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

## Views and Opinions

### The Common Front

I FEEL sure that most Freethinkers will have read Mr. Jack Lindsay's three lengthy articles on the "Materialist Basis" with interest, even if they feel that they have little reference to the original issue. Originally Mr. Lindsay wrote asking for space to put in a plea for a "Common Front" against existing threats to freedom. I agreed, but the articles really formed a plea for Marxism, with the inference that it was only through Marxism that a Common Front could be achieved. But the need for a Common Front has no necessary connexion with the advocacy of a particular theory of economics. The first may be necessary, but it does not follow that the second is quite sound. Mr. Lindsay substantially takes up the position that if attacks on freedom are to be rebutted Marxism is the only way.

Now it is not my job as editor of the *Freethinker* and President of the National Secular Society, to either attack or defend Communism. My purpose and my duty is to make plain what I believe is the attitude of organized Freethought in this country in relation to a "Common Front." So far as we are concerned, the Common Front is here and has always been here. We have always practised it. We are always ready to join with any body of individuals who are content to work loyally for a common end, and not utilize that association for party or personal gains. And I repeat that so far as the N.S.S. is concerned it will remain loyal to its avowed objects. It may also be taken that, as the history of the N.S.S. shows, it cannot be frightened into panic action either to pacify its enemies or please its friends, I also feel certain that it cannot be fooled into preaching one thing under the impression that it is advocating something else.

I regret that Mr. Lindsay said nothing about the Common Front, although this was the only material point in our friendly discussion. It is true that I opened the way for his last series of articles by com-

menting upon the value of certain terms used by Marxists, but, as I explained, I did this because I did not wish to appear discourteous, and, besides, some good is always done by clarifying terms. So I pointed out that the acceptance of certain first principles had no more necessary connexion with Marxism than with any other 'ism. Laws of social growth, laws of mental operation, laws of logic, are the same for all, and I objected to their being given party names. That very vital consideration is left untouched.

\* \* \*

### The Sociality of Man

Mr. Lindsay converts my exposition of the meaning of terms used by Marxists into a "very substantial agreement between us." If that be so, it can only mean agreement on the significance of certain terms which are to be used with equal relevancy by all. But he must not take opposition to Fascism and crass militarism as indicating agreement with Marxism. It is one of my complaints against Marxists that they, with exceptions, are too often led away by phrases which may be common to many schools of thought, and which when they are part of the Marxist terminology are taken to belong to Communism. The very term Dialectics, for instance, has a mystic power about it which reminds one of the power of the Holy Ghost in Christian mythology. But the term is as old as the Greeks, and means no more than extracting the truth by a questioning of opposites. I am afraid that, to many, to say that Marx showed the nature of a particular economic order would not be nearly so satisfying as that blessed word "Dialectics."

Also, my agreement with the statement of the social origin of *everything* that distinguishes man from the animal world (which is, of course, recognized by Mr. Lindsay), does not of necessity imply agreement with Marxism. It merely affirms the action of a feeling, a conviction that has been implicit in human society since human society began. It is no more the exclusive property of the Marxist than it is of the Capitalist. I do not say there are not differences of appreciation of the social fact, but it is there; it is recognized in every law that is made for the better distribution of the wealth of a country, or in the education of a people, or in every help given to distress; this sense of social oneness may flame into vigorous life with some, it may flicker like the feeble breathing of a weakly, newly-born infant with others, but it is there with the Conservative and the Communist, the Capitalist and the Proletarian. And when a single factor covers so wide a range, I prefer to adopt a scientific method, to use a term that covers the whole, and not one that is descriptive of a part only. I feel sure that is the more scientific way, although it may not so readily encourage a "mass mentality."



### Economic Determinism

Mr. Lindsay demurs to my calling Marxism "economic determinism." I am afraid I must repeat my preference, and for several reasons. First because Marxism does emphasize the economic factor as in the main, and with the less enlightened Marxists the only, factor in life; and while the better-educated ones allow for the operation of other factors, these are placed in a subordinate position. Even Mr. Lindsay says it is "the relationship of men in terms of the developing productive mechanism that makes history." Everything else is a mere surface phenomenon. My first preference is thus based on my liking for calling a spade a spade. My second reason is that the use of "Materialism" by Marx "dates" it as belonging to a stage when "spiritualism" still had a place in science. And "Materialism" as a philosophic or scientific principle is *not* what Marxism means by the term. As I have tried to make plain in my *Materialism Re-stated*, the use of "matter" as a basis for a cosmic philosophy dates back to the Greeks, and what was involved there was no more than cosmic determinism. And it is really inadvisable to confuse this Materialism with the Marxian use of the word. Marx's use of Materialism and of the environment has a curiously pre-evolutionary ring. Anthropology plays hardly any part in his sociology, and certainly has no important part in his philosophy. And if we are always to be referred back to the "productive-mechanism" as the ultimate and the decisive fact in human life, then economic determinism is the only term that fits the case.

My final reason for calling Marxism economic determinism is that in tracing everything back to the mode of production, and in regarding this as the decisive fact in life, Marxism loses the right to be called a scientific sociology. It hardly rises above the level of animal economics.

For the great, the distinguishing, feature of human society, the feature that definitely separates human from animal society, is the transformation of the material environment by the play of human intelligence. It is only in the very earliest stages of human society, and then only when the environment is peculiarly unfavourable to human well-being, that it can be said to dominate human life. But so soon as man learns to control the supply of food, to strengthen his natural powers by artificial aids, so soon as he peoples the world with superhuman beings whom he believes can affect his life, so soon as he evolves definite ideas of right and wrong, of superiority and inferiority, so soon we are noting the beginning of the domination of the human intellect over the material environment. And the greater the development of human society the greater the power of ideas and ideals, of inculcated beliefs and acquired knowledge over the material environment. I think Mr. Lindsay would agree with this, but it is not in line with, shall we say, popular Marxism.

Of course, it is possible, as I have said, by depriving man of all the advantages that society has given him, and by keeping him on the point of physical starvation, so to reduce him in the scale, that he is again at the mercy of the raw environment, and to make this all-powerful in its influence. But short of this there is the plain fact that the environment to which we react is one that has been transformed and is mainly man-made. It is perfectly true that man's thoughts and his actions are determined by the social situation. The error lies in thinking of the social structure exclusively in terms of the material environment. Sabbatarianism, animism, the vogue of obedience to those in power, the ideals for which men fight and scheme, ideals of power and influence, of

leadership and so forth, together with the "organized curiosity" of science and philosophy, to use an expression of Veblen's, are the conditions to which man adapts himself, and which exert a steady and increasing pressure on him.

Of course, different methods of production play their part. That is implied in the pre-Marxian principle that action and reaction are equal and opposite. Life functions as a whole, not in parts, and the result is a product of the interaction of all the parts. Ideas play their part in modifying economic conditions as economic conditions play their part in determining the form of ideas. It is not wrong to say that the material conditions affect ideas, it is not wrong to say exactly the reverse. It is wrong to say that either works alone. One does not "lose sight of the Materialist basis," in calling attention to the transformation of the material environment under the compulsive force of the non-material basis. It is not I who "abstract" the intellect from the conditions among which it functions. It is rather Mr. Lindsay who abstracts the material conditions from the play of the intellect on them, and who insists upon direct reference to them in explaining social phenomena.

Mr. Lindsay is rather unfortunate in asking whether I can think of "Darwin at any other moment of time than that of nineteenth-century Capitalist expansion." Of course, Darwin owed much to his time, but I must confess to some difficulty in realizing what Capitalist expansion had to do with his work in the field of evolution. For the theory of evolution, some sort of evolution, had been afloat since the time of the Greeks, and Mr. Lindsay must surely have overlooked the *De Rerum Natura* of Lucretius, which certainly contains some kind of evolutionary theory. No one imagines that ideas come from nowhere, and have no relation to the time in which they are expressed. The real point at issue is whether the "material basis" does not lose its relative power before the growing power of intellect. After all, speculations arise from speculations, ideas arise from ideas, the thirst for knowledge, as such, becomes an operative force, and even though we have to go back to a raw natural environment for a beginning, yet once the beginning is made the "material basis" begins to lose its dominating power, and one has to note the rise of other and superior forces. And this transforming power must, if we are to be genuinely scientific, be paid rather more attention than is paid to a King nodding to a subject and who in nodding forgets that without the subject the King would be a very different person indeed.

I must thank Mr. Lindsay for recommending me certain books to read, and it may comfort him to know that nearly all he names are at present on my shelves, and my friends are aware that I do not buy books merely for ornament. It is really because I have read them, and find therein many old friends who have been draped in Communistic garments that I made the statements which led Mr. Lindsay to conclude that we were in fundamental agreement. I agree that civilization is a social product, but I give the word "social" a more inclusive, and I think a more scientific, significance than Mr. Lindsay appears to do.

I also agree with Mr. Lindsay in his passion for freedom, although while again recognizing the great work done by revolutionary Russia, the colossal task it set out to do, and the success it has unquestionably gained, recognizing all these things to the fullest, I think he is straining the facts when he says that in Russia "everyone is given full chance to express criticism." Would anyone be allowed to criticize the Soviet system and advocate the re-establishment of the Capitalistic system? I think not. Criticism



within the Soviet system, may be permitted; this criticism is certainly greater than is allowed in either Germany or Italy, but *complete* freedom of criticism! I am afraid not.

Finally, I must again point out that in this attack it has not been my aim either to attack or defend Communism. That is not my job. Therefore I was not really concerned with "whether Marx-Engels-Lenin made a dialectically sound analysis of Capitalistic society" or not. I merely pointed out that an analysis is an analysis, and if one forgets that the parts act differently in a synthesis than they do in analysis, one is chasing moonbeams. Most Marxists appear to forget this. There is also a risk of misunderstanding when Mr. Lindsay says I am in "entire sympathy with the aims of Marx and Engels." With their *aims*, certainly. But the aims of Marx and Engels were the creation of a society in which men achieve the greatest possible degree of intelligence and happiness; and many others who disagree with the conclusions of Marx and Engels have also had this aim. The important thing is whether a

I have also emphasized the implied belief of all reformers in the social origin of everything that constitutes civilized life. This belief is imbedded in the nature of all normal men and women. It can be seen in operation long before Marx wrote. It is therefore inevitable that every social thinker should take it into account, without necessarily agreeing with particular theories derived from this common ground. Biologists and physicists all accept the same facts, but that does not prevent endless quarrels in the use made of them.

I was anxious to stress the fact (let us say, as against the ordinary Marxist) that while for purposes of study we are compelled to separate certain things from their relations to other things, we must not forget that in life all things act together, that life functions as a whole, and that the "Capitalist" and the "Proletarian" as they appear in analysis is a monstrous distortion of the two as they appear in actual life. We separate organism from environment for analysis; in actual life they are two sides of the same fact. The man who neglects these considerations has a dead sociology on his hands. The environment of social man is not a dead, or as (ordinary) Marxists would say, a material environment. It is the physical environment transformed by the human intellect, and operates on a new generation in terms of mental incitement. I fancy few of the more philosophic Marxists would disagree with the statement that the battle now in being is fundamentally that of conflict between rival systems of ideas—in Marxian phrasing "in rival ideologies."

I must apologize for taking up so much space, but it is better to close this discussion with a single article than continue it over two or three issues of the paper.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

#### PLATO

He is an inveterate dialectician, a severe and abstract thinker, and a great sophist. His metaphysics are of a nature so abstract and so subtle that they frighten away all but the most determined students. His views on morals and politics, so far from having any romantic tinge are the *ne plus ultra* of logical severity, hard, uncompromising, and above humanity. He had learned to look upon human passion as a disease, and human pleasure as a frivolity. The only thing worth living for was truth. Dialectics was the noblest exercise of humanity.—G. H. Lewes.

## The Shadow of the Sabbath

"The key to modern political history is emancipation."—G. W. Foote.

"The dangerously uneducated man is not the natural unschooled man, but the monster who has been elaborately uneducated at Eton, Cambridge, Oxford, and in the Church of England."—Shaw.

It has been said that English people "take their pleasures sadly." This is true so far as the weekly holiday is concerned, for Sunday, in this country, is so hedged about with priestly restrictions that foreigners are appalled. On the Continent, on that day, theatres, music-halls, circuses, cinemas, beer-gardens, and all the fun of the fair, are open. It is the principal day of the entire week for enjoyment, from Leningrad to Lisbon. The unfortunate Briton, on the other hand, has the choice between a church, chapel, tin-tabernacle, and mission-tent, or he may within certain specified hours, actually enjoy a "drink." If he is living in some areas, he may take his courage in both hands and at six o'clock in the evening attend a shortened and fourth-rate programme at a local cinema. He may even visit a museum, or art-gallery, and find out, by bitter experience, how fine is the dividing line between amusement and instruction. During the summer there is some amelioration in the shape of railway excursions, motor trips, and steamboats, but this relief only applies to sixteen Sundays out of fifty-two.

This onerous state of affairs presses on ninety per cent of the population. Wealthy people seem to do as they please. They give their choicest parties on Sunday, and if they cannot attend a theatre or music-hall, they can hire the artistes to amuse their guests. They can escape boredom by spending a week-end in Paris. As in so many other instances, there is one law for the rich, and quite another for the poor.

The centre of London on a Sunday resembles a city visited by a plague, almost a city of the dead. You may walk from Liverpool Street to the Marble Arch and find almost every shop shuttered and barred, and the only pedestrians a solitary policeman and a caretaker's cat. Not until six o'clock in the evening is there much change. Then a few restaurants uncover themselves, and a little liveliness is apparent in the streets. This happens in the heart of the Metropolis of a mighty empire, and a similar blight is in evidence in almost every town and village in the country.

All this happens in the ebb-tide of Puritanism. What the flood was like may be gleaned from the history-books. In those far-off days a man had to attend a place of worship. If he did not, he was suspected of infidelity, and the penalty was social ostracism, and persecution. Centuries later, we are a more civilized and more humane people, but the old, out-of-date, obsolete Acts of Parliament, restricting the liberty of the ordinary citizen, are still on the Statute Book, and still unrepealed. A man can still be fined for opening his shop on Sunday, but the law is enforced in some districts, and allowed to lapse in others.

The real opponents of a free Sunday are the clergy. They wish to have a monopoly on that day, and will brook no opposition. Every shilling spent on amusement on Sunday they regard as being diverted from their own collecting-bags and alms-dishes. Besides, they do not wish people to be too happy. They teach that this earth is but a vale of tears, and, if they had their way, they would leave the unfortunate Christian only his eyes to cry with. "Jesus wept" they say, and they imply that the whole world should also cry.



Sunday should be a real holiday, a day of rest and recreation, a day to be happy in. Why should this period, which is the one day in a weary week in which we really do have leisure, be so hedged round with petty restrictions? Why should grown-up people be treated like children, even naughty children? On the Continent, men, women, and children enjoy themselves on Sundays, and nobody has been struck by lightning because of this light-headedness. But the poor Briton has to find a stool to be melancholy upon; not because he likes it, but because his spiritual pastors and masters will have it so. Is it not high time that these priestly tyrants were told to play the fool only in their own pulpits?

The rationing of production, the ever-increasing use of machinery, has made so many "jobs" onerous in the extreme. The daily occupation has ceased to occupy the mind, and has been reduced to a close, fatiguing specialization. To restore the balance of contentment and happiness to millions of human beings is a task worth the attention of those in authority. How can the worker best profit by the Sunday leisure at his disposal? Must his leisure be employed in hearing George Lansbury preach or Oliver Lodge read the "lessons" in church?

The question of Sunday recreation once again illustrates the fondness of our law-makers for compromise. The laws and the bye-laws relating to the weekly holiday are a veritable hotch-potch of ridiculous contradictions. Complete prohibition of amusements on Sunday would be tyrannical, but it would be at least logical. Complete liberty would be both logical and sensible. But the confusion which is caused by arbitrary determination on the one hand and the inequality of the restrictions imposed, on the other, brings the laws of our country into contempt.

For example, cinemas are open on Sunday, but not until the evening, and only in certain districts. But theatres must not open anywhere on that day. Music-halls and dances are also taboo. Concerts are only permitted if their programmes are censored by kill-joys. Shops are open in some areas, and not in others. Even refreshment is restricted. The consumption of alcoholic liquor on licensed premises is a permissible indulgence in certain areas at 10.29 p.m., and an act liable to punishment at 10.31. In an adjoining borough you may have a drink up to 11 p.m., and emerge from the experience without a stain on your character. Even after 11, there are places where one can still legally consume alcohol, provided that one pays for a sandwich in addition, though one is not compelled to eat that sandwich or even a part of it.

What foolishness it all is! These laws and bye-laws relating to Sunday must be rationalized and brought into harmony, not with Ancient Judæa, nor with England under Oliver Cromwell, but with the twentieth century. Far and away the best kind of rationalization would be the sweeping away of that great jumble of pettifogging restrictions which suggest to the world at large that the British, in the eyes of their pastors and masters, are half-witted hooligans who cannot be trusted to behave themselves as civilized beings. Puritanism is as silly and as wicked in its way as is the ascetic view of life fostered by the Romish Church, which covered Europe with nunneries and monasteries. As for its wickedness, one has only to turn to the terrible records of witch-hunting in England and America by the Puritans. These fanatics were obsessed by the idea that the world was but a place of sorrow, and they did their worst to make it so for other people. Small wonder that Ingersoll remarked caustically that: "The Pilgrim Fathers landed on Plymouth Rock, but it would have

been better for America if the rock had landed on the Pilgrim Fathers." The continued desire of the clergy to keep the sun out of Sunday is but a relic of far-off, unhappy days when power was in the hands of half-mad fanatics. Let us do our best to make our country a land of smiles. Let us make Sunday a real holiday instead of a day ringed round with petty and insulting restrictions; a day on which men, women, and children can be happy in the brief leisure of their busy lives.

MIMNERMUS.

## Masterpieces of Freethought

SIX DISCOURSES ON THE MIRACLES OF OUR SAVIOUR

By THOMAS WOOLSTON

II.

WOOLSTON prefaces each of his *Discourses* with a letter to a Bishop, and excellent reading they make. The first is to the then Bishop of London, and at the very outset we get a taste of that joking which is so displeasing to Sir Leslie Stephen:—

Upon no other view do I make a Dedication of this Discourse to your Lordship, than to submit it to your acute Judgment, expecting soon to hear of your Approbation or Dislike of it. If it so happen, that you highly approve of it, I beg of you to be sparing of your Commendations, least I should be puff'd up with them.

That Bishop of London was likely to commend Woolston's first Discourse about as much as the present Bishop would have done. But there is another passage worth preserving:—

As to the Expediency of prosecuting Infidels for their Writings (in whose Cause I am the farthest of any man from being engaged) I will here say nothing. The argument, *pro* and *con*, has already, by one or other, been copiously handled. And I don't know, but I might be with your Lordship, on the persecuting side of the Question; but that it looks as if a Man was distrustful of the Truth of Christianity, and conscious of his own inability to defend it; or he would leave that *good cause* to God himself, and the Sword of the Spirit, without calling upon the Civil Magistrate for his Aid and Assistance.

Woolston's attack on the Miracles was based on his reading of many of the Church Fathers. Proof of Christian truth by an appeal to the wonders Jesus performed was, he insisted "no sanctuary" whatever. And he put the whole matter in a nutshell by claiming that "I believe, upon good authority, some of the Miracles of Jesus, as recorded by the Evangelists, were never wrought, but are only related as prophetic and parabolical narratives of what will be mysteriously and more wonderfully done by him." And he added, "that the literal History of many of the Miracles of Jesus, as recorded by the Evangelists, does imply Absurdities, Improbabilities, and Incredibilities, consequently they, either in whole or in part, were never wrought, as they are commonly believed now-a-days." Nothing, indeed, could be put more clearly than that; and Woolston proceeds methodically to prove his case, appealing not "only to Reason," but "also to the express Authority of the Fathers."

What he actually thought of these Fathers he probably kept to himself; but as Church writers were constantly appealing to them for proofs of the authenticity of the Scriptures and the credibility of Christianity, Woolston slyly adds that he appeals to the Fathers because they were "holy, venerable, and



learned Preachers of the Gospel in the first Ages of the Church, who took our Religion from the hands of the Apostles and of Apostolic Men, who dy'd, some of them, and suffered for the Doctrine they taught; who professedly and confessedly were endu'd with Divine and extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit; who consequently can't be supposed to be Corrupters of Christianity, or Teachers of false notions about the Miracles of our Saviour, or so much as mistaken about the apostolical and evangelical sense and nature of them. I know not how it comes to pass, but I am a profound Admirer, and an almost implicit Believer of the Authority of the Fathers, whom I look upon as vast Philosophers, very great Scholars, and most orthodox Divines."

One can understand that, writing in this way, Woolston was really poking fun at the stupid credulity of contemporary divines, who made a point of appealing to the Fathers whenever it suited their case, but who at once disowned them when it did not. The whole point as put by Woolston, was that the Fathers were constantly insisting that the miracles were to be regarded mainly as allegorical; and that if orthodoxy took its stand on the Fathers, how could it appeal to the miracles of Jesus as proof of the Divine Truth of Christianity? If the miracles never happened and the Fathers agreed they never happened, what had orthodoxy to say in defence of its dilemma?

Woolston had spent many years in reading the Fathers; indeed, he seemed to know them almost as well as some Victorian evangelists knew their Bible. He had carefully collected all they said about the miracles; and he proceeded to quote them with devastating fulness. "And if any are offended," he adds, "at what follows about the Miracles of Christ, let them turn their Displeasure and Indignation against the Fathers, for whose express or implicit Opinions I can be deserving of no Blame."

He is naturally fond of Origen, who saw in most of the narratives concerning Jesus a symbolical or allegorical signification; a point of view by no means pleasing to other members of the Church. In fact, Origen was long considered a heretic by the orthodox. But to Origen, Woolston added St. Hilary, St. John of Jerusalem, and St. Augustine, all of whom he quotes in their own language and with his own translation. And he does not hesitate to point out a fact not generally known, that the Fathers speak of the miracles of Jesus "indifferently, I had almost said, contemptibly" particularly of his Power of healing bodily Diseases, which by modern writers is so much magnified and extoll'd." For example, St. Irenæus says, "if we consider only the then temporal use of Jesus's Power of Healing, he did nothing grand and powerful" St. Augustine says that, "if we examine into Jesus's Miracles by human Reason, we shall find he did nothing great, and considering what he did was but little," and also, "Such works as Jesus did, might be imputed to, and effected by Magic Art."

Woolston deals in detail with the driving of the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple, as all the Evangelists give it; and he makes a sorry hash of its literal interpretation. Origen analyses it as an allegory, declaring it quite impossible to have literally happened; and St. Hilary agrees with Origen. One can understand how angry the clergy of Woolston's day were at this kind of exposure.

H. CUTNER.

## Indian Conjuring

(Reproduced from "Nature" by the courtesy of the Editor and by that of the author.)

THERE is a widespread belief among British people who have not visited the East that India is the "home of mystery." I have come across not a few men and women in high and responsible positions who share this erroneous idea. In "the dim red dawn of man" every strange natural phenomenon was ascribed to the supernatural. Slowly but surely knowledge grew, explanations displaced superstition, and reason, greatly daring, trespassed more and more on the once undisputed domains of the gods, with the result that one mystery after another was resolved by the onward march of common sense. The area of the "supernormal" has steadily shrunk, and is daily still shrinking. The discovery of facts has always preceded the explanation of their causal origin. There are many things which still puzzle us; we have no valid explanation for them; we freely admit our ignorance and wait for the advance of the tide of knowledge which we believe will sweep on irresistible and ever progressive, washing out as it goes the ripples on the sands of ignorance.

In the early days of our colonization of the East, men watched with wonder the fearlessness with which the Indian snake-man handled his dangerous pets. They saw "the mango trick," the disappearance of the girl from the basket which was stabbed in every direction by a sword, and the speedy return of the young woman unharmed at the bidding of her master. . . . As time went on, men who had been imbued with an interest in conjuring before they left "home," started to study the "tricks" which had obtained so wide a fame. To their surprise they soon found that conjuring as practised in the East was dependent on the very same factors which governed the art they had learnt at home. . . .

Step by step our people unravelled the mysteries, dragged them into light and saw them in all their pitiful fraudulence, until it became clear that the fact that a man has a brown, black or yellow skin, and lives in far-away parts of the earth little known to the majority of us, gives him no claim whatever to mystery. Man is man wherever you may find him; his powers are as limited in China as in Chiswick, in Tibet as in Tooting. . . . The wonderful "mango trick" is based on such barefaced deception that were a performer to present it before the "Magic Circle" at one of our monthly meetings, he would be laughed off the stage. The marvellous nodding duck is dependent on a principle so elementary that my grandson of eleven years of age—a budding magician—would hesitate to use it, unless it were combined with other methods which would help to conceal the fraud. The earthenware medallion, on which the Christian is invited to inscribe the symbol of his faith, with the result that though the disk is ground to powder beneath his foot, the cross is found imprinted on his hand, suffices at first to astonish the subject of the experiment, until he has had time—provided he has the intelligence—to solve the very simple device which led him astray. The wonderful seer who reads your fortune in the sand tells you things which seem supernatural in their source, unless you realize that your personal servant has been impanelled to help deceive you. Your conversation has been listened to, your letters read and the information so gained has been handed to the "holy man" in exchange for the receipt of a small coin of the realm. One might go on with a number of other "tricks"; and please

Faith does not rise from the dead, and one can make nothing but mythologies out of dead religions.—Zola.



note that "tricks" they are, nothing more and nothing less.

At the present time, most sensible people know all about the majority of these wonders of the East, but two remain to puzzle and disconcert a number of our fellow-countrymen, even including some who have spent the best years of their lives in the East. I refer to the "Rope Trick" and to "Levitation." The Occult Committee of the Magic Circle, a Committee of which I have the honour to be chairman, spent a great deal of time sifting the evidence in favour of the former performance, for which supernatural origin has been so freely claimed. At a meeting held in London on April 30, 1934, with the late Lord Amptill, a former acting-Viceroy of India, in the chair, we submitted a résumé of the evidence which we had collected. Lord Amptill said that during his viceroyalty he had tried hard to see the "rope trick," but in vain. Similar evidence had been sent us by letter from the late Viceroy, Lord Irwin. Lord Mes-ton, the Right Rev. the Bishop Welldon (formerly Metropolitan of India), Sir Michael O'Dwyer and others supported Lord Amptill, whilst the last-named mentioned that he had asked the Nizam of Hyderabad if he could help him, but though probably the most powerful prince in India, His Highness could not do so. Those who are interested in the subject will find it fully discussed in the second and third chapters of my book *The Myth of the Mystic East* (Blackwood).

No better illustration could be given of the way in which evidence in favour of this trick has been adduced than the statement made by a correspondent in the *Western Morning News* of November 29, 1934, who wrote as follows: "According to a correspondent, the Indian Rope Trick was performed before several hundreds of men who landed in India from Her Majesty's troopship Malabar. It was performed several times a day, not in bad light or when it was dark, but in full light of the Indian sun. The Duke of Connaught watched the performance sitting on his horse and seemed highly interested." This story, so circumstantially told, seemed as if it must be true, but I had the privilege of being able to submit it to His Royal Highness, through the kindness of a member of his staff, and this is the reply I received: "With reference to the enclosed letter from Colonel Elliot, I sent it to the Duke. Quoting from his letter, he says: 'After these many years I am unable to remember small events of that time, but I have no recollection of ever having seen the rope trick during my service in India, or even heard of it.'" It is impossible to believe that His Royal Highness would ever have forgotten such a supernatural happening.

There are two recent incidents which deserve a brief mention. The first of these was the so-called "Cheltenham Rope Trick." A gentleman who styled himself "Professor" declared that he had discovered how to perform the "Indian Rope Trick," and had actually done it before a meeting of a society of conjurers. This statement was widely advertised in the Press, and a local photographer stated that he had photographed a girl "as she reached the top of the rope—but when he developed the film, to his amazement, no trace of the girl was to be seen. The rope was bare." I took some trouble to run this story to earth, and was in communication with officials of the society, and with a gentleman of undoubted honesty who was present at the meeting in question. What did it all amount to? It was just a joke at the expense of the local press-man. A wire had been suspended between the tops of two tall trees a rope was hung from this, care being taken so to arrange the light that the wire was not visible, and the

dupe was told that just before his arrival a girl had ascended the rope and disappeared. The members of the society were much annoyed at the publicity that this trick had attracted and were very unwilling that more advertisement should be given to it than they could help. I had to fall in with their wishes. Measures had been taken to prevent any further absurd claims being made. All the same, from time to time notices appeared in the Press, dealing with this incident as if it were worthy of credence instead of being the joke—perhaps not in the best of taste—that it was. My son sent me a copy of it from an Indian paper in which it was taken seriously.

There remains the "Plymouth Demonstration of the Rope Trick," by Karachi, who, by the way, in private life was a Mr. Arthur Darby. There can be no doubt that a number of honest witnesses, who, however, had not had the benefit of a training in conjuring, were taken in by Karachi, who was simply performing a conjuring trick, which some people have thought very clever, but which to those of us who have studied conjuring was a very cheap form of deception. Mr. Harry Price exposed it in the *Listener* (January 16, 1935), and there was a lot of correspondence on the subject, much of which called to mind Carlyle's bitter dictum on the subject of the intelligence of the population of Great Britain.

The other much disputed topic is that of the power of Oriental fakirs to practise "levitation." Many years ago, Messrs. Maskelyne put on a show in which a girl was apparently suspended in mid-air lying horizontally. Hoops were passed round her in various directions to show that there were no mechanical aids to her flotation. It need scarcely be said that it was simply a clever piece of illusion. The Eastern magician presents a similar trick, and much has been made of it in a recent issue of the *Illustrated London News*. Many Europeans have seen this clever performance, but some at least of those who have described it have not been very skilled observers. What actually occurs is substantially as follows: The girl lies on the ground and is covered up; a sort of tent is built round her; then under cover of it she is raised up; the tent is gradually taken away bit by bit, until she is seen lying suspended as it were above the ground, but with some of her coverings dropping down to the ground near her head-end in what appears a very innocent way. The spectator is not allowed to go up and examine this drapery or he would find out that it conceals an iron post driven into the ground. Were he allowed further licence, he would soon discover the secret of the trick, which indeed is very similar to the device used by Maskelyne long ago. An Indian civilian who occupied a high position in the country recently wrote to me describing how he had had this trick performed in his compound at a garden-party. Among his guests was a well-known bishop who was greatly troubled by what he took for a satanic manifestation, until the Commissioner asked him how the man described his performance. "As a trick," replied the bishop. "Well, if he only claimed for it that it was a trick you may be sure it was nothing more. He would certainly not err on the side of modesty in his claims."

We read and hear wonderful descriptions of *yogis* buried alive and being none the worse for it. In those cases in which expert conjurers have witnessed such experiments, it has been quite clear that the actual conditions were not those claimed by the performer. By means well known to expert magicians—I use the term without prejudice—the suffocation of the subject was easily avoided, though doubtless the experience was sufficiently unpleasant. I know the wonderful claims that have been put forward, but I have so often had the opportunity of checking such



claims by careful observation and discovering their worthlessness that I am very far from being convinced.

Once again I would urge readers to look always for a natural explanation of any phenomenon, and when one is not forthcoming, to await the advent of more knowledge, confident that a normal and not a supernatural explanation is always forthcoming, provided that we have the requisite knowledge.

LIEUT.-COLONEL R. H. ELLIOT, late I.M.S.

## Acid Drops

The B.B.C. has now issued a Prayer Book "for use at the daily broadcast service." Church authorities are by no means too pleased, for as one of them says, "while we sincerely hope that listeners will continue to be provided with the many means of instruction and edification issuing from Broadcasting House, the clergy, and all concerned with the promotion of true religion, must see that broadcast services are not an alternative to corporate worship." In other words, pious people, once given the idea that fervently praying in front of a wireless set is just as good as praying in a church, and knowing also that some "lighter" entertainment is following immediately, will gradually abandon church-going and "corporate worship." This may mean smaller—very much smaller—church collections and congregations a consummation to be utterly abhorred. We expect a holy row one day about the whole question of religious services.

"When Not To Pray," was the subject of a sermon by the Rev. Cecil Roberts, at a Blackheath Church. His view was that when God told a man to do a job, he should get on with it instead of wasting his time praying about it. He believed as we do that prayer is often merely an excuse for not doing anything. Probably Mr. Roberts was sarcastic when he added: "Use your abilities first; your prayers will become effective after you have prayed and worked." Apparently prayers are answered—if you answer them yourself. Voltaire advised that prayer was a good thing in the case of disease—if mixed with physic.

Dr. Donald Soper received a great welcome on his first appearance in his new job as Superintendent of the West London Mission, always to be remembered as the Church manned by the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes—a preacher who never recanted his "Lie in Five Chapters." Dr. Soper, straight from Tower Hill, assured the new crowd that Jesus was "The One who astonished the multitude." Dr. Hutton who was present "capped" this smart wise-crack by telling of a lady he once asked about her new minister: "Did you understand him?" To which she answered: "Oh, I wouldn't dare be so presumptuous" ("much laughter," says the report). It will be an ill day for religions when congregations "understand" preachers who "astonish" them.

We see that the Rev. Principal Nathaniel Micklem has been "astonishing" his readers by his delicious definitions, which they will certainly not "dare to understand." In his new book: *What Is the Faith?* he tells us that:—

The Christian has to conceive of God as transcendent above history, as immanent in history, and in Jesus Christ as intrusive into history.

And Dr. Micklem refuses to believe that Jesus Christ possessed a "human personality." Oh, no! He says, "the Son of God became man," but he denies that He became "a man." It is like saying that cod is "fish," but not "a fish."

The Plumstead Methodists claim that they have had an answer to their prayers. Indeed they deserve it.

They have—so they boast—positively bombarded heaven with incessant cries for help. For five weary years God has heard Plumstead Central Hall shrieking prayers at Him from 8 a.m. till 10 p.m., to take away their weekly debt of £9. After all that time God has "converted" the debt into a credit balance. All the same, five years is an unconscionable time for the Owner of All Wealth to liquidate so small a weekly sum.

A stupid misquotation occurred in a leading article in the *Methodist Recorder*, which reveals a characteristic misunderstanding of life. The Greek phrase beloved of Matthew Arnold was, of course, to "see life steadily and see it whole," not to see it "solemnly" as the *Methodist Recorder* has it. But then Matthew Arnold was a humorist who saw the comic side of the Trinity instead of its "solemnity," when he compared this funny Deity to "three Lord Shaftesburys."

The Rev. P. J. Hesketh has a simple way of solving the question of "leadership" in the Church. He suggests that "every individual Catholic [Anglo] should seek the leadership of Christ in their own lives." This seems to have been the "solution" ever since Christianity came into being, but nobody seems to have found it solving anything. The snag, of course, lies in the fact that Christians appear to have always been at loggerheads as to what constitutes the "leadership" of Christ. Does anybody know? Are all Christians unanimous on the matter? Mr. Hesketh thinks it would be "interesting to consider our blessed Lord's attitude towards the unemployed and the want of decent housing." Well, what would it be—what *could* it be?

What could "our blessed Lord" know of modern labour-saving devices? Of refrigerators, electric appliances, vacuum cleaners, sanitary improvements, and the like? On the questions of both housing and unemployment, almost anything "Our Lord" could say would be so much nonsense. He wouldn't understand these things. That Mr. Hesketh himself feels this somewhat is shown by the fact that he recommends "more self-mortification in our lives," and, of course, "an increased effort to improve our prayers"—the kind of thing "Our Lord" and his coterie of ignorant disciples and followers understood very well. And a lot of good, prayer and self-mortification are for anybody!

While the British and Foreign Bible Society is distributing or selling Bibles and Gospels in thousands every year to all sorts and conditions of "heathens," the *Church Times* laments the fact that most of the people who get these Bibles "apparently construct the Christian religion for themselves from a study of its pages." To put it another way, unless the Bible is followed up by the Church, of what earthly use is it? How can reading the story of the wars of Moses, Joshua, and the Kings of Israel and Judah, teach heathens "pure" Christianity?

The position is put very well by the paper:—

For instance, in a certain neighbourhood, a hundred copies of the Gospels were sold. As a result, "fifteen different homes accepted Christ." What precisely does that mean? Accepted Christ as what? As Teacher? As Redeemer? As Son of God or only as Son of man?

We might have said this ourselves in criticism of the airy way in which the British and Foreign Bible Society reports the sale of millions of Bibles every year, as if merely selling the "precious" book was enough. The *Church Times* rightly says, "The circulation of the Bible within the Church is one thing. Its circulation divorced from the Church is another, and a widely different thing." Just so. We ourselves have many versions of the Bible on our shelves, but this fact cannot be hailed as a triumphant one for Christianity.

Does a Modernist believe in the Resurrection as a literal fact, or does he not? It seems very difficult to get a straight and unequivocal answer to this simple



question. The Rev. J. R. C. Webb tries to justify a very hazy position on the subject by a long rigmarole of words and words in the *Modern Churchman*. There is no doubt whatever that he *does* believe in the Resurrection—but “not in the sense in which either the Apostles or the Church employs it,” as one critic insists. Mr. Webb's idea seems to be that the Resurrection is “a purely natural survival of a discarnate consciousness.” If this is not “disintegrating” true Christianity, what is?

The cruelty of the fraud of Lourdes is once again shown in what the *Universe* calls a “poignant” story. One of the pilgrims was a poor soldier who had had part of his face shot away in 1918 in the War. Nothing more pitiful could be imagined yet when recently “a pain grew and spread, creeping over the little of his face that was left,” he was persuaded to make the pilgrimage. He “marched with the rest to the station filled with great hope. He prayed all the way to Lourdes to be cured or to die.” When he got to the grotto he “knelt there waiting.” And “Our Blessed Lady reached down and took him to her heart.” That is, he died without being cured. Yet here was a splendid chance for “Our Lady” to show Lourdes was not a huge fraud. This case will *not* be quoted by believers as a cure.

Two train accidents recently took place near Lourdes. In one, when 14 persons were killed and 20 injured, the Catholic press was delighted to report that no Lourdes pilgrims were among the victims. This proves how “Our Lady” looks after her own. In the other, eight Lourdes pilgrims, including a priest, were badly injured. This proves conclusively that “Our Lord” is no respecter of persons. You pay your money and takes your choice.

A critical biography has appeared in America of that strange fanatic-big-business man, the Negro, known as “Father Divine.” Mr. John Hoshor, the author, calls his book: *God in a Rolls-Royce*, which admirably sums-up Father Divine in a phrase. Father Divine may be only an imitation of many predecessors (he was “converted” by “Father Jehovah”—a successful booster of his obscure sect). But he has made money on the grand scale. He owns 25 restaurants, six grocery stores, ten barber shops, two weekly newspapers, 1,000 acres of farmland, and has an income of £5,000 weekly. Mr. Hoshor says:—

Father Divine has not only convinced 5,000 persons that he is God: he has set them working for him. He has shown them that material possessions are of no value and that they are better off without them. He has persuaded those who suffer from cancer, tuberculosis and other ills that they will live happily for ever. He has made the prosperous believe that they will be happier poor. He has persuaded many, by casual-seeming inference, that he killed King George of England because the King failed to answer a letter. And he has convinced thousands of the most physically minded citizens in America that they must love no one but God.

New York is suffering from the fanatical persecution by a Minister called Bowlby, who is prosecuting hundreds of little shop-keepers who dare to sell food and other necessaries on the Christian Sabbath. Mr. Bowlby has met his Waterloo at last. Appearing before a Manhattan judge, Mr. Michael Ford, he begged for the Sabbath-breakers to be “sent up the river” (to Sing-Sing). He even claimed that “If we don't uphold the Sabbath law, we will end up in Russian Communism.” But a sensible judge dismissed all the cases with the admirable words:—

The Sabbath law, in my opinion, is one that in years will come to be in a class with those hundreds of old blue laws, on the statute books of every State, never repealed, but never enforced because popular sentiment is not back of them.

Of course, there are some among us who claim to be in intimate confidence of the Almighty and therefore

claim the right to tell us what kind of a Sabbath is good for us. I don't belong to that class. In the enforcement of laws of this kind, whose strict application might conflict with the religious beliefs or rights of others, I will always be a liberal.

We learn from the *Literary Digest*, that Mrs. Alma White is the “Only living bishop.” Alma married a Methodist, but was far too fiery for that denomination. She founded instead The Pillar of Fire Church at Zarephath in New Jersey. She now boasts 3,000 converts and assets of over a million dollars. That her holy mission is really recognized in high (or low) places, can be gathered from what she told the *Digest*:—

On a certain evening in Longmont, Colorado, she recalls, I preached on the punishment of the wicked, warning the people that judgments would come speedily if they continued to resist the Holy Spirit.

I was looking into the faces of a number of young men in the rear of the tent and felt the message was especially for them. But they refused to surrender at the foot of the Cross. The next day there was an explosion in a canning factory nearby, and six of them were badly scalded, one of them died a few hours after the accident.

Murder as a “means of Grace” is no novelty in the annals of Christianity.

Ten thousand white Persons attended the hanging of a Negro of Ownsboro, Kentucky. Pop-corn was sold, souvenirs were collected to be treasured by future Christians, and loud and prolonged prayers were put up to Almighty God thanking Him for His prompt killing of this black soul.

How inviolate are the Catholic laws relating to indissoluble marriage can be seen in the case of Mr. John Farrow who is marrying Miss O'Sullivan. Mr. Farrow was formerly married to “a non-baptized party.” This marriage was “dissolved by the Holy See” when Mr. Farrow became a convert, and he is now free to re-marry. The Very Rev. Canon Mahoney puts it very clearly in his book on Christian Marriage. “In cases of conversion it may be that the unbaptized party is opposed to Christianity; in fact, the fear of possible disturbance might even prevent a person from becoming a Christian. In these circumstance the marriage contracted in infidelity may be dissolved, even though it has been consummated.” Altogether, it will be seen how delightfully accommodating the Catholic laws relating to the sacrament of marriage, even when it is consummated, can be. In fact, any marriage can be dissolved “in favour of the faith.”

### The “Freethinker” Circulation Drive

It is proposed to celebrate the coming-of-age of the present editorship by an attempt to create a substantial increase in the circulation of this paper. The plan suggested is:—

(1) Each interested reader is to take an extra copy for a period of twelve months, and to use this copy as a means of interesting a non-subscriber to the point of taking the *Freethinker* regularly.

(2) So soon as this new subscriber is secured, the extra copy may be dropped by the present subscriber. Until this is accomplished, he will regard the extra threepence weekly (for one year) as a fine for his want of success.

The plan is simple, and it is not costly; but it does mean a little work, and whether or not it is more blessed to give than to receive, it is certainly easier for most to give than it is to work. But in this case it is the work alone that will yield permanent benefit. There are many thousands of potential readers in the country; why not try and secure some of them?



# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

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## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

R. J. HOLLOWAY (Queensland).—Thanks for list of names and addresses to which copies of the *Freethinker* are being sent.

W. MACDONALD.—We know nothing of the orders of "Knights of Malta," and "The Knights of St. Columbia" save their names. If you could give us details, authenticated, we might be able to deal with them.

H. SMITH.—We are obliged for cuttings. See "Acid Drops."

R. PARIENTE.—Many thanks for your efforts to obtain new readers; paper being sent.

*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.*

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

*The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—*

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

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

## Sugar Plums

Mr. Cohen had a very good audience at the McLellan Galleries on Sunday last, and received a warm welcome by way of congratulation on his recovery from his recent illness. In this respect, no one could have been more pleased than the lecturer himself on the result, as it showed that he is still fit for work. He left home with many warnings—medical and domestic—but finished the task quite easily and without the slightest feeling of fatigue. It was a good omen for the future. On Sunday next, October 18, Mr. Cohen will speak in the Picton Hall, Liverpool.

We have had a very substantial response to our request for an editorial birthday present in the shape of an increased subscribers list. We thank those who have "done their bit," and suggest that gratitude in this case is really a request for more. What can be done is shown by those who have secured two, three and four new subscribers. One Wallasey friend has managed to rope in six, and to make sure that they get their paper he takes it round to them weekly, and collects payment. More power to his elbow. His example proves that we are right in saying that there is always a potential *Freethinker* reader round the corner. We have given over forty years of work to this paper, and we want those who appreciate what has been done, to give a forty minutes' search for a new subscriber among their friends.

Our offer to send a selected five shillingworth of Pioneer Press publications with every annual subscription from a new reader, still holds good. So also does our offer to send four weeks' issues of the *Freethinker* to addresses that are sent us on receipt of twopence in stamps.

Apropos of our "*Freethinker* Circulation Drive," we have to thank the West London Branch for issuing a circular to its members calling attention to the need for taking part in the move to secure new readers. We trust its appeal will receive the attention it deserves. The Branch is very energetic, and we hope West London *Freethinkers* will lend whatever help they can.

The second edition of *Spain and the Church* is selling well, and this also is making us many new friends. Two booksellers in London have sold a thousand copies each, and street-sellers have done well. Some of these have made quite a respectable profit from the sales. We are ready to extend this last method of sale indefinitely, and it is a good one while Spain is in the news. We shall be pleased to hear from as many of our provincial friends as possible on this matter.

Our old friend, Theodore Schroeder, has addressed a scathing letter to Father Coughlin—a prominent figure in the U.S.A. Presidential Election. Mr. Schroeder writes less as a politician than as a Secularist. Our readers will read with interest the conclusion of his note:—

Secular social justice is a standard of justice derived exclusively from human reason, applied to observed human practices. . . . In contrast with this "Christian social justice" might be a standard of justice claimed to originate from God, and transmitted through some divinely authorized and infallible Pope, priesthood or revelation. . . . This makes your political activities look very much like a promotion of the dictatorship of God, or of the Pope, rather than a supremacy of the independent secular thinking of Catholics and others.

Two announcements of interest to Birkenhead and Leeds *Freethinkers* are that Mr. G. Whitehead will speak in the Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane, Birkenhead, on "Religion and Psychology," at 7 p.m., and the Leeds Branch N.S.S. opens its indoor session with a lecture in the Imperial Hotel, Briggate, Leeds, at 8 p.m. Both meetings take place this evening (October 11).

The successful open-air season of the Sunderland Branch N.S.S. is largely due to its good fortune in being within range of several good speakers. Messrs. Brighton Flanders, Dalkin, Charlton, and the brothers Straughan have all put in some very good work during the season. A debate on "Is There a God?" has been arranged to take place in the Priestman Hall, Roker, Sunderland, on October 21, between the Rev. Rosenthal and Mr. J. T. Brighton. Additional strength to the *Freethought* movement in that area has undoubtedly resulted from the North-East Federation of N.S.S. Branches, in which the Sunderland Branch is included.

Mr. George Bedborough opened the new season's lecture campaign at the South London Branch last Sunday, at their new centre, the well-known Alexandra Hotel, close to Clapham Common (Underground) Station. Mr. Bedborough is lecturing to-day, October 11, at the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. His subject is "Christ's Crudities: The Sermon on the Mount." We hope to hear of a large attendance.

It is really awarding Maximilian Robespierre too much honour to compare him with Immanuel Kant. Maximilian Robespierre, the great citizen of the rue St. Honoré, did truly have an attack of destructive fury when the monarchy was concerned, and he writhed terribly enough in his regicidal epilepsy, but as soon as the Supreme Being was mentioned, he wiped the white foam from his mouth and the blood from his hands, put on his blue Sunday coat with the bright buttons, and attached a bouquet of flowers to his broad coat-lapel—*Heine*.



## Things Worth Knowing\*

LVII.

### A PLEA FOR LIBERTY IN EDUCATION

At the meeting of the British Association in 1935, the headmaster of Winchester said: "The primary and governing object of education is to bring men to know and to love God and to do His will." Others would probably express their ideal by saying that the development of character was the major purpose of education. As the type of character aimed at is very clearly defined, the broad effect of the training is that all the children think alike; and they think as the elders intend them to do, that existing institutions are the best and that it is an act of impiety or disloyalty to disturb them. Childhood is prolonged by reducing responsibility to the minimum; respect for authority is secured by discipline; and manifestations of sex are sternly repressed. A good deal of instruction of practical value is really given for the purpose of developing character. The process begins in the preparatory school, and is continued long after maturity in the universities. Some voluntarily subject themselves to further discipline by joining military organizations, and in countries where conscription is in force, such further discipline is universal and compulsory. The public school ideal dominates British education in all classes, and it will accordingly be useful to examine the special features which make it so effective an instrument for producing a uniform type of character.

Religion is prominent in the English Public School. The headmaster must by preference be in Holy Orders, and if he is also a "doctor," he is so much safer. Prayers are held in the school, and many old boys find their most vivid recollections centring round the old school chapel. Every college at the older universities has its chapel, and compulsory attendance thereat was only abolished during recent years. The Church of England form predominates, and for long, Jews, Roman Catholics, and Nonconformists were debarred from entering Oxford or Cambridge. The very names of the colleges form a chapter in ecclesiastical history.

Uniformity of thought is partly secured by uniformity of attire, games and other institutions. Every school with any pretension to dignity must have its school tie, colours and cap, and where purse permits, even everyday clothes must conform to pattern. Thus the boy is encouraged to sink his individuality and to feel himself one of a group, and he is incessantly taught that his allegiance is due to the group.

... Tradition plays a great part in the older schools. Most of them have special customs, commemorations, and titles which are scrupulously adhered to. The Bluecoat of Christ's Hospital, for instance has survived from the time of Edward VI.

Respect for the great is encouraged in every aspect of school life. ... The dignity of the masters is upheld by cap and gown, and caning in a Public School is considered by many to be an important factor in building up British Character. National traditions are as scrupulously maintained as school traditions, and royal anniversaries and State ceremonies are always observed with demonstrations of loyalty. The general atmosphere of the school is conservative, and patriotism is demonstrated by devotion to the O.T.C.

\* 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.

... A boy may be subjected to these influences during the impressionable years of fourteen to nineteen, and they are not haphazard but are deliberately intended to produce a certain type of character which is also constantly held up as the ideal by precept and instruction.

... Such a training is obviously ideal for fitting men to fill positions where the lines of action are already laid down, and precedent and custom prevail. Hence the Public Schools have contributed very largely to the number of judges, ecclesiastics, administrators and statesmen of the less revolutionary type. These classes control the country and consistently resist change. ... But the Public School type is lacking in constructive capacity, initiative, and resource, and when placed in a new situation or confronted with a crisis, it rarely has the imagination to deal with it other than by old methods or weapons of force. It views every innovation with distrust, and that is why so many grave social evils remained unredressed in England for years. ... The deadly uniformity of the Public School education and its discouragement of creative ability account for the smaller proportion of men of science, imaginative writers, poets and musicians the system has turned out, while art students frankly seek a freer and more inspiring atmosphere in their own institutions.

When we return to the schools for the masses and other institutions for training the children of the poor, we find that the Public School ideal still prevails, and as far as possible the same methods are adopted. Scripture is taught in the national schools, and religious observances play a part in many philanthropic organizations. The team spirit is constantly inculcated in the Boy Scouts and similar movements. Above all the value of discipline is emphasized again and again, and its real object is made quite clear.

... Discipline reaches its zenith under Fascism, and there are some who do not regard this as too extreme for England. At a meeting of organizations interested in the welfare of boys and girls, at which a representative of the Home Office presided, Mr. W. McGregor, editor, said as reported in the Press, "He envisaged universal adolescent schools in which boys and girls would be in the nature of 'wards of State,' returning thereto when unemployed. Although they might not agree with the ideals they would be foolish not to realize what was being done for the youth of Germany and Italy, where youth was encouraged to make sacrifices for an ideal. ... (Times, April 3, 1935.)"

In an address which was broadcast, the Archbishop of York said, "The Liberty that was rooted in human selfhood expressed itself in claims made upon the community or in self-assertion against it, while the liberty that was rooted in Divine sonship expressed itself in free fellowship and aspiration to service. ... The freedom which Mussolini wiped out in Italy was deeply corrupt; the freedom which Hitler obliterated in Germany was so incapable of fellowship, that in the multitude of political parties, always forming new combinations, executive action was paralysed." (Times, May 31, 1935.)

... It is sometimes claimed that the public school system teaches us to command as well as to obey. ... But this is very far from being a general truth. Readiness to obey and capacity to command are opposite states of mind. The most highly disciplined person is the one who, when urged by the strongest possible motives to act for himself, refrains from doing so and obeys the order of another, even if that order sends him to death. His own judgment must count



for nothing. If a highly-disciplined person is promoted to a position of authority, he can rarely do more than discipline others as he has been disciplined himself, and rule them by the principles he has been taught. In a situation requiring independence of thought and departure from precedent, he is likely to be vacillating and timid. This can often be observed in civil life, but is most obvious, and has its most tragic effect, in the profession of arms. Not without reason has the caricaturist seized upon the elderly figure to typify inaccessibility to new ideas. In the South African War, confronted by a method of fighting which they had not been taught, they were hopelessly bewildered, and constantly surrendered to bodies of Boers far inferior to them in numbers. The enemy were only defeated in the end by overwhelming forces and devastation of the country. Many who took part in the Great War will be able to recall instances of gross military inefficiency, and the blunders of the Higher Command on a vast scale are now only becoming known to the public.

... The children of the poor, on the other hand, have had to identify themselves with those who must or at least are expected to obey. Many of them have never given an order to another person in their lives, and on them the effect of incessant disciplining is far more potent. Nevertheless it would be stupid and ungracious not to recognize the amount of genuine human sympathy which finds its outlet in philanthropic institutions. Indeed, as society is constituted at present, many of these organizations afford the only possible means of relieving the various means of distress among the poor. It is all the more tragic, therefore, that much of the help for the young, through holiday camps and institutions, must be given under a system which compels an unnatural segregation of the sexes, defiance of biological principles, and the building-up of a character which too easily lends itself to manipulation by interested or unscrupulous persons.

*Sacrifice to Attila,*

By DR. W. A. BEND, pp. 287-99.

## Nationality and Internationalism

### I.

THE above title introduces a subject of many-sided interest, particularly in its bearing on the outlook for peaceful co-operation between nations and peoples. It lends itself here to idealistic theories of a World State, in lieu of a chaos of conflicting national interests, under some form of world government. Against this idea is the persistence of national sentiment and sympathy as the dynamic of statesmanship: while connected therewith is the principle of nationality as an organic factor in the evolution of human societies and civilization.

Then in contrast to co-operation between separate sovereign states as a basis of action, we have in the field a revolutionary movement of violent change to obliterate national boundaries, as such, and to usher in a "new World-Order," founded on a particular economic dogma. Beyond all this is the turmoil of the contemporary situation. We propose here an examination of the question in a scientific spirit, though, of course, any conclusions thereon must be of a personal persuasion.

The subject links with the wide problem of Race, and its division into distinctive peoples or nationalities. But what constitutes "Race"? and what specifically defines "nationality"?

As the *Hominidae*, wherever they first appeared, or became differentiated from the *Simian* genus spread over the habitable globe, they developed variations into sub-species, now broadly classed as "race." The process went forward when the distribution of land and water and climate differed, apparently, from the constitution of things in historic time. Ethnologists are not at one in their notation of these main divisions, though they may be reduced to three or four according to colour of skin, and nature of hair. They comprise the wide-spread Caucasian race of a white complexion, merging into olive and light brown, with wavy or curling hair; the Mongolic, of a yellowish tint, with long straight black hair, allied to the American Indian or "red man"; the Negro and Negroid with woolly or frizzy hair, black to dark brown or chocolate skin, widely distributed in the Tropics. In these divisions are presented also broad distinctions of physiognomy. These "races" again differentiate into numerous sub-divisions or "peoples," who vary in stature, proportions, conformation of skull, in their features, temperament and endowment.

The Caucasian peoples are distributed in Europe—their historic habitat—and the temperate zone, but extend to sub-tropical Asia and North Africa. The Mongolic types range through North, Central and South-East Asia. The Negro and Negroid divisions mainly cover the warmer zones, including the Pacific Islands. The "red" aborigine of the Americas has representatives of varying tribes and tints, from the lands of the Eskimo to Patagonia. When they first become known to European adventurers they also present singular contrasts of material culture and social organization. Where, through circumstances of association, mixture of these distinctive racial types has taken place, further sub-species appear.

It is of import in this connexion, that beyond dispersal of the primary hordes of mankind, almost every defined people, when first known to history or acquaintance, has a tradition of migration from some other region to where they happen to be settled. To take a few instances; in so vast and long established an empire such as China, the indigenes of the Middle Kingdom have a legend of an ancestry coming from beyond the Hwang-ho and settling there; whence, in the course of centuries, their power has expanded over neighbouring territories and tribes. The founders of the Brahmanic polity of Hindustan were invaders from elsewhere. The Maoris of New Zealand and other tribes of the Pacific are migrants. The British and Irish are historically not the first inhabitants of these islands; to be followed later by Anglo-Saxons and Vikings. The story is universal of the pressure of peoples on each other under the twin urge of hunger and lust and the means of subsistence. Enmity, not amity, prevails. Attainment of desirable conditions by one incites the cupidity and rapacity of others. Long before "capitalist" and "imperialist" exploitation was heard of, the human family has been cheerfully engaged in the same game, and war is a principal counter. The only prescriptive right to territory acknowledged through the ages is possession and *force majeure*:—

The good old rule. . . the simple plan,  
That they shall take who have the power,  
And they shall keep who can.

All which is illustrated in the account of the conquest of Canaan or Palestine by the Israelites, as told for the benefit of posterity in their own unique records; which portray a similar ethnical originality. Under a mandate of their Lord, Jehovah, these Chosen People are sent on their exploit with the charge from their leaders, Moses:—



Therefore thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his commandments alway. . . . And that ye may prolong your days in the land, which the Lord swore unto your fathers to give unto them and to their seed, a land that floweth with milk and honey. For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot as a garden of herbs: But the land whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year. . . . Then will the Lord drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves. Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river Euphrates even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be.

The record goes on to describe in detail the celestial warfare for its acquisition. How when the city of Ai was taken, Joshua drew not his hand back until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. And the spoil of that city Israel took for a prey unto themselves according unto the word of the Lord, which he commanded Joshua. When a combination of Kings came against these marauders, the Lord discomfited them before Israel:—

And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Bethoron, that the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Asekah, and they died: Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the Sun stood still, and the Moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies.\*

This naïve story epitomizes in its way the nature of the harsh conflict out of which arose the nations and empires of the primal civilization as presented at the dawn of history. The races and peoples, as they appear a few thousands of years B.C., exhibit themselves in a similar ethnical character to that shown in more recent times—already clearly defined in their peculiar variety. It is here that we touch the emergence of "nationality," but at first in a tenuous shape. Here, too, there enters the entity of language, for one of the attributes of the several tribes or peoples is the possession of a special tongue, language or branch of a language. Whatever mankind may have failed of accomplishment, it has shown a diabolical ingenuity in the invention of modes of expression and means of articulateness. At the same time it has provided innumerable barriers to mutual intelligibility and comprehension. Then in the attempted art of writing language, after tentative experiment with "pictograph" and "phonogram," a true alphabet is hit upon with signs for the main phonetic elements of language or speech. Yet a similar fertility of invention is used in different scripts to embody alphabet and grammar in forms of practical utility.

Philology has lighted up the growth and classifica-

\* Jehovah is an austere masculine deity, and a ground for dispossessing the "heathen" of their lands is the "abominations" of their local cults; presumably the worship with licentious rites of Baal and Ashtoreth, male and female Semitic divinities of fruitfulness and fertility. Yet these rites were seductive to the Israelites, who "went a whoring after other gods and bowed themselves unto them"—much to Jehovah's displeasure. So religious antagonism appears as a further incentive to material rapacity; a phenomenon which recurs in later times.

tion of language; but leaves untouched the psychic mystery of its diversity. So with causation in race and tribal variation, ethnologists talk of "genes" and "hormones" in the system as factors in adaptation to environment as the chief cause of change. Adaptation must be accepted, to an extent, as natives of one climate, transported suddenly to another extreme, suffer, and may die. There are other things to be explained—those differences of stature, feature, temperament, etc., previously mentioned. While they may be subject to mutation, the persistence of a type and character once formed is its striking attribute. And this persistence carries a decisive relation to the general human upshot.

AUSTEN VERNEY.

## Ingenious Jehovah

THE finite mind has for long accepted the fact that the Infinite moves in a mysterious way. Indeed it is asserted that "His ways are not our ways," and, that they are, on occasion "past finding out." So much so, that many good people persuade themselves that the standard applied to the Almighty should be somewhat different to that set for fallen mortals, and that the gifted Omar was no better than he should be when he exclaimed:

"What! Did the hand then of the Potter shake?"

I have known of irreverent miners who, while thanking God for laying down the coal-measures, hinted at the absurdity of placing them in such awkward positions. These men who have to earn their scanty living by hard and onerous toil, should remember that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," and when a dreadful accident devastates a countryside, leaving numberless widows and orphans, it is only another mark of Divine Kindness; one more proof that "He doeth all things well."

A favourite argument of the believer, when anything particularly stupid, or brutal, or illogical, is brought to his notice, is that God in his wisdom adapted circumstances to suit the mentality of simple men. Is it a question of defending the special creation theory outlined in Genesis? The primitive mind was unable to comprehend a truer statement. Was it necessary to make a fresh start in the world's history by drowning the bulk of the population? Here again, it was the only way the Lord could "lam them"—these stiff-necked ancient peoples.

One has only to read the Hebrew Scriptures to find out a few of the ingenious methods devised by the Lord of Hosts. If the ordinary hours of daylight were not sufficient to slaughter those of mine enemies, then the sun was compelled to come to a standstill so as to finish the job. That was a much better way than devising that Aaron and Hur should hold up the arms of Old Man Moses while the favoured party gave the Amalekites the drubbing they deserved. Still, it was an original idea!

Spoiling the Egyptians, too, at the time of the Exodus was a bright notion. Plenty of people would have been so glad to be free—especially from the lice and the boils, and the murder of their first-born—and that they would have ignored the "swag." But the Lord was out for a profitable transaction. He wanted "shent per shent."

This subject reminds me of a story told of an artist who painted a most ambiguous picture and showed it to a friend. Inquiring the title, this friend was told "The Deliverance from Egypt." "But where are the Israelites?" was the further query. "Oh, they are over the other side." "Then where are the Egyptians?" But the artist was equal to the occa-



sion. "The Egyptians," he said, "were all drowned. You want to read your Bible."

It may be allowed that some read the Bible too little, while it is equally true that others read it too much. The Freethinker should preserve a happy medium. I rather fancy that a Mr. D. Davidson has gone to excess in this. It's true that a little romance now and then, "is relished by the wisest men," but one can have too much, even of a good thing. I have just seen a copy of the *Daily Telegraph* for August 1, in this year of grace, wherein that gentleman enlarges on the Great Pyramid as a "sign and witness unto the Lord of Hosts." He occupies a whole page, and there are two diagrams showing how inevitably the Lord meant Mr. Davidson to be the exponent of important secrets, that he was to settle tremendous issues, and that, by his amazing industry and estoteric knowledge, he was to make plain to a sceptical world, the inner workings of a Divine Mind.

Mr. Davidson must have spent years at it. He has written books on the subject, and he is familiar with all the chambers, and tunnels, and passages and galleries of that mighty monument. He works it out in inches, and the inch is not the orthodox British inch, but a special inch which is rather less. In fact our inch is 1.0011 compared with the Pyramid inch. The inches stand for years, and out of this complex structure, you get an amazing synopsis of history, even down to the beginning of the Great War, August, 1914.

To show the "cuteness" of the mind of Jehovah we must bear in mind that he allowed it to be inferred that the Pyramid was erected, in honour of Osiris, who, of course, was not a true god. We only spell this deity with a small g. Also, these early builders were instigated to the fabrication of the records of the ancient Egyptian Kings. This all seemed necessary for the establishment of the Chief Corner Stone—the stone that was rejected by the builders. It is a curious method of forecasting world-events. One point may be noted. One of the long passages leading from below the Queen's chamber emerges in a direct line with the Pole-star at the time of 2144 B.C.

With lines drawn from the "Chamber of the Triple Veil of Ancient Egyptian Prophecy" our guide and philosopher can find several forecasts of past events. The date of the birth of Christ is, naturally shown. It was on B.C.4. His crucifixion is equally apparent, the tragic event happened  $30\frac{1}{4}$  A.D. The Adamic race began 4000 B.C., but whether these round numbers are an attempt to shelve the real origin or not, is not quite clear. Perhaps those early masons knew of the text, "In the beginning," and declined to commit themselves.

It is to be regretted that Mr. Davidson does not show any variety of prophecies of great events. Surely the Queen's Chamber itself could have given us more of world-shaking events. The Punic Wars, Discovery of America, the Inquisition and the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, Alfred burning the cakes, or John signing Magna Charta. There are numberless important events which Jehovah doubtless meant to be understood, and he fobs us off with Adam's beginning and the date of the Crucifixion.

Still, we must not gird at our prophet, for giving a meagre record of the past. What is more to the point, he peers into the future. After claiming successful "tipping" for 1913, 1914, 1918, 1928, and 1933, he takes our breath away by asserting that September 14, 16, of this year is of considerable importance, seeing we stand on the "threshold of the assessment period," connected with the Kings' Chamber. Freethinkers the world over will be glad to note that the event has once more been postponed.

Till the 15th the lamp holds on to burn  
That e'en the greatest sinner may return.

Armageddon comes later, I am pleased to report. Not till November 27, 1939 is hell to be let loose for the final. It will be a long and weary business for August 20, 1953 will have arrived before "a righteous form of Government shall emerge from the English-speaking peoples" from 1947 onwards. So now we know, that "English as she is spoken" was hinted at and made allowance for, in the dim recesses of those ancient tombs long before Moses was discovered among the bulrushes.

It is only fair to say that Mr. Davidson is not prepared to enter into detail as to the happenings that will take place. All he will say is that it will lead to the "displacement of the forces of Materialism, and the return to the Plane of the Divine Courts"—whatever that may mean. In any case, apparently we are in for a busy time, and as has already been said, it was thoughtful of Jehovah, in the first instance to give us unmistakable records of events; and in the second place, to illuminate the genius of Mr. Davidson, so that he might warn us in good time, against these dangerous events, and take necessary precaution, if precautions can be taken.

ALAN TYNDAL.

### The Barbaric Law against Suicide

AMONGST the numerous progressive and reformist movements in this country agitating for the repeal or abolition of ancient laws, which interfere with the liberty of the subject and which are altogether out of harmony with public opinion, and the spirit of our age (e.g., The Blasphemy Acts, The Lunacy Acts and D.O.R.A.), it is regrettable to find that there is apparently no society nor movement which has as its objective, the repeal of one of the most barbarous of these old acts—viz., the law against attempted suicide.

The extreme danger of this measure is well-illustrated by a recent experience of my own.

Last year I was in dire poverty, and was also suffering terribly owing to an estrangement from a friend and to other causes. In my desperation, I became faced by the age-long problem of man, immortalized by Shakespeare in his famous passage from *Hamlet*, beginning, "To be or not to be?" In the crisis in my life, I answered this question in the negative, and took a gamble on death solving my problems, by swallowing 120 aspirins. I never dreamt that in taking this course, I ran any risk of criminal proceedings in the event of failure. I was aware that in all ages, leading men, including Judges and Statesmen (to cite two modern instances, Mr. Justice McCardie in 1933, and the Hon. E. Marjoribanks, M.P., stepson of Lord Hailsham, The Lord Chancellor), have taken this way out of their troubles, and I never dreamt that a poor man would be branded as a criminal for endeavouring to follow their example. Moreover, have not many scientists (e.g., the late Lord Moynihan) defended and advocated euthanasia in cases of extreme physical or mental suffering. Were they criminals?)

The aspirins did not kill me, but made me very ill, and I was removed to the Infirmary, where the friend, whose estrangement was a contributory cause of my attempt, completely made it up with me, and my mother agreed to take me home and care for me on my recovery, which took place four days later, when I was discharged. The cause of my attempting suicide having completely gone, I thought my troubles were over for awhile, and that I could look forward to a spell of happiness. This hope was however shortlived, for three hours later I was arrested at my home and charged with attempted suicide, and committed for trial.

After three weeks in custody my "trial" took place at London Sessions on September 12, 1935. Had I been tried by a "Jury of my peers," I should probably have escaped the long period of confinement and torment



which awaited me as the extenuating circumstances were so strong, and the charge such an inhuman one for this twentieth century, that I have enough faith in the judgment and mercy of my countrymen, and enough experience of them as a public-speaker, to believe that, had the case been decided by them, they would either have found me "Not guilty," or "Recommended me to mercy." But the "Christian" judge—doubtless realizing this fact after the evidence of my friend had been given (she was called by the prosecution, but her evidence was strongly in my favour)—pressed and induced me into pleading guilty, by promising to take into consideration the extenuating circumstances, and leading me to believe I should escape imprisonment if I did so. As soon as I had pleaded guilty, however, the Judge's attitude changed. He declined to allow me to call my mother or any witnesses, and although he permitted me to address him, he cut my speech short, suddenly stating that my time was up, that he would only give me three minutes more, and then he proceeded to inflict upon me the amazing and surely unprecedented sentence in modern times for such an "offence"—of six months imprisonment in the second division.

I adopted the hunger-strike as a protest, and continued the same, for nearly six months, until my discharge at the expiration of my sentence, being kept alive by forcible feeding, three times daily (476 times in all). Although my health was affected, the authorities declined to discharge me on licence, although "The Prisoner's Temporary Discharge Act, 1913," was especially passed to enable this to be done, and although this act has been applied to persons guilty of far more serious offences (e.g., the Suffragettes, who were found guilty of arson, etc.) And the authorities also refused my alternative request that I should be permitted to complete my sentence in Maudsley or some other nerve institution where I might have obtained treatment, thus proving that my detention was purely punitive and not for my benefit.

Quite apart from the callousness and inhumanity of such a sentence, it would be interesting to know what possible good the authorities imagine they achieve by punishing persons who commit acts of this description—acts which are the outcome of suffering, and which in no way constitute any attack on the state or society. If the motive is a deterrent it certainly was a failure in my case, as the effect of my confinement was to revive the suicidal desires which had left me after my reconciliation with my friend. My long confinement and struggle against my tyrannical sentence has also detrimentally affected my nervous system, and increased my passionate hatred of intolerant Acts of this description.

Since my discharge I have again been arrested and fined 40s., not for trying to die this time, but for trying to live; the trumpety and trumped-up charge against me being merely that I caused an obstruction by taking up a collection after an open-air meeting. Thus while one law forbids me to die, another law drives me to try and die by making it impossible for me to obtain the means to live. Thus does "Christian" British justice treat her poor. Is it not surprising that in these circumstances, I have formed the opinion I was punished not for trying to die, but for failing to die. Truly "The Law is an ass." (Dickens.)

I sincerely trust that at any rate all Freethinkers will unite in demanding the repeal of this medieval measure which violates the sacred right of the individual to the control of his own body, which penalises sufferers by adding to their suffering, and which so far from preserving life is calculated to produce the opposite result, as it tends to drive the would-be suicide to adopt a sure method of destruction, in order to avoid the legal penalties of failure.

H. GORDON EVERETT.

The only way in which one human being can properly attempt to influence another is the encouraging him to think for himself instead of endeavouring to instil ready-made opinions into his head.—*Sir Leslie Stephen.*

## 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

#### INDOOR

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead) : 11.30, Mr. L. Ebury. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, October 12, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Bryant, Evans, Barnes and Tuson. *Freethinker* on sale at Kiosk. Should be ordered in advance to avoid disappointment. *Freethinker* and *Spain and the Church* on sale outside the Park gates.

#### OUTDOOR

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Primrose Restaurant, 66 Heath Street, Hampstead, N.W.3, One minute from Hampstead Underground Station) : 7.30, R. B. Kerr—"Delusions of Democracy."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Alexandra Hotel, opposite Clapham Common Station) : 7.30, A Lecture.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1) : 11.0, Har Dayal, M.A., Ph.D.—"Japanese Imperialism: Its Cause and Cure."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.) : 7.30, J. P. Gilmour—"Christianity and Civilization."

### COUNTRY

#### INDOOR.

BANKHEAD (Dubmire Club Hall) : 7.0, Wednesday, October 14, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

BIRKENHEAD BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane) : 7.0, Mr. G. Whitehead (London)—"Religion and Psychology."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Shakespeare Rooms, Edmund Street, near Livesey Street) : 7.0, Mr. C. H. Smith—"Supernaturalism versus Naturalism."

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. (Cobden Hall, Cort Street, Blackburn) : 7.30, Impromptu Discussion on "The British Israelites." Literature for sale.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Freegardeners' Hall, Picardy Place) : 7.0, A. Copland—"Superstition and the Supernatural."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (McLellan Galleries, 270 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow) : 7.0, Mr. David Hardie—"Public Health and Cremation."

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES (9 Grange Road, Kingston-on-Thames) : 3.30, Members' Meeting.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, entrance in Christian Street, Islington, Liverpool) : 7.0, Mr. C. McKelvie (Liverpool)—"Religion's Last Refuge."

PRESTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Farmers' Arms, Market Street, Preston) : 7.30, Annual Meeting.

#### OUTDOOR.

BLYTH (Market Place) : 7.0, Monday, October 12, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES (Market) : 7.0, Mr. C. Tuson.

MIDDLESBROUGH (Davidson Street) : 7.0, Tuesday, October 13, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

MODERN CULTURE INSTITUTE. Dr. Har Dayal, M.A., Ph.D., will give the following lectures at CAXTON HALL, at 8 p.m. Admission free. October 23—"After Christianity, WHAT?" November 20—"The World State, WHY?" December 11—"Develop Your Personality, HOW?" Read Dr. Dayal's book, *Hints for Self-Culture* (Watts).

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