But there was one easy escape from this liability, for the opinion widely prevailed that, as overseas settlements grew to maturity, they were certain to follow the example of the rebellious American Colonies by proclaiming their complete Independence. As Douglas Woodruff states in his brilliant survey of *Expansion and Emigration in Victorian England*: "Through the thirties and the forties and the fifties, the general attitude of responsible public men was that the Colonies should become as independent as possible. Utilitarians like James Mill, Grote and Warburton, Radicals like Cobden and Joseph Hume, evangelicals with missionary interests like Sir James Stephen, the permanent head of the Colonial Office, Parliamentarians like Roebuck, all looked upon the Colonies as problems which in time would solve themselves by walking away."

That these anticipations have been completely nullified needs no saying. No one suspected that the semi-barbarous beginnings of European colonization under the Southern Cross would lead to such splendid achievements as those of Australia and New Zealand, and that what was then the dumping-ground for England's criminal and recalcitrant population would develop into a great modern Commonwealth.

What is regrettably, even now, a largely empty Continent, attracted the interest of the early Victorians for several reasons. New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land were well known penal settlements to which innumerable victims of our revolting Criminal Code were transported with every mark of cruel ignominy. In the early thirties so tame a body as a Royal Commission strongly condemned this disgraceful system which, nevertheless, lingered with some ameliorations until 1853.

Gilbert Wakefield and his supporters agitated for the acquisition of virgin soil for their projected settlements. For Australia seemed a region designed by Nature as the ideal habitat for those who keenly appreciated the amenities of English country life. Sheep-rearing on a large scale began and, despite the onerous conditions imposed by Australian rural existence handsome fortunes were made.

Later, arrived the most alluring prospect of all. The Californian gold excitement had died down when news was circulated of the discovery of the yellow metal in Victoria. The bold, the enterprising and the adventurous rushed to this novel El Dorado and the digger, a new personality in Australian life, appeared on the scene which he soon dominated. Indeed, it is urged that: "From the gold rush, coinciding with, and furthering the growth of Colonial Parliaments based on extending suffrage, dates the development of Australian political life as it has persisted till this day."

In 1837 the convict community of New South Wales and Tasmania numbered 30,000, and the free population was little more. The convicts served as labourers to the settlers and the comforting theory that transportation was truly an act of mercy, inasmuch as it enabled men who had served their sentences to regain their liberty and independence in better surroundings, was in high favour.

Unfortunately, too many of the transported men were really the victims of poverty and oppression, and were mean material for the foundation of a virgin community. The craftier, more vigorous, and criminal on the other hand indicated clearly in their

subsequent activities as bushrangers their menacing character in a defenceless settlement. Curiously enough, owing to the semi-romantic ideas prevalent in England concerning life in Botany Bay, quite normal people occasionally committed crimes in order to be shipped to a far-off country where opportunities were afforded for success in life never available in their native land.

Also, "it meant a free passage to a new land to those who could never hope to pay their own passage. On the whole, those who did well in Australia and redeemed their name in England were heard from again, while no one heard from those who were sinking by the lash and the cells into permanent and hopeless degradation. Transportation was a lottery with a few prizes. Sentences were for seven years, or fourteen, or for life; but in practice a man became a ticket-of-leave man after three, six, or eight years. He was then free to set up for himself, and might become very wealthy. The Royal Commission were told the history of one convict who, by lending money to farmers and dispossessing them, was worth £40,000." Yet, broadly speaking, the system worked badly, and many of the worst horrors of American slavery were perpetrated under the authority—to a great extent the ill-informed authority—of the Crown.

Inspired as it was by the noblest motives, the movement in England which advocated the abolition of the entire system of transportation was regarded with disfavour by the free colonists. To them it appeared a sinister device to deprive them of inexpensive labour and its supporters were subjected to the vilest vituperation. But public sentiment in Australia later underwent a complete change, and there was a feeling of general relief when the system ended.

The prospect of a free agricultural life with a practical certainty of ease and pecuniary security stimulated emigration. Land was abundant and free; cheap labour was available. Sheep could be purchased at a low price, while the home market for choice wool seemed limitless. During Napoleon's ascendancy, Continental supplies of wool were suspended. Here was Australia's opportunity and John McArthur eventually succeeded in establishing the breeding of merino sheep as the principal industry of Australia. Considerable economy was now possible, for the transports which formerly made an empty return-voyage to England, or sailed on to China to procure cargoes of tea were now loaded with fine quality wool and Yorkshire no longer complained of the scarcity of raw material for its major industry. Thus the foundations of Australia's prosperity were laid. Still, Colonial conditions were scarcely ideal. With the disappearance of the penal settlements, the price of labour rose. Certainly, those who were willing to toil from rosy dawn to dewy eve prospered, but the less hardy and persevering found the pleasures of Sydney, such as they were, much more attractive than the squalid loneliness of the sheep-farmer's occupation.

An English agricultural labourer's life, however rough and ready, had at least a tincture of comfort, while in Australia sheep-runs, a shake-down served instead of a bed and Professor Shane assures us that general living conditions were not enviable. For, "In dry weather dust, in wet weather mud up to the uncertain line at which bush ended and house began, made a home little better than an animal's lair, and equally attractive to flies and vermin."

Again, as Mr. Woodruff reminds us, mounds of manure several feet high environed the more primitive huts and the adjoining stream provided ideal breeding places for injurious insect life. "To light a candle indoors in summer," he remarks, "was to

fill the place with mosquitoes. The only way to escape them was to sit or sleep in a smoke from smouldering cow-dung so dense that it weakened the eyes' resistance to 'sandy blight.' Just before day-break the mosquitoes would stop, but at dawn the flies were up for the day."

The marked scarcity of women, again, was the parent of many anomalies until Mrs. Chisholm, aided by Lord Shaftesbury and Sidney Herbert, sent girls from England who were settled in domestic service with a view to their later marriage. Many made excellent wives to emancipated convicts, who proved themselves able and willing to pursue an honest calling.

The gold rush of 1851 initiated important changes. Quaintly enough, the Colonial officials were unnerved by the discovery of gold, and even attempted to suppress information concerning it. Eventually these sagacious men were persuaded that the presence of gold would induce free emigrants to embark to Australia. The Home Government encouraged the miners, and the Ballarat gold quest which eclipsed all predictions began. A license for each gold prospector had to be paid, but the rush was unimpeded and Ballarat, formerly little better than a wilderness, was soon a hive of industry.

Not only was there a great influx from abroad, but diggers flocked from all parts of the Colony to the gold-fields, and many rural areas became silent and deserted. The profits made by the gold dealers were for the time enormous, and then the Sydney Mint was instituted in 1855, with a fixed price for the coveted metal.

T. F. PALMER.

## The Movement of Dialectical Materialism

IN his *Marxism after Fifty Years*, R. P. Dutt aims at showing how the political aspect of the theory is active and influential at the present day. A similar claim might be put forward for its philosophical side, at least in this country. There is a "boom" in literature anent Dialectical Materialism, and not only are Russian works being translated and sympathetically reviewed, but eminent English thinkers are defending or leaning to the theory. In our two select philosophical quarterlies, *Mind* and *Philosophy*, Dialectical Materialism is beginning to intrude into the company of the theist-idealist effusions of Oxford, the hard-headed realism of Cambridge, and the rather heretical tone of London. Whether this will lend style and prestige to the Communism of the soap-box is problematic.

Best known to Freethinkers will be the symposium *Aspects of Dialectical Materialism*, by Prof. Levy and company (other current collective works are *Marxism and Modern Thought*, and *Marxism*, by J. M. Murry, Prof. MacMurray, etc.), but it may not be untimely to mention and remark on others, of recent date.

The several works of Julius Hecker, himself resident in Russia, and not a Communist, have done much to foster interest and sympathy, and a most popular treatment is featured in his *Moscow Dialogues*, in which the representatives of the proletariat has dialectic intercourse with a variety of foreigners, and we learn from him that in his philosophy we are to "study things, not as fixed or permanent, but in a moving continuity of interpenetrating opposites," punctuated by sudden breaks or upheavals, these being integral parts of the process. In the sociological realm they are characterized by revolutions.

An important English writer, Prof. John Macmurray (*The Philosophy of Communism*) stresses the inability of any part of the organism to function as successfully as the whole. In its incompleteness it is "infra-organic." Applying this to society, the existence of classes is to be condemned as the condition for internal competitive conflicts. Power, he contends, is competitive, and therefore malign, and the bourgeoisie, who hold the reins, cannot plan for the whole.

We recall the work of that first-class experimenter, Loeb, who found that on making an incision in the body of the anemone a fringe of tentacles developed round the edge of the cut, and these new tentacles seized the crab-meat that was supplied, and pressed it against the cut, and when the slit was made near the natural mouth the new tentacles struggled with the old for the food. Internal conflicts within the organism also exist in nature, without the intervention of the scientist; curling tusks of certain animals have gradually pierced the skull, for instance. Survival for organisms in which the parts coalesce and do not compete or hinder. The (now deceased) Russian botanist, Starynkevitch, showed the benefits of "team-work" within the component parts of organisms, in his *Structure of Life*. Thus, in human society, what will best meet the conditions of survival will be the achievement of a high organic unit, and so the division into classes and competitive groups must disappear.

The scorn of Idealism on the one hand is only equalled by the hatred of behaviorism and what is termed "mechanistic materialism" on the other. The latter has become the *bête noir* of Soviet philosophers, for it leads to deviationism, which evidently is not to be tolerated. There are still a few weak-minded religionists of the fundamentalist calibre in Russia, and they appear to enjoy the freedom that is extended to harmless lunatics to moon about the precincts of their asylum. Levy saw them when he visited Russia, and has described something of their degradation. But the intellectual deviators from the straight Marx-Lenin line are a different proposition.

A definite number—between one and two thousand—of young Russian men and women are trained to be philosophers. That seems all to the good, but one wonders whether Mr. Chapman Cohen's familiar exposure of the vital difference between education and mere instruction may have some bearing here. For one smiles at the title of a book, *Dialectical Materialism, the Philosophy of the Proletariat*, by Pozner; in it one scents instruction, and not education. Surely, in order to hold and defend a philosophy, it is necessary to have made some study, at first hand, of all rival philosophies. There is something amusing in the idea of any proletariat even taking up the study of philosophy, much less all coming to the same conclusion. Then, indeed, the smile becomes a laugh.

This, of course, cannot militate against any inherent validity which the Russian system may have, but it certainly raises doubts as to the intelligence of its constructors. This doubt is, we think, amplified by L. Rudas' *Dialectical Materialism and Communism*. We have elsewhere criticized its matter, and merely stay to note that his opening words are: "Since the time of Huxley, Materialism has not been discussed in England." This is not merely nonsense, but the kind of nonsense that lets the cat out of the bag so far as its author's knowledge is concerned. At least fifty books could be named, in the time of J. S. Huxley, let alone Huxley grandpere, in which Materialism has not only been discussed, but defended; and the number in which it has been discussed we cannot now stay to estimate.

Pozner bitterly attacks mechanism, "the world-process being a creative evolution." But who denies it, so long as a clear meaning is given to "creative." Inasmuch as there are forms now extant which have been brought into existence in the course of evolution, they may be said to have been created. But they were not made out of nothing, in the theistic sense, but out of the properties of existence, ultimately analysable into those of matter or its forerunner. Both Dialectics and mechanists agree in this. Why, then, this excited opposition by the former? Common or garden Materialists feel nothing like the hostility evinced by the dialectic school, but we venture to suggest its cause.

It would seem that Dialectical Materialists know a good deal about nineteenth century thought, and not enough about that of the twentieth. In the former period, Engels and Marx formulated Dialectical Materialism, and, drawing as they did from Hegel, their criticism turned sharply on those Materialists who did not employ him, but followed sober science. Engels' *Anti Dühring* is to-day a potent source of dialectic polemic. And to-day the "mechanistic materialism" which is decried is mostly that of the nineteenth century, and not of the twentieth (the attack on behaviorism is an exception). It may even refer to the eighteenth, when certain clumsy statements of La Mettrie, Cabanis, Diderot and von Holbach may be explained as the result of the then very imperfect state of knowledge and method. Moreover, we know of no one who now styles himself, in the bold lettering of the Russian school, Mechanistic Materialist. Let the Dialectics get to grips with "empirical naturalism," "neutral monism," "critical realism," "emergent materialism," "emergent neutralism," and other forms which the Materialist line of thought has taken. Then we shall be spared the experience of seeing a distinguished Dialectic, Byhovsky (*The Philosophy of Dialectic Materialism*) taking in his criticism of the "mechanists" a figure so remote as Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), whose philosophy Flint said led to Idealism.

The differences between the Dialectic and contemporary materialistic systems are not so great. For Byhovsky, matter is what affects the sense-organs and produces sensations, and in physics is all that exists. Consciousness is the manifestation or function of its organized entities, and "subjectivity is an aspect or feature of objective reality." New laws arise for the new syntheses that spring up in evolution, and cannot be reduced to those that pertain at more elementary levels. Everything is subject to the laws of mechanism, but not to its laws alone. Non-A develops from A, which is not destroyed in the result, but enters into it as a component part. And so "the destruction of capitalism implies the assimilation of its technical achievements." Every change is an embodied contradiction; the conflict of warring forces gives rise to new qualities, containing fresh contradictions in their turn.

The system would thus appear to be contaminated by the pretentious Hegel-inspired terminology, which would seem to leave room for many arbitrary constructions. It is this which makes H. G. Wells denounce "this pseudo-scientific talk," "this class war stuff," and bothers sane-minded critics like C. M. Beadnell (*Literary Guide*, p. 43), who rather deplors that comrade J. B. Haldane should toy with it (in a Conway Hall lecture), though he is not, of course, enamoured of the official methods (see his article to the *Rationalist Annual*, 1936).

Finally, let us mention Prof. Alexeyev's *Theory of the State*, the constituent elements of which he gives as Population, Government, Order and Territory. It differs from the individual in not having a single

centre of reference, yet is an organic whole. Democracy, he maintains, tries to build up a state without a leading class, and is therefore bound to end in failure. Success attends the efforts of a state when it trains leaders bound by common beliefs.

In this connexion it is noteworthy that the British section of the Militant Socialist International, now ten years old, have issued a booklet of that title, which sets forth in summary fashion the aims, methods and constitution of the Party. The rejection of Democracy is here not allowed to endanger Free-thought, and a workable course of Government is conceived, which is neither Capitalism nor Collectivism. The project should be worth the attention of Freethinkers.

G. H. TAYLOR.

## The Revolt of Youth

THERE was a serious outbreak among the students of the Sydney University Evangelical Union a few months ago. During prayers and addresses there were continuous interruptions—cat-calls, whistles, hisses, etc. The Minister who was speaking at the time, the Rev. D. C. Hughes, states that never in his forty year's ministry had he heard the name of God and Christ so derided.

Views may differ as to whether the objecting students should have resorted to these methods, but several things stand out very clearly.

Students at the University—the great majority of them, it would appear—utterly reject the superstitious rubbish of the Bible. For this reason, it is a torture to them to have preachers, particularly of the ranting order, foisted upon them, and then to be required to listen—unprotestingly, and with apparent approval—to whatever issues from their lips. Thus the spirit of revolt.

Personally I welcome it.

'Tis the only means, it would seem, whereby they can effectively express their resentment of the humbug to which they have for so long been subjected.

A further fact revealed by the outbreak is the extent that Rationalism has permeated the university. Preachers here can go on spouting of the alleged converts to their creeds. Similarly, too, may we expect to find the papers, from day to day, reporting the fictions that are spun in this respect. But the proceedings at the university conclusively demonstrate that the Bible, with all its purports, is being more-and-more widely rejected.

That, in short, is the great and vital truth that emerges from the revels by the students in the present instance; and very gratified am I to be able to record it.

The foregoing, however, would be incomplete, without a brief reference to subsequent developments.

The students' attitude was, frankly and emphatically, a denial of religion. But this could not be honestly admitted by the clergy. The effects might be too far-reaching. So there were pitiful attempts to misrepresent, in the interests of religion, the proceedings at the university.

For example, we had the Rev. Nicholson, in a letter to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the following day, assuring the public that it was all merely "a youthful, exuberant outburst," and that he longed for the same "stir and enthusiasm" in some of the missions held in the churches. But in this hush-hush spirit he so far forgot himself as ruthlessly to expose those among whom he lives and from whom he draws his daily sustenance.

Let us have a few of his own words, as follows: "Would it not help to disturb this awful sleep of death that reign in them"—that is, the churches—"and burst up the deadly and damning smug, self-satisfied, complacent feeling that abounds in many of them?" There is no need to follow the Rev. Nicholson any further in this indictment of his own crowd. He's been among them so long that he must know them. Thus, in this respect it can be accepted that all he says is correct. But there is not the least possibility of his clouding, in this way, the

meaning of the demonstration—clear and inescapable—with which he deals.

The very day that the Rev. Nicholson so expressed himself in the *Herald*, there was another preacher at the University. In this instance the greatest care was taken in the admission of students to his meeting. All known to be unfavourable to religion were barred. In this way, dozens were kept out. Yet what was the verdict?

To those constituting the assemblage—an assemblage, of course, from which a unanimous response was expected this direct question was put—"Let all who believe in Christ stand up?" The daily papers report that, in reply, at least half the students present remained seated.

What a knock-out, then, have we here—both to the Rev. Nicholson, in the self-interested, misleading interpretation that he sought to give to the proceedings of the previous day; and to the whole of the clerical persuasion who would, if they could, for ever suppress the desire of the students to substitute the cult of intelligence and reason for that of superstition and fear!

FRANK HILL.

Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

### Acid Drops

This is the way the *News-Chronicle*, in a special article, deals with the proposal that Italy shall, as a reward for its attack on Abyssinia, be given about half of the invaded country:—

Having by the grace of God gained a magnificent initiative for peace, a British Government has lost it utterly by a blunder of the first magnitude.

Very flattering to the divine intention, but what a commentary upon God's intelligence? God Almighty having carefully selected Mr. Baldwin and his Cabinet to gain an initiative in the furtherance of European peace, finds himself let down because he has overestimated the dependable quality of a group of politicians. Why did he not select more reliable material? There are thousands of people in this country who could have told God not to trust too implicitly to party politicians, who however much they may love their country, love the interests of their own party more. Still, God meant well. We suggest that a good name for the Christian deity would be "The God of Good Intentions," for never has the world known a god who meant so well, but who bungled things so effectively.

If we may paraphrase Danton we might say that the kernel of current Christianity is "Cheek, again Cheek, always Cheek." Here is the *Church Times* calmly remarking that "The Christmas festival is the Church's gift to the pleasure and happiness of the greatest number." But everyone who knows anything at all of the subject knows that the Church has no more to do with either the existence or the perpetuation of the December festival than it has to do with the average December snowfall. There is hardly an authority worth bothering about who does not admit that the celebration of Christmas with its convivial and other customs are pre-Christian. The writer of the article on *Christian Customs* in *Hasting's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, says quite plainly that Christmas customs are "heathen customs which have been absorbed or tolerated by the Church," and adds that "the Saturnalia in Rome provided the model for the merry customs of the Christmas time." What on earth has roast turkey and plum pudding and drinking and singing and mince pies and general jollification to do with such a character as Jesus Christ? As a matter of fact there is no mention in Christian annals of Christmas being kept as an official holiday of the Church for over three hundred years after that given for the birth of Christ, and then it appears that the Church adopted a pagan custom which it found impossible to suppress

There is one thing that may be counted as a gift from the Church to the people. That is the falsification of history, the fabrication of documents, and the manufacture of bogus happenings. No one will dispute the supremacy of the Christian Church in these things.

A great many simple-minded souls have wondered why when God led the Children of Israel from Egypt to the promised land, they took forty years to do a journey that a travel agency would have done in as many hours. We are indebted to the *British Weekly*, which is naturally much better informed as to the mind of Jehovah than on the reasons dictating the actions of the local dustman, for the solution of the problem:—

He may have pondered whether or not He should take his straggling people by the near way. But he looked at them. He listened to what they were saying to themselves and to one another, to what they were saying privately about the whole business of making for any Promised Land, He decided, overcoming within Himself one of the thousands upon thousands of disappointments—He decided that they were not ready.

One wonders how much better the Israelites were at the ending of their forty year's wandering than they were at the commencement. Perhaps by that time "He" had given them up as a bad job and thought that the sooner he got rid of his excursion party the better. But the picture of God Almighty looking down on the Israelites, and listening to what they said privately about the whole undertaking, and then deciding they were not what they ought to be, is quite interesting. Now what we should like to happen is that God would attend a few modern Christian gatherings, listen to what they had to say, watch what they do, and then let the world have "His" private opinion about the lot.

The *Daily Express* reports that the night before the famous film star Ramon Novarro put on his new play at His Majesty's Theatre, "he knelt at the grave of Sir Henry Irving, in Westminster Abbey, and prayed for the success of the production." As the piece utterly failed to capture the public, it is evident that the prayer either failed to reach the Almighty or the Almighty failed to influence the public. In either case the prayer was a failure; and we would wager anything from a brickbat to a battleship that this particular instance of the efficacy of prayers will never be cited by the pious—not even by the Bishop of London in his wildest moments.

Mr. Gordon Beckles, in the same paper, tries to answer the question, why do not people go to church on Sunday? He asks a lot of questions—some stupid and some tolerably intelligent, and he would have liked to ask more. He wants to know, "what do the various denominations think of disunion between the churches?"—and he actually believes this and similar question may make people think he is "an infidel with a destructive bent." He need not worry. So long as he calls himself a Christian—and he does—almost any Church or denomination will welcome him with open arms. Asking perfectly innocuous questions does not make one exactly an infidel.

Mr. Beckles considers that "Christ's religion is simple." The great theologians and the thousand and one commentators of the Gospels evidently do not—or else they would never have written their ponderous, boring, and weary tomes. And Mr. Beckles admits that:—

All are inspired by the same Word: Baptists, Anglicans and Catholics—Presbyterians, Lutherans, and Methodists—Calvinists, Congregationalists and Quakers—Salvationists, Unitarians, and Christian Scientists; and all coming to different conclusions.

Surely this should prove that "Christ's religion" is not simple—though this confusion of tongues should have given one reason at least why so few people go to church on Sunday. Let us give another reason. *Sensible* people are finding the Church out; that is, they

are beginning to see that the whole of the combined Churches represents a huge imposture. This is what Mr. Beckles will discover for himself one day. But if he makes his discovery public he will have to leave the staff of the *Daily Express*.

While the Archbishop of York thinks a big war might be necessary to consolidate the power of the League of Nations, his brother in Christ, the Bishop of Bradford, claims that "if ever the League of Nations has to use military power, the prospects of any peaceful plan of international settlement will be very black indeed." Now what is a good, pious Anglican to think of his two leaders—both, of whom he is supposed to believe is inspired by the same God—giving such contradictory opinions? Either the League will be "consolidated" by another big war or it will not. It's like saying to a man who expects to win something through the toss of a coin that it is sure to fall either heads or tails. The plain man outside the Churches, might surely believe it possible for the League to devise some means of avoiding war altogether. Is this such an impossible ideal even in our own mad world?

"There has, we gather," says one of our religious journals, "been a vigorous discussion in process at Cambridge, about the proper subjects for study in the theological Tripos." "Textual criticism," claim some critics, "is unlikely to prove useful to a parson in his parochial labours." We entirely agree with this. Textual criticism has a nasty knack of being very unsettling to a parson. All the time he is quoting some precious words of "Our Lord," he remembers that textual criticism either has dissolved the traditional meaning of the words attributed to "Our Lord"; or has proved that they are interpolations either from the Septuagint, Philo, or Josephus or even the Old Testament. There is nothing we advise a good parson to shun as he would the devil so much as textual criticism.

On the other hand, the aforesaid journal considers "it right that the main subject for the Theological Tripos should be general knowledge of the contents of the Bible." Here again we agree. It is most disconcerting for a Freethinker in debate with a parson to find that the man of God so little knows his Bible. Just a few texts from Paul simply will not do. What is required is a *thorough* knowledge of the Word—or Words. The Theological Tripos should aim at making genuine Fundamentalists not half-baked Modernists. And we hope it will succeed.

Blackmail is a very ugly practice, and judges have denounced it as one of the most objectionable of offences. Here is a case of religious blackmail—official religious blackmail—that is full of instruction. It is taken from the issue for November of *Reason*, published in Bombay:—

The Principal District Munsiff of Alleppey passed some severe remarks against the methods of the Rev. Father Markose De Earasera, the Vicar of the Church of Mararikulum, South India, and nine of his colleagues in a case which he decided in favour of three defendant parishioners of that church in a suit filed against them by the Rev. Father and his associates for the recovery of the sum of Rs. 550 alleged to be due to the Church by the defendants.

It would appear from the proceedings of the case, as reported by the papers, that the defendants, who are brothers, had passed a promissory note to the Church for a debt contracted by one of their brothers since deceased. The Church could not recover the debt in the usual manner from the brothers and there the matter rested for the time being. When, however, their mother died, the Rev. Father brought pressure on them by refusing to bury her for three days. In the end to enable them to bury their poor mother they were forced to sign a promissory note the matter in dispute before the court. "I cannot conceive of a sterner or more relentless form of compulsion than what the church authorities put on a parishioner," said the Judge, "self-respect is

dear to everyone and the failure to bury a dead mother in time, as suits her position in life is not consistent with the self-respect of a son. The defendants, I find, have been the helpless victims of undue pressure on the parts of the plaintiffs and I dismiss the case with costs."

The defendants deposed that the promissory note was extorted from them by undue pressure and influence. Following the death of their mother in 1928, the Vicar and the trustees of the Church did not allow them to bury the body of their mother in the Church cemetery before they paid up the rental arrears due to the Church by their deceased brother. In the course of the judgment His Honour observed that every one of the witnesses examined for the defendants swore that the defendants' mother died in 1928, and that the body could not be buried in the Church cemetery until the third day due to dispute between the Vicar, his trustees and the defendants.

"The question put by the plaintiffs' counsel to the defendant," said the judge, "suggests a practice obtains in the Church of recovering arrears from parishioners by bringing pressure upon them when a death or a marriage takes place in the family."

Those people who see the hand of God in all things should be able to explain the result of a recent hurricane in Haiti. Nearly 3,000 people were killed, 200,000 of the 600,000 inhabitants lost all the possessions they had, and nearly all the churches, schools and rectories, about 250, were completely destroyed. The Archbishop of Les Cayes, Haiti, thanks God, however, that the disaster was not quite as bad as the one in 1928. But then he was not one of the killed, nor did he lose all his possessions. As La Rochefaucald says, "with what equanimity can we bear the misfortunes of others!"

Ever since Christians debated the knotty point as to how many angels can stand on the point of a needle Christians have distracted themselves with queer problems. Here is one writer trying to explain how a family will be united in heaven. But if some of the family go to heaven and some to the other place, how can they be united, unless there are excursions from one place to another? And in that case one would not feel quite certain that each excursion party would return to its departing place. We imagine that when comparing the company in hell with the company in heaven, some might well prefer the lower regions to the upper. For there are really no fools heard of as going to hell. These all seem to get to the other place, and there is a world of philosophy in the old lady's remark, "Heaven is all right for climate, but give me hell for company."

Professor Findlay says that there is no need to bother very much over the question of "mere human families," because "in this life family depends upon sex, and sex is for this life only." But in the absence of sex there can be no family reunion of any kind. Child and parent, husband and wife, will have no meaning? And imagine what kind of family party that will make! How on earth will a parent recognize a child or a child a parent, or a husband a wife if some sort of sexless transparency clad in a fleecy robe is all they can each discover. The more one thinks of this question of a future life the more ridiculous it seems. The Spiritualistic heaven has at least this kind of recommendation—it is so full of absurdities and contradictions that it can suit every kind of folly, and forward the policy of every kind of rogue.

Canon Sharrock addressed a meeting of Catholic mothers, the other day. He said that they had "a great task confronting them—the task of opposing the pagan outlook on human life, which has worked its way into the minds and hearts of so many in this country." It is difficult to imagine, that even the Canon really believes that Catholic mothers or the mothers of any other Christian denomination—could have any effect whatever on the advance of "Paganism"—by which term he really meant either anti-Christian teaching, or such a question as birth-control. These things have come to stay; and not only does the Canon know it, but so do the Catholic mothers.



# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL:

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## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E. G. CLARKE (Toronto).—We congratulate the courage of the *Toronto Evening Telegram* in publishing the criticism of Christianity by M. H. Halton. We do not know any British newspaper that would have had the courage to do so. We have no official censorship of the press in this country, but the censorship exists and is exercised with the customary cowardice of all unofficial censorships. Thanks for your high appreciation of the *Freethinker*.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—Miss C. M. L. Morgan, £1.

R. PARIENTE.—Many thanks for kind wishes, which we heartily reciprocate. Paper being sent to addresses of likely new readers.

L. MARTINS.—Mr. Cohen has dealt very fully with the question of Agnosticism in his *Primitive Survivals in Modern Thought*, besides dealing with the question in separate articles. In his judgment it is a compound of religious sham and philosophical humbug, with a background of mental timidity.

To Advertising and distributing the *Freethinker*.—Don Fisher, 3s.

A. THOMPSON.—There were several periodicals published under the title of *Freethinker* towards the end of the seventeenth and during the eighteenth century. Mostly they were concerned with a statement of liberal opinions on ethics, religion, and, to a smaller extent, politics. We have several of these publications among our books. In these periodicals the term "Freethought" is used with its fundamental significance—opposition to opinion in matters of authority. That it has during the last few centuries become associated with opposition to religion, that being the sphere in which authority is most prevalent, has made many timid people who feel they must claim to have some sort of a religion, fight shy of the term.

J. HUMPHREYS.—A state of mind that can properly be characterized as disbelief cannot exist without having at least a hypothetical belief as its opposite. We think that the state of mind you have in view should more properly be called doubt. But the subject is too wide to be made completely clear in a few lines.

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.

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

## Sugar Plums

Owing to fog, Christmas and holiday troubles, we are obliged to hold over until next week some matters that otherwise would have been noticed in this issue.

The tickets for the Annual Dinner on January 25, are being applied for rather earlier than is usual, but the earlier the better. We also hope that provincial Freethinkers will be as strongly represented as on previous occasions, or even more strongly. Full information as to suitable excursions appeared in last week's issue.

On December 21 over ninety couples were married at two London Register Offices—White Hart Lane, and Hackney Town Hall. This item of news will not be a pleasant Christmas Box to the clergy. It strikes at both

their incomes and their prestige. Now what is required is an improvement in the character of the buildings in which these marriage ceremonies take place. Some improvement has been made in many places, even to the extent of the local Council providing a few flowers, when the marriage takes place in Council premises. But some places are still very shabby. Marriage should be recognized for what it is, whether it takes place in a church or elsewhere, and it should be conducted amid circumstances that are as dignified and as beautiful as possible.

The January issue of the *Literary Guide* is a Jubilee number, and we congratulate it on its longevity. As the editor remarks, it is no easy task to keep a paper in being without substantial help from an advertising income, and the compliments that appear from many quarters in the Jubilee issue are well-deserved. It is true that the *Guide* has never had to meet the sustained boycott and the fierce antagonism that has faced the *Freethinker*, but all the same no Freethought journal can be maintained without a great deal of voluntary labour and much anxiety expended on its upkeep. We wish the *Guide* a continued and useful career. In the Freethought movement in this country there is urgent need for as much work as can be done, and by as many phases of opinion and forms of action as can join in the task of mental liberation.

Our remark last week that the only thing which will keep a Government straight—that is, as straight as any Government is likely to be—is the existence of an informed, critical and mentally independent public, has been demonstrated by the outcome of the Hoare-Baldwin-Laval affair. Mr. Baldwin having got his majority by affirming his inflexible determination to support the League of Nations in collective action against an "aggressor State," proceeded to concoct a plan with M. Laval which would give to this aggressor State half of the invaded country. When a blaze of indignation swept the country at this gross betrayal, he tried the stupid bluff of the man, who, if he could speak, would secure the support of everyone; and that failing to secure confidence, the next step was to dismiss the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and to admit humbly, almost tearfully that a blunder had been made, and it should not again occur.

Now the moral of all this is not the trickiness of politicians, or the worthlessness of their promises, or the fact that they will always play for personal or party ends. The real moral is (1) Whatever Government is established the tendency is in practice to lead (mislead) public opinion in a way profitable to itself; and it will do this by the customary methods of oppression, suppression and misrepresentation. (2) The only method of preventing this is to have an alert and independent and educated public. (3) That while the political type of mind is useful in its place the moment it is taken as capable or desirous of creating independence of mind with the general public, there is danger ahead. The last thing that any political party or any Government desires is a genuinely critical and educated electorate.

We are not arguing that the politician is not necessary. He is; but the qualities required for the political life are different in value, and to some extent in kind, from those exhibited by the man who has an obvious capacity to serve as teacher. That is why no one who can well serve the public as a teacher ought to expend his time or energies in the field of politics, where the possible workers are as plentiful as leaves in autumn. A glance over the fields of science, or philosophy, or sociology, will show how rare is the genuine teacher. The field of political life is crowded with men and women who only await opportunity for a successful career in that sphere of life. We would not like to pledge ourselves to the truth of the saying that "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world," but we are prepared to stand by the maxim that the man who moulds the public mind can keep the politician in order. In other words, a progressive democracy can only be secure so long as it is essentially a Freethinking one.

## Things Worth Knowing\*

### XXI.

#### THE ARYAN MYTH

ONE particular and very unfortunate ascription of one science to another, is the myth of the existence of an "Aryan race," the repercussions of which have been so intense that we must discuss it separately.

Despite the fact that England had had commitments in India from the beginning of the seventeenth century, there was no interest in the language of that sub-continent until the end of the eighteenth century. In the year 1783 the eminent oriental scholar, Sir William Jones (1746-1794), landed in India as Judge of the High Court of Calcutta. He began at once to study the Indian language. During the remaining ten years of his life he demonstrated the relationship of the Sanskrit to the main vernaculars of Europe.

It was Sir William Jones who introduced the word *Aryan* into modern European literature. He used it in a translation from Sanskrit in a perfectly correct and purely linguistic sense, to distinguish the speakers of certain Indian languages from others. Later it was used to denote the speakers of the Aryan or Indo-European family of languages or sometimes to denote the languages themselves. It is of Sanskrit origin, occurs also in Zend, and passed thence into modern Indian dialects. It was used by the Greeks and Romans (Latin *Ariana*, modern *Iran*) as a description of Eastern Persia, the district now called Afghanistan. *Arya* has also been used, as Sir William Jones well knew, as a religious group-name to distinguish the worshippers of gods of the Brahmans from the worshippers of other Indian deities.

During the first half of the nineteenth century the work begun by Sir William Jones was carried on by European philologists, especially in Germany. It came to be realized that there was a concrete group of languages which had very distinctive common factors and included Sanskrit, Zend, Sinhalese, Pehlevi, Pali, Armenian, Persian, Greek, Latin, as well as the Celtic, Teutonic, Slavonic and other-groups. Hittite has recently been shown to be of the group. The greater number of these languages is or was spoken in Asia. They came to be described as "Aryan," though they were also called "Indo-European," "Indo-Germanic," and sometimes—following a Biblical theory—"Japhetic." There was, however, always a tendency among philologists to restrict the use of the word Aryan to the Asiatic portion of this group of languages. This restriction rested on the firm ground that only the ancient Indian and Persian speakers of this family of languages called themselves *Arya*.

It happened that, the beginning of the nineteenth century the Romantic school in Germany became attracted to the study of the Indian languages. This was largely the result of the efforts of the poet Friedrich von Schlegel (1772-1829), who with his equally romantic wife, the daughter of the Jewish philosopher, Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786) became deeply impressed by Sir William Jones' translations from the Sanskrit. . . . From Schlegel's time to the present, the study of the Indian languages and their relation to the European has been pursued with more zeal than in any other country. We are not concerned

with the general course of those investigations, but there is one incident which is specially important.

In the early years of the reign of Queen Victoria the Prussian Minister to Britain was Baron William Carl Josias Bunsen (1791-1860), whose grandson was British Ambassador to Vienna at the outbreak of the Great War. Baron Bunsen was a considerable scholar, overflowing with enthusiasm for German philology. In 1847 he read a paper to the British Association at Oxford, in which he sought to show that the whole of mankind could be classified according to language and that this was a valuable anthropological guide.

About this time there came to England, under Bunsen's patronage, the young German scholar Friedrich Max Müller (1823-1900), who settled in Oxford in 1848 and remained there for the rest of his life. The high character and great literary and philological gifts of Max Müller are well known. About 1853 he introduced into current usage the unlucky term *Aryan*, as applied to a large group of languages. His use of this Sanskrit word contains in itself two assumptions—one linguistic, that the Indo-Persian subgroup of language is older or more primitive than any of its relatives; the other geographical, that the cradle of the common ancestor of these languages was the Ariana of the ancients, in Central Asia. Of these the first is known to be certainly erroneous, and the second is at least very doubtful. . . .

Moreover, Max Müller threw another apple of discord. He introduced a demonstration which is demonstrably false. He spoke not only of a definite Aryan language and its descendants, but also of a corresponding "Aryan race." The idea was rapidly taken up both in England and Germany. It affected to some extent a certain number of the nationalist historical and romantic writers, none of whom had any ethnological training. It was given especial currency by the French author Gobineau. . . .

In England and America the phrase "Aryan race" has ceased to be used by writers with scientific knowledge, though it appears in political and propagandist literature. . . . Max Müller was later convinced by scientific friends of the enormity of his error, and did his very best to make amends.

Thus, in 1888, he wrote: "Aryans are those who speak Aryan languages, whatever their colour, whatever their blood. In calling them Aryan we predicate nothing of them except that the grammar of their language is Aryan." "I have declared again and again that if I say Aryans, I mean neither blood nor bones, nor hair, nor skull; I mean simply those who speak an Aryan language. When I speak of them I commit myself to no anatomical characteristics. The blue-eyed and fair-haired Scandinavians may have been conquerors or conquered. They may have adopted the language of their darker lords, or *vice-versa*. . . . To me an ethnologist who speaks of Aryan race, Aryan blood, Aryan eyes and hair, is as great a sinner as a linguist who speaks of a dolichocephalic dictionary or a brachycephalic grammar. . . ."

Max Müller frequently repeated his protest, but alas! in vain. "The evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones." Who does not wish to have had noble ancestors? The belief in an "Aryan race" had become accepted by philologists who knew nothing of ethnology—and even by a few ethnologists who had no technical training and no clear idea of the biological meaning to be attached to the word "race." The influence of the idea of an "Aryan race" vitiates the work of a small band of anthropologists to this very day. If the term Aryan is given a racial meaning at all, it should be applied to that ethnic unit, whatever it

\*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.

was, that first spoke a language distinguished as Aryan. Of the character of that hypothetical unit it is simple truth to say that we know nothing whatever. As regards locality, the balance of evidence appears to suggest somewhere in the region of the Caucasus.

*We Europeans* (1935), by JULIAN HUXLEY, A. C. HADDON, & A. M. CARR-SAUNDERS.

## Spirit Photography

### II.

It cannot be too often repeated that the only way a "spirit" extra can appear on a photograph is to photograph it. And for getting this "extra" there are some obvious ways known to anyone who is familiar with photographic processes. One way is the very prosaic method of *copying*—that is, pinning the "spirit" on to a copying board and making a negative of it, carefully seeing that the only part of the plate which is exposed is that used to take the copy. This is a very easy matter for the experienced photographer. The same plate is then used to take the photograph of the believer and, naturally, when it is developed both the "extra" and the portrait appear.

If there is to be a test, then all the spirit photographer has to do is to exchange the test plate for the one already exposed with the "extra" upon it. If he is quite unable to do this, then the spirits do not appear that evening unless he can manage to get the "extra" on in another way. One nearly infallible method when the first copying fails or when it is found impossible to change plates, is through a special piece of apparatus. This consists of a developing tray with part of the bottom made of clear glass. There is a negative with some half-developed figure fastened to it on the underside. The tray is placed over a hole on the table in the dark room in which is an electric light. When the plate has been exposed—and in this case it can be the genuine test plate—it is taken to the dark room, put into the special dish and covered over while the photographer prepares the developer. He takes good care to press the switch at the same time, thus exposing the plate to the action of the light through the spirit negative—or rather it should be called a *positive*—and the trick is done. In fact, it would take an expert conjuror all his time to discover all the possible methods which a clever spirit photographer could "get over" the silly dupes who believe in him, or even the so-called experts who think they are a match for the cunning scoundrels.

In the case I gave last week, the question was—how could the spirit "extra" of Dr. Hyslop appear on a photograph when every possible precaution had been taken? A new packet of plates, duly sealed and signed; no possibility of substitution in the dark slide; no trick developing dish; everything fair and above board—at least, so it appeared. And yet it was as arrant a fraud as could be done. Mr. Van de Weyde had taken a batch of photographs of Dr. Hyslop many years before. Some of these were not liked by the worthy doctor and so were put aside. They were quite unknown to the general public.

Now, as soon as the little circle to which Mr. Van de Weyde belonged expressed a wish to test spirit photography, he went along to the nearest dealer—quite alone, of course, and without saying a word to anybody—brought a packet of plates, very carefully opened the wrappers, took out one of the plates, copied the unknown portrait of Dr. Hyslop upon it,

put the plate carefully back in the box, and fastened up the paper wrapping again so carefully, that no one could tell the box had been opened. He then took it back to the store and asked it to be put away till he called for it later on. This was done by Mr. Van de Weyde and two members of the testing committee, the assistant handing over the prepared packet of plates without a word, and the two members never suspecting, of course, that it was prepared. The rest was easy. And it would have required a very good expert to say exactly how the trick was done. I should be greatly surprised if any reader could have found it out last week.

The principal method of spirit photography, however, is substitution. It is almost impossible to avoid this so quick is the spirit photographer—especially in the dark room. The famous Magic Circle, a committee of clever conjurors, some years ago tested the pretensions of the notorious Hope. They had no difficulty in proving, quite conclusively, that this gentleman, whose fame as a spirit photographer was almost world-wide, was nothing but the usual plate-substituting trickster. And those who have had occasion to assist in these amusing seances, would have noted that the medium always insists upon *plates*.

Personally, I should never consent to this if I were testing his pretensions. I should use an ordinary roll film which has to have six or eight exposures before developing. Upon some of these I should take some photographs privately, and should insist on the test being made upon the unexposed parts. The roll film could not be "substituted." I have an idea that the "spirits" would be too hurt at my unbelief to appear then.

The palmy days of spirit photography were thirty or forty years ago in the small towns of both America and England. It was not too difficult to get copies of photographs of the prominent people, and even of some obscure ones after they were dead. The visiting spiritualist—for many of them toured a district—was generally smart enough to get hold of family albums, without the owners suspecting why. Methods are given in that rich repository of fraud entitled *Revelations of a Spirit Medium*, which had become very rare after it was published, because copies were bought and destroyed by spiritualists. It was reprinted some years ago by Messrs. Harry Price and E. J. Dingwall, and is worth treasuring as a monument to human credulity. The accounts therein happened in America, but people in England were not a whit behind their cousins in this respect.

We had our own frauds, whose exposure even by convinced spiritualists seemed to have had little effect in stemming belief in spirit photography. As far back as 1872, a famous spirit photographer named Hudson had a lucrative practice. He was exposed by the editor of the *Spiritualist*, who was a photographer himself, but the other spiritualist papers "gladly opened their columns to fresh testimonies and heated vindications," as Podmore reports.

The Frenchman Buguet, who was heralded in England as an absolutely genuine spirit photographer, was later prosecuted by the French Government for fraud but, I believe, he still has defenders among the faithful. Incidentally, Podmore in his *Modern Spiritualism*, gives some of the methods which spirit photographers have used to obtain their results, and which may prove interesting to those who wish to pursue the matter further.

Finally, one must call attention again to the famous photographs which were heralded by the late Sir A. Conan Doyle as indisputable proof of the existence of fairies—wings and ballet dresses complete. Copies lie before me as I write. They are clever examples of

trick photography—which almost any photographer who knows his job could duplicate. How clever trick photography can be is evinced by some of the famous films shown in our cinema theatres. Look at Wells' *Invisible Man*, or Edgar Wallace's *King Kong*. Had Sir A. Conan Doyle been alive to see these, he would have moved heaven and earth to convince people of the reality of giant apes, and of the possibility of making oneself invisible. In the matter of fairies his credulity could have hardly gone further.

And I must repeat again with what I said at first—that spirit photography is *all* fraud. The wonder is that anybody should have ever believed otherwise.

H. CUTNER.

## Commercial Christmas

EVERYONE KNOWS that "Christmas" is a children's festival. To many who have long since left their school days behind them, the last few weeks of the dying year culminating in one last spasm on New Year's Eve is one long period of worry, financial difficulty and often forced conviviality.

Christmas in these days is naught but an excuse. We keep alive the legend of Santa Claus to the kiddies, that is, if we are lucky; for most modern offspring know full well that Christmas is merely present time and an opportunity for seasonable goodies and parties.

We have heard on the still night air strains of carols; platitudes of "Peace on Earth, Good-will to Men" will creep into many a Sunday sermon; hurrying folk will jostle in the streets, their arms full of parcels and their mouths full of mock camaraderie.

The rich will order their food and presents from the stores and the poor will scrow, scrape and go without something in order to mark the occasion with a little present or delicacy culled from goodness knows what stall.

What creatures of habit we are! The practice of re-union at Christmas is being killed by the growth of modern transport; no longer do scattered members of a family climb into a stage coach and undertake a hazardous journey to gather together under the same roof at least once per annum. Even the very idea of sending cards is absurd if we come to analyse it carefully. As a remembrance to those we see but rarely it may be defended as a sort of "hands across the distance" notion; to send stereotyped greeting cards to all and sundry just because they in turn will return the compliment is silly. And yet we have not the courage to break with the tradition; we should be outside the pale did we not send a card to So-and-So. Old Smith gave a rattling good party last year, we must go one better this time, or we are stingy, we haven't the spirit of Christmas!

What is this spirit of Christmas? Where is the evidence that it exists? It is not scattering Goodwill among men to send cards or to exchange presents with members of one's own circle. What good do we do to the poor half-starved wretches on the Embankment by our exchanging of amicability?

Is there any more of the alleged spirit of Christmas, or of Goodwill in those troubled homes where discord and incompatibility are rife ordinarily just because the calendar says December 25? Of course not.

Rather the opposite; in many homes of sorrow or of poverty there is vague resentment, the difference between the haves and the have nots becomes more apparent, the lot of the unfortunate more burdensome.

And further from the domestic field, among other

so-called Christian nations of the world, is there more of the spirit of Peace and comradeship at the end of the year? Do they draw nearer to one another to join in Christian harmony and accord? Quite the reverse. The hates, the jealousy, the smouldering fires of envy are not one whit abated; the tie of the common Christian festival is not strong enough, despite the complacent mouthings of the pious, to override the tie of nationalism or of private feud.

The urging of the prelates falls upon deaf ears. It has fallen on deaf ears for hundreds of years past; it is a mere ritual adorned with much lip-service.

Christmas is a feast, certainly, but for the shopkeepers; they of all folk appreciate most the spirit and occasion of Christmas, although the same cannot be said with truth of the unfortunate assistants who work terribly long hours often unprotected by the humanity of the shopkeeper. They too are victims of the commercial function, which masquerades under the style of the "Festive Season."

"Trade follows the flag," is a maxim that is shouted at us from all patriotic quarters; it should now be amended to "Trade follows Christianity," for if we are not selling bibles to savages recently "Christianized" we are selling cards and presents to people we have imbued with the "Spirit of Christmas."

A. F. WILLIAMS

## Religion and Money

"Every religion is a getting religion; for though I myself get nothing, I am subordinate to those that do. So you may find a lawyer in the Temple that gets little for the present; but he is fitting himself to be in time one of those great ones that do get."

*Selden's "Table Talk."*

"The Divine stands wrapt up in his cloud of mysteries, and the amused Laity must pay Tithes and Veneration to be kept in obscurity, grounding their hope of future knowledge on a competent stock of present ignorance."—*George Farquhar.*

RELIGION and priestcraft may not be the same thing in *essence*. That is a point on which we do not intend to dogmatize, and this is not the opportunity to argue it. But *practically* religion and priestcraft are the same thing. They are inextricably bound up together, and they will suffer a common fate. In saying this, however, we must be understood to use the word "religion" in its ordinary sense, as synonymous with *theology*. Religion as non-supernatural, as the idealism of morality, the sovereign bond of collective society, is a matter with which we are not at present concerned.

Priestcraft did not *invent* religion. To believe that it did is the error of an impulsive and uninformed scepticism. But priestcraft developed it, systematized it, enforced it, and perpetuated it. This could not be effected however, except in alliance with the temporal power; and accordingly, in every country—savage, barbaric or civilized—the priests and the privileged classes are found in harmony. They have occasional differences, but these are ultimately adjusted. Sometimes the priesthood overrules the temporal power, but more frequently the former gives way to the latter; indeed, it is instructive to watch how the course of religion has been so largely determined by political influences. The development of Judaism was almost entirely controlled by the political vicissitudes of the Hebrews. The political power really decided the great controversy between Arianism and Athanasianism. Politics again, twelve hundred years later, settled the bounds of the Reforma-

tion, not only for the moment, but for subsequent centuries. Where the prince's sword was thrown into the scale, it determined the balance. England, for instance, was non-papal Catholic under Henry VIII., Protestant under Edward VI., papal Catholic under Mary, and Protestant again under Elizabeth; although every one of these changes, according to the clergy, was dictated by the Holy Ghost.

Priests and the privileged classes *must* settle their differences in some way, otherwise the people would become too knowing, and too independent. The co-operation of impostor and robber is necessary to the bamboozlement and exploitation of the masses. This co-operation, indeed, is the great secret of the permanence of religion; and its policy is twofold—education and the power of money.

The value of *education* may be inferred from the frantic efforts of the clergy to build and maintain schools of their own, and to force their doctrines into the schools built and maintained by the State. In this respect there is nothing to choose between Church and Dissent. The reading of the Bible in Board Schools is a compromise between themselves, lest a worse thing should befall them both. If one section were strong enough to upset the compromise it would do so; in fact, the Church party is now attempting this stroke of policy on the London School Board, with the avowed object of giving a Church colour to the religious teaching of the children. The very same principle was at work in former days, when none but Churchmen were admitted to the universities or public positions. It was a splendid means of maintaining the form of religion which was bound up with the monarchy and the aristocracy. Learning and influence were, as far as possible, kept on the side of the established faith, which thus became the master of the masters of the people. This is perfectly obvious to the student of history, and Free-thinkers should lay its lesson to heart. It is only by driving religion entirely out of education, from the humblest school to the proudest college, that we shall ever succeed in breaking the power of priest-craft and freeing the people from the bondage of superstition.

We could write a volume on this theme—the power of education in maintaining religion; but we must be satisfied with the foregoing at present, and turn our attention to the power of *money*. It is a wise adage that money is the sinews of war. Fighting is very largely, often wholly, a question of resources. Troops may be ever so brave, generals ever so skilful, but they will be beaten unless they have good rifles and artillery, plenty of ammunition, and an ample commissariat. Now the same thing obtains in *all* warfare. It would be foolish, no less than base, to deny the inspiring efficacy of ideas, the electric force of enthusiasm; but, however highly men may be energized, they cannot act without instruments; and money buys them, whether the instruments be rifles and artillery, or schools, or churches, or any kind of organization.

Given churches with great wealth, as well as control over public education, and it is easy to see that they will be able to perpetuate themselves. Endowments are specially valuable. They are rooted, so to speak, in the past, and hold firm. They bear golden fruit to be plucked by the skilful and adventurous. Besides, the very *age* of an endowed institution gives it a venerable air; and its freedom from the full necessity of "cadging" lends it a certain "respectability"—like that of a man who lives on his means, instead of earning his living.

It is not an extravagant calculation that, in England alone, twenty millions a year are spent on religion. The figures fall glibly from the tongue, but

just try to realize them! Think first of a thousand, then of a thousand thousand, then of twenty times that. Take a single million, and think what its expenditure might do in the shaping of public opinion. A practical friend of ours, a good Radical and Free-thinker, said that he would undertake to create a majority for Home Rule in England with a million of money; and if he spent it judiciously, we think he might succeed. Well then, just imagine, not one million, but twenty millions, spent *every year* in maintaining and propagating a certain religion. Is it not enough, and more than enough, to perpetuate a system which is firmly founded, to begin with, on the education of little children?

Here lies the strength of Christianity. It is not true, it is not useful. Its teachings and pretensions are both seen through by tens of thousands, but the wealth supports it. "Without money and without price" is the fraudulent language of the pious prospectus. It would never last on those terms. The money keeps it up. Withdraw the money, and the Black Army would disband, leaving the people free to work out their secular salvation, without the fear and trembling of a foolish faith.

(Reprinted.)

G. W. FOOTE.

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## Natural Law

IN the works of many writers who have ceased to hold orthodox views on religion, we frequently encounter the use of expressions which would seem to indicate that their change of view has resulted, not so much in a wider outlook, as in a diversion of their former modes of thought to a fresh objective. Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the *Freethinker* of November 17, 1935, refers to the article by Mr. Archibald Robertson in the 1936 *Rationalist Annual*, and rightly brings him to task for speaking of nature as being "governed" by natural laws. Unfortunately, this instance of speaking of things being "governed" by natural laws is not an isolated one. Dr. Hollander, in the *Rationalist Annual* for 1935 states that "natural laws govern the Universe." I open the first volume of Buckle's *History of Civilization*, and in the first chapter encounter a reference to "principles which govern the order of events." Such instances could be multiplied, and when we recollect that they issue from the pens, not of obscure writers, but of individuals who are considered authorities in the world of science and philosophy, and, most of all, leaders of heterodox opinion, the seriousness of the position cannot be over-estimated by anyone who has the future welfare of the Freethought movement at heart. So long as the idea of "governing" exists, it requires but one more step to the conception of a "Governor," and God, after being kicked out at the front door, is re-admitted, in disguise, at the back. This may not be obvious to the writers concerned, but a change of terms does not necessarily mean a change in mental outlook. The "Spirit of the Age," which stalks through the pages of Buckle is reminiscent of the Jehovah of the Old Testament.

Laws of nature are not pre-existing. They are not discovered. They are invented by man himself as an expression of what occurs in the realm of phenomena. They are classified observations from experience for future use. In the sciences into which human knowledge is divided: physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, and sociology, the observed processes are mentally detached and applied to all similar phenomena. A law of nature is a record of *how* things happen. We find by experiment that the intensity of light at a distance of two feet from the source is equal to one-fourth of its intensity at a distance of one foot. At a distance of three feet the relative intensity is one-ninth. This series may be extended and from the observations made we formulate the law: "the intensity of illumination varies inversely as the square of the distance from the luminous body." The law once formulated serves as our guide for the future.

The formulation of laws is a device to give precision and definiteness to our knowledge. This is the fundamental principle on which all laws of nature are based. The phenomena determine the laws, not the laws the phenomena. That the opposite opinion should be held by theologians is not surprising, but that it should be found in the strongholds of Rationalism is deplorable. Undoubtedly the use of the term "law," with its misleading connotations, is responsible for this erroneous idea. Prof. A. Wolf, in *An Outline of Modern Knowledge* (Gollancz) says: "The use of the term 'law' to express the regularity of natural phenomena is clearly reminiscent of the 'law and order' decreed and enforced by a sovereign power in a society; and to this day some people cannot divorce the notion of 'law' from that of a legislator."

The term "law" as applied to natural phenomena is not a happy one; "process" would appear to be more appropriate. In this connexion I cite from G. H. Lewes (*Problem of Life and Mind*, First Series, 1874 Edition, Problem 1, Chapter vi.).

"Referring to what was briefly stated in our Introduction we there saw that Law was originally supposed to have not only an objective existence 'in' the phenomena, but an objective existence independent of the phenomena; and this ancient error is still alive. By one of the illusions into which Philosophy easily glides, a Law of Nature is supposed to hold a position with respect to natural objects which is analogous to that held by a legislative enactment with respect to social life. Laws are a kind of wise police keeping Nature in order. How far the connotations of Language inevitably transfer this conception of the regulation of conduct to the regulation of Nature, it may be difficult to say; but the fact is that having once named Process by the word Law, we have great difficulty in keeping the two conceptions distinct. Even careful writers are apt to express themselves ambiguously on this point; and the majority of writers assuredly suppose that Law is independent of the phenomena which it rules. Strongly impressed with the mischievous teaching of its suggestions, I was many years ago led to propose the abandonment of the word Law in relation to physical phenomena; but I soon found that the reform was impracticable; the word is too deeply rooted. Instead, therefore, of attempting to get rid of it, we must be content with a recognition of its misleading connotation."

If this recognition is borne in mind we shall soon hear the last of nature, the world, and the universe being "governed" by natural laws.

F. KENYON.

### National Secular Society

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD DECEMBER 19, 1935

THE President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the chair.

Also present: Messrs. Clifton, Saphin, Tuson, Ebury, Preece, Sandys, Mrs. Grant, and the Secretary. A number of apologies for unavoidable absence were read. Minutes of the previous meeting were read and accepted. Financial Statement presented. New members were admitted to Brighton, Bradford, Preston, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Sunderland, West London, West Ham Branches, and the Parent Society. Meetings were sanctioned, and speakers appointed for Preston, Fulham, Bradford, Birmingham, and Edinburgh. Correspondence from Swansea, Finchley, Czechoslovakia, League of Nations Union, and other organizations was dealt with and the Secretary instructed. The first notice concerning the Annual Conference of 1936 was ordered to be despatched to Branch Secretaries.

The meeting then closed.

The next meeting of the Executive will be held on January 16, 1936.

R. H. ROSETTI.

General Secretary.

### SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

#### LONDON

##### OUTDOOR

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Mr. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday. Messrs. Gee, Wood, Bryant and Tuson. Current *Freethinkers* on sale.

##### INDOOR

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Gauden Hotel, Gauden Road, Clapham, S.W.4): 7.30, Annual General Meeting. Members only.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.): 7.30, D. H. Futorian—"The Fallacy of the Survival of the Fittest."

#### COUNTRY

##### INDOOR

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane, Birkenhead): 7.0, W. T. Wood (Chester)—"Liberty."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Social Evening.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Cooper's Hall, 12 Shaw Street, Liverpool): 7.0, Curzon Newhouse (Birkenhead)—"My Outlook on Life."

It is surprising that while most men are ashamed of being detected in an act of physical cowardice, so few should be ashamed of intellectual cowardice. Far from that being the case they will take it as a sufficient justification that it was not safe to express their opinions, or that it was not wise to oppose the majority. And yet physical cowardice is a small matter beside intellectual cowardice. In nine cases out of ten, when a man is guilty of physical cowardice the consequences end with himself and are negligible. In intellectual matters this is seldom the case. To suppress one's opinions may be to suppress something that is of infinite importance to the whole of humanity. To hide one's convictions is to convey the impression to others that you agree with their views, and you are thus bolstering a lie. And in society the personal attitude is reflected in the way we glorify the soldier and ignore the thinker.

"Opinions," Chapman Cohen.

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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.

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