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

Views and Opinions

Words and Phrases

THERE is great need of a term that will cover the misuse of words. I have not in mind their accidental misuse; this may occur with anyone, and may be due to nothing more serious than a lack of education and a very limited vocabulary. I am thinking rather of the case of a man who misuses words in circumstances where one must attribute it to downright carelessness, or to a kind of professional licence in places and conditions where one knows he is not likely to be called to book for the offence, and where even deliberate deception may pass uncensored. The field of politics offer many examples of this although the evil is lessened here because the game is generally well understood. When, for example, Mr. Chamberlain recently said that the time for a General Election was drawing near, he was using language which he could afterwards interpret as he pleased—either that Parliament might be dissolved within the next few weeks, which would act as a threat to those who thought more of the safety of their place in Parliament than of the good they were doing there, or as a commonplace statement that the end of the parliamentary term was nearer its end than it was. But however useful it might be to fool or threaten people, a great many would recognize it as meaning nothing at all. The expression, again, "We have no official information" does not necessarily mean that no information is there, it may mean only that the Government will either act upon the knowledge it has, or safely deny its existence as circumstances make this or that course advisable. In any case political misstatements of this kind deceive no intelligent person. It deceives only fools, and the probable apology would be that fools will be deceived in any case.

* * *

Verbal Counterfeits

It is in the field of religion that this abuse of language is most common, and where it receives the minimum of condemnation. It is not often that one

parson rebukes another for the practice, and the congregation generally think more about the sound than the sense of what they hear. Both remind one of Bentham's statement:—

What we are continually talking of, merely from our having been continually talking of it, we imagine we understand, so close a union has habit connected between words and things that we take one for the other, when we have words in our ears we imagine we have ideas in our minds.

I find a striking example of this habit of thinking that because we have words in the ear we believe we have ideas, and sound ideas, in the mind, in the Saturday sermons that the Dean of Durham contributes to the *Daily Telegraph*, and which the editor, with unconscious sarcasm, usually publishes in the neighbourhood of obituary notices. In the *Telegraph* for January 21, Dr. Allington's article bears the title of "The Religious Basis of Democracy." Here is his thesis, and as an illustration of Bentham's statement an examination of it may prove interesting. This is the central passage:—

We need to remember that democracy is not a political ideal. It is based upon a belief in the equality of man, and his infinite value, which has no meaning except in relation to God. Anyone can see that in many respects men are unequal; few people can detect the value in every man; it is only because we are all equal and all valuable in the sight of God that the obvious fictions implied in the democratic theory are tenable for a moment.

If I were a teacher in a secondary school I should enjoy giving this passage for analysis and comment to a number of students of about fifteen years of age, and I fancy there would not be much left of it when they had finished.

* * *

Democracy

Dr. Allington was, I believe, head of one of our public schools, and I can think of my imaginary youthful critic pointing out, to begin with, that Dr. Allington did not appreciate the essence of democracy. That men are not equal in intelligence, in innate manners, in conduct or in character, or in the value of their relations to others, is quite plain, and no one ever really took the equality of men in these directions to have any connection whatever with democracy. Democracy has nothing whatever to do with the equality of men in the sense used by Dr. Allington. The vote, for instance does not rest on an equality of intelligence—if it did quite as large a proportion of the "upper" classes as of the "lower" would be disfranchised. Democracy is a political theory which asserts that laws shall be equal with respect to all men, and that all men shall, so far as it is practicable, have a word in the fashioning of the institutions under which they live. There is no better definition of

democracy than the old radical one of "Government by the people, of the people, for the people." I hope no one will be sending me letters arguing that such a democracy does not exist, and never will unless certain things are done. I am concerned here with the theory of democracy alone. The inequality of men in any direction, is a natural fact which no one but a fool would deny, and which no sensible person who was not trying to mislead the people would stress.

* * *

The Churches and Democracy

So I conceive a bright boy of about fifteen might deal with Dr. Allington. Next, I can imagine the same youth asking, If the theory of democracy cannot be justified on social and political grounds, in what way can it be justified by a belief in God? The democracies of the world have not been noted for their theistic character, and on the other hand the most emphatic denials of democracy have come from societies in which the belief in God has been most strongly affirmed. In the New Testament one can derive little encouragement from the order that we are to give obedience to the powers that be for they are "ordained of God," and to disobey them deserves damnation. When Dr. Allington speaks of democracy depending upon belief in God, he means the Christian God. So let us see what ground there is for that statement. The largest, and the greatest of Christian churches is the Roman Catholic Church, and what encouragement to democracy does that give? How much has any Roman Catholic to say as to how he shall be governed? In the whole of the Church there is only one electoral process. The Pope is elected by the College of Cardinals, and the election is generally as fine a mass of trickery, falsity, and sharp practice as one can imagine. Or take the Church to which Dr. Allington belongs, what kind of a Democratic Government has that? The heads of his Church are not elected, they are appointed, and family and friendly influence and intrigue play the main part in the election. Dr. Inge has as sincere a belief in God as Dr. Allington, and with a far better brain. But if there is one thing that enrages the ex-dean it is the thought of democracy. The main social aspect of Church teaching until yesterday was to uphold those in power, and to teach the people to be content in the position in which God has placed them, and to bear themselves reverently towards their betters.

Turn to the other Christian Churches. What kind of democratic idea had Calvinism or Presbyterianism? With them, as with the English Church, there was an assertion of independence only so far as the secular powers interfered with the privileges of sectarian interests. Democracy is sometimes said to have had its birth in this country in Nonconformity. This is one of those generalizations which mistake an historical accident for a philosophical truth. The Nonconformist bodies were in their beginning in direct conflict with the establishment. They differed not alone in doctrine, but the very legality of their existence was in question. Opposed as they were to the Established Church, they had no resource but to make a doctrinal appeal to the people, and because they were opposed to the Church of the ruling classes gave a superficial encouragement to the social and political revolution that was then in their early stages. But so far and so soon as they became established, their lack of interest in democracy became plain. Indeed the Nonconformists went out of their way to make it plain that they had no sympathy with the advanced social and political ideals that were then developing, and in the case of the Methodists, issued injunctions to its preachers that they were to take no part in such agitations, and sent memorials to the Government dissociat-

ing themselves from them. Only a Christian preacher can take up the attitude of Dr. Allington.

* * *

God and Man

I can further imagine our fifteen-year-old essayist asking Dr. Allington the crucial question (which I am sure he would no more answer, than he would answer what we have already said), if democracy is a good thing, then it must be a good thing on earth? There is obviously no chance for its operation in heaven. And if it is a good thing on earth, what is there to prevent our recognizing its goodness whether there is a God or not? Whether there is another world to which we go after we are dead, whether we are to wear wings in that world, or go round in a state of Edenic nudity, whether we are to live in a state of political equality in a world in which political equality has no significance whatever, does not materially alter the value of things in this life. And therefore, as democracy is clearly connected with our life here, its value must be settled with reference to this world, and not with reference to another.

Nor do I think our bright youth would miss Dr. Allington's later statement that "it is our obvious business, as good democrats to ensure that every citizen of our country has the opportunity of living a happy honourable and useful life." Of course! But if our obvious duty is to see that citizens are happy, honourable and useful, do these things become other than they are because one does not believe in that survival of primitive thought, "God"? Dr. Allington ought really to make up his mind whether happiness, honour, etc., depend for their value upon the existence of some almighty personage who neither lives in our society, nor even on our earth, and if he lives anywhere, is subject to none of the incidents that affect human life, or whether they owe their value to the established relations that exist between men and women as members of a common social state. I am quite certain that not many intelligent boys of fifteen would miss these obvious comments on the Dean of Durham's sermonette. He is quite safe writing where he does and preaching where he does. No one can question him, and probably few that delight in reading his Saturday sermons bother very much whether the ideas in them are silly or sensible. It is enough that they repeat the familiar sounds, and end with the familiar moral. If I may borrow an analogy from Pavlov they stand for a conditioned reflex that has been created by generations of repetition, and by people being taught to respond to these repetitions, much as Pavlov induced the flow of saliva in a dog's mouth by the tinkling of a bell. And so I may sum up by returning to Jeremy Bentham, content that a line from this great Freethinker is of far greater value than a column from a Dean of the English Church:—

What we are continually talking of, merely from our having been continually talking of it, we imagine we understand, so close a union has habit connected between words and things, that we take one for the other, when we have words in our ears we imagine we have ideas in our minds.

CHAPMAN COHEN

The man who devotes the larger wealth of the mind, reason, understanding, imagination, with all the treasures of culture and the graceful dignity of eloquence, to serve some noble cause, despised as yet, and sacrifices not money alone, but reputation, and takes shame as outward recompense for truth and justice and love—think you that he has less delight than the worldly man well gifted, cultivated well, whose mind lies a prostitute to the opinion of the mob, and is tricked off with the ornaments of shame?—*Theodore Parker.*

Gods and God-Making

Man cannot make a flea, yet has created thousands of gods.—*Voltaire*.

Light, more light.—*Goethe*.

THAT a man should become a "god" is surprising, but that an Atheist should undergo this divine transformation is still more startling. Yet this phenomenon has occurred. For the Oriental imagination is very exuberant, and does not stick at trifles. Hindus, for example, are very partial to "gods," and cannot have too many. This may account for some of them being made in Birmingham, simply as a matter of business. A plain matter of supply and demand! which is in complete harmony with religion itself, for the latter itself is a trade. Indeed, religion may be described as the oldest of all the rackets. Through all its manifestations and transmigrations, in every land and clime, the one connecting link has always been the clutching hands of the priests in their desire for pelf, position, and power. It has been a perilous thing for humanity that this lust for power should have been accompanied by such abominable cruelty towards their fellow men:—

Strange that such difference should be
"Twixt Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

Readers of Dante's *Divina Commedia* must often have marvelled at the jumble of Christian and Pagan ideas in that immortal work. And, be it remembered, Dante wrote very many centuries after the alleged birth of Christ. This admixture is of more than usual significance, for the study of comparative religions has long revealed that the Christian Religion is a thing of shreds and patches, stolen from forms of faith long anterior. Maspero, Gerald Massey, and other Egyptologists, have demonstrated that there is scarcely a rite or symbol in Christianity which cannot be paralleled in the creed of Ancient Egypt, including even the worship of the virgin and child. Ancient Egypt has been called "the motherland of superstition," and it is a truism.

Of all the many derivative sources, Buddhism supplies the most definite object-lesson. So much is this the case that Jesuit missionaries, when confronted with the very striking similitudes, naïvely suggested that the Religion of Buddha must have been the work of the "Devil." Even more sober scholars were at first plainly puzzled by these parallels. Then, later scholars suggested that the writers of the "New Testament" must have come in contact with Buddhist ideas and legends. A still closer examination of these similitudes suggests that the Buddha legend may be the original of the Christ legend, so strikingly similar are the two accounts.

The resemblances come from the Tripitaka, the Three Baskets that constitute the evangels of the Buddhist faith. In them it is said that Maya, the mother of Gotama, was immaculate. According to "St. Matthew," Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a virgin. The infant Jesus was visited by magi; the infant Buddha was visited by kings. Both preached poverty, humility, and selflessness. Both fasted in a wilderness; both were tempted by the "Devil." Both announced a second coming; both were transfigured. Both died in the open air. At the death of each was an earthquake. Both healed the sick; and both were rebels against authority.

A courtesan visited Jesus and had her sins remitted; Gotama was visited by a harlot, whom he instructed in sacred matters. Jesus is depicted as a glutton and a wine-bibber; the same is said of Gotama. In *St. Matthew* it is written: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust doth consume, and where thieves break through and steal." The Khuddakapaths says: "Righteousness is a

treasure which no man can steal. It is a treasure that abideth alway." As for the so-called "Golden Rule," it was taught by Buddha, and also by Confucius; and it is in the Talmud, and was a commonplace of religious thought.

Nor do the similarities stop at oral tradition and literature. In common with the early Christian Churches, Buddhism has saints, censers, litanies, tonsures, holy water, fasts, and confessions. Observe, however, how Priestcraft transforms things. Buddhism originally had neither rites nor ritual. It was a mendicant order in which the members tried to do right, with, for reward, the peace that passeth all understanding which Nirvana provides. Originally a system of pure humanitarianism, with no future life and no god, it has been transformed by the craftiness of Priestcraft in to a vast jungle of contradictory principles and of popular idolatry, the mazes of which are difficult to tread. It passes from atheism and materialism to theism, polytheism, and spiritualism. From high morality it descends to a mere farrago of superstitions, necromancy, witchcraft, idolatry, and fetishism. With what art and craft did Priestcraft work that Gotama, who was an Atheist, and had denied the "gods," was transformed into one by these unscrupulous charlatans. The most nihilistic of doctrines was altered and elaborated until it became a welter of idolatry and superstition. Nirvana became Elysium, and the priests battered upon the offerings of the very people they had fooled. That is not only true of Buddhism, it is the history of all religions. Mormonism is one of the newest of creeds, but it has adopted tithe, "the sacred tenth," as a highly profitable form of revenue, and the followers of Joe Smith pay up regularly, just as their deluded ancestors did thousands of years ago to other forms of the abracadabra racket. In religion, the more things alter the more they are the same.

What gives the death-stab to superstition is the study of comparative religions, and also of folk-lore. To read the *Sacred Books of the East*, to digest Frazer's *Golden Bough*, and to compare both with the information in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, is to tread the tortuous mazes of theology with assurance and with success. The study of Egyptology gives up the last secrets of religion. In recalling the legends of Buddha and of Jesus it is utterly impossible to overlook the many similarities, or to ignore that the earlier story was familiar five centuries before the alleged birth of Christ. That the legends are the work of priests is proved by the fact that secular historians ignore all the marvellous happenings narrated in the Gospels, and also by the ecclesiastical tone of the writing, as pronounced as the theatrical falsetto used in the pulpits. The forged passage added to "Josephus" is further confirmation, for truth needs no bolstering from lies.

In the bad old days priests had it all their own way. The masses of the people were little more than brutes, with minds as naked as their bodies. To such slaves, priests appeared as gods. But the priests knew better. In all the Eastern world, the priests possessed both knowledge and power. The only mortals who could compete with the priests were the kings, and, in becoming sovereign, by a polite fiction they became celestial. Many of the Roman Cæsars declared themselves gods. In that ocean of superstition, Freethinkers were so few that they were lost as a handful of salt spilt in the sea. To-day, the ordinary citizen has access to knowledge. In reading the story of Gotama Buddha, who never sought to be worshipped, and who was made the central figure of a huge imposture, and a vested interest, one may see how large a part fraud and follies play in the history of religions.

MIMNERMUS

A Sage of Science

ISAAC NEWTON was born in a farmhouse at Woolsthorpe, near Grantham, Lincolnshire, in 1642, at the time of the death of Galileo. The dwelling in which Newton first saw the light is religiously preserved as a national memorial.

The genius of the discoverer of the universal Law of Gravitation apparently owed little to ancestral ability. As a lad he was visionary, and betrayed scant interest in matters mundane. His mother desired him to become a yeoman farmer, but, as his latest biographer, J. W. Sullivan, remarks in his *Isaac Newton* (Macmillan, 1938): "He neglected his farming duties with great thoroughness. Sheep or cattle placed under his charge wandered at their will, while he spent the time on books, or carving things with his knife. When sent with a servant to market to learn the mysteries of trade and barter, he would leave the servant to attend to the business while he employed the day with his books." So the boy was restored to school to prepare for a later Cambridge career.

There was nothing in Newton's early character to indicate the possession of the marvellous mathematical powers he subsequently displayed. His acquaintance with science was strictly limited when he entered Trinity College, and the Cambridge of that day was by no means distinguished for its scientific achievements, which have since made eminent so many of her sons. Sullivan notes: "Philosophical and theological controversies often of the most barren kind were the chief occupation of scholars, superstitious beliefs of all kinds were commonly accepted." It is solemnly recorded that a cod-fish sold in Cambridge Market was found to preserve in its belly three pious tracts, and that this amazing discovery was viewed with such misgiving that it was brought to the notice of the vice-chancellor, and learned and unlearned alike interpreted the incident as a warning of impending evil. As a matter of fact, both Oxford and Cambridge were still shrouded in ancestral darkness, and the researches and conclusions of Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler and other natural philosophers found far less acceptance in academic circles in England than in the intellectual centres of France, Italy and Holland.

By 1665 Newton's marvellous insight into scientific problems was completely developed, and the two succeeding years disclosed achievements of a magnitude practically unparalleled in the whole annals of science. But many years elapsed before the activities of this short period were made known to the world. Ever reticent and diffident unless his honour was impugned, Newton, even at this early time, betrayed that curious secretiveness which he exhibited throughout his long life of more than eighty years. For despite his intimacy with men such as Locke, and the famous astronomer, Halley, as well as the statesman, Montagu, Macaulay's trimmer, Lord Halifax, Newton remained a solitary man, who apparently led a strictly celibate life. And it was at Woolsthorpe where he resided between 1665 and 1667, owing to the prevalence of plague at Cambridge, that "he made three of the greatest discoveries in the history of scientific thought, the Differential Calculus, the Composition of Light and the Law of Gravitation."

Newton's capacity for long concentration was evidently supremely great. For hours together his mind became completely immersed in his problem, all else being blotted from consciousness. When it is recalled that not more than one third of his waking life was at any time devoted to science alone, and that he never appears to have realized the immense superiority of natural knowledge to his other studies, his achieve-

ments verge on the miraculous. For strange as it seems, the major part of his active hours was spent in meditations concerning mysticism, alchemy, theology and other barren topics, while in later life, unless his scientific integrity or priority in discovery was impugned, he apparently lost all interest in those superb departments of Nature, whose laws he was better qualified to interpret than the very greatest of his scientific contemporaries. But he did not escape the penalties of genius, perhaps accentuated by his celibate life, and clear testimony is available that in subsequent years "Newton came almost to resent his mathematical powers. From the times of his greatest concentration and achievement, he emerged irritable and depressed, as if he had been indulging in some secret vice."

Even his discovery of the Law of Gravitation he failed to make public for several years, and seemingly he had thought no more about it. Thirteen years later he resumed his researches with pronounced success, but still he confined his results to himself, and a score of years passed away after the original discovery before, under friendly pressure, he was persuaded to complete his inquiries and pen the *Principia*, perhaps the greatest contribution of a single mind to the stately temple of science.

Sullivan dismisses the contention that Newton's disregard of his achievement is traceable to a miscalculation of the size of the earth. As he cogently states: "It can be shown that there is no reason whatever why Newton should have remained in ignorance of the correct figures for the dimensions of the earth. These figures were contained in several books, all of which were accessible to him, and two of which we know that he possessed." The only rational explanation seems to be that, for a time he was more interested in researches relating to light which provided abundant scope for the scientific play of the imagination, and also necessitated experimental and mechanical operations. These studies proved of primary importance, as Newton's discovery of the composition of white light conclusively proves.

Newton was intensely interested in chemistry, and he conducted many experiments, and it is reported that he indited a work on this subject, which was accidentally destroyed. But even in this study his mystical tendencies obtruded, and he became absorbed in the philosopher's stone and the wondrous elixir of life.

His relations with Hooke and Flamsteed were strained, but these differences were predominantly due to the pharisaic character of Flamsteed and the egomania of Hooke. Flamsteed, who was Astronomer Royal, abominated Halley, and was never weary of warning Newton of the danger of that celebrated astronomer's infidel opinions. In one of Flamsteed's epistles to Newton, he was especially virulent towards Halley, whose whole career he says, "is too foul and large for a letter." Sullivan suggests that Flamsteed's persistent vilification of Halley, a far greater man than himself, "would lead one to suspect that he was not on good terms with many of his contemporaries. This has been attributed to his grudging and suspicious nature. But this, combined with his self-righteousness makes it probable that Flamsteed's grievance was that few people would take him at his own valuation, while Newton evidently regarded Flamsteed rather as a useful tool than as a collaborator." In any case, later science was immensely indebted to Halley, for when the Royal Society was in pecuniary trouble, he willingly bore the entire cost of the publication of Newton's *Principia* himself.

As Warden and, later, Master of the Mint, in the reign of William III., Newton superintended the re-

storation of the coinage which, under the Stuarts, had fallen into a deplorable condition. He appears ever to have been more permanently interested in activities beyond the range of science within which he was so supreme a master. As Sullivan says: "The paradox of Newton's scientific career is due to the fact, probably unique in the history of scientific men that he was a genius of the first order at something that he did not consider to be of first importance."

Newton's written correspondence with Pepys and Locke during a period of nervous prostration indicates that for a time he was on the brink of insanity, if not positively insane. Also, his speculations and deep studies concerning chronology and prophecy were decidedly singular. Although it is hard to believe that his scientific investigations were originally undertaken in the interests of Deism, he was greatly gratified to learn that some viewed them in that light. In a letter to Bentley he remarked: "When I wrote my treatise (the *Principia*), I had an eye on such principles as might work with considering men, for a belief in a Deity." And as Sullivan notes, perhaps had Newton suspected that his system instead of strengthening his Unitarianism "was to become one of the most powerful weapons for destroying that belief," he might have abandoned science altogether.

Newton's essay on the corruptions of Scripture remained unpublished in his lifetime, for his views were very unorthodox. The doctrine of the Trinity he dismissed as an impudent forgery. Nor did he regard Jesus as divine. To him Christ was simply a human creature, and therefore, not to be addressed in prayer. This may explain the fact that Newton, although so frequently urged, consistently refused to take holy orders. When referring to one of the Biblical texts cited in favour of the Trinitarian dogma he scorned it as utterly meaningless. And he writes: "It is the temper of the hot and superstitious part of mankind, in matters of religion, ever to be fond of mysteries; and for that reason to like best what they understand least."

Newton concluded that the text in question was an interpolation inserted by Jerome in the fourth century. For at the time of the bitterly protracted discussion of the Trinitarian theory at the Council of Nicæa in 325 A.D., not one of its champions ever mentioned it. As for the text in Timothy which favours the belief, this Newton rejected as a deliberate forgery fabricated by Macedonius, the patriarch of Constantinople.

In conclusion, the excellent summary of Newton's scientific achievements in Professor Glazebrook's essay may be cited. "*The Principia* established Newton's fame; some little time elapsed before it was fully accepted on the Continent, but for more than 200 years it reigned supreme, and all theories of cosmogony were based on principles laid down by Newton. . . . And if in these last years Einstein has carried us some steps further, and has picked up a few more of the jewels of truth, which Newton sought on the shore, Newton's laws remain, included it may be, in a more comprehensive statement of truth."

With reference to the controversy concerning the calculus: although Newton anticipated Leibnitz in its invention, the latter's work was, at least, mainly independent in character. But if Newton's discovery was prior to that of Leibnitz, later analysts owe more to Leibnitz, whose method afforded greater facility and completeness than that of his English contemporary.

T. F. PALMER

Flashbacks on Tyneside

(Continued from page 44)

H. B. Dodds was the next "find" upon whom Bartram fitted his mantle. For many years he was the capable and active Secretary of the Newcastle Branch. He had before that long been an active member of the Branch—he was, in fact, one of Peter Weston's many well-trained youngsters. Dodds was Scotch, like Peter, and shared with him another devotion—to the memory of Robert Burns. Their knowledge of that poet was rather uncanny, but then many Scotsmen possessed it. Dodds wrote occasionally for the *Freethinker*, and in his articles always displayed personality and a thoughtful standpoint based on reading and research. The last time I saw Dodds was in London at the Debate in Caxton Hall between Mr. Cohen and Dr. C. E. M. Joad on: *Materialism. Has it been exploded?* with Mr. J. M. Robertson in the chair. After the splendid fare we experienced that night we had minor fare in the shape of a cup of coffee together, and he told me that the *Newcastle Chronicle* had recently printed an obituary notice of A. L. Coates, and Coates had written to the editor from France complaining, in Mark Twain's phrase, of gross exaggeration. My talk with Dodds took place on September 26, 1928. On the morning of September 27, I found a letter from Coates on my breakfast-table. It retailed twenty-years (with masterly brevity) of his scrapes and adventures abroad. Coates had a *trophism* which impelled him towards the adventurous. He was then engaged, he told me, as an ex-service man, in showing parties round the battlefields of France, and was living at Douai. I wrote him at once and suggested my going to France to pay him a visit. The letter was returned to me, the envelope bearing the melancholy but sufficient inscription, DEAD. For practical purposes the report of his death had not been so grossly exaggerated after all.

There had been many workers for Freethought on Tyneside who had helped the cause strenuously at a period long ante-dating mine. Those who had left the district always seemed to correspond with Bartram, who kept their memories green in this way to newcomers. When I was added (in 1902) to the Committee of the Tyneside Sunday Lecture Society (a body which could boast a distinguished personnel in the best sense of the word) I met many who had in the past "assisted" the great Bradlaugh, and who had once been active members of the National Secular Society. Among them, I remember Frank and J.H. Cresswell, Tom Purves, J. R. Greenwell, P. Truttman, and J. Dickinson. John Easton was also on that Committee, but John had never severed his connexion with the Newcastle Branch. I found that Easton was as much appreciated by the Sunday Lecture Committee as he was by us. They had learnt his sterling qualities, his honesty of purpose, his inexhaustible willingness and helpfulness. John Easton was of Gargantuan dimensions—Novocastrians could not escape his huge figure if they ever attended the Sunday Lectures in the Tyne Theatre. It was his job to arrange comfortably—but not too comfortably—the occupants of the pit and his abnormal avoirdupois and loud voice were helpful. They flew at his behest. But John was huge in every way. He towered.

Elijah Copland was then amongst us, though ageing. He was a well-known figure in the North of England. He had been, and still was, a prominent person in the Co-operative Movement, and often had the job of presiding at annual meetings in the Palace Theatre, when the Committee had to defend their stewardship. These meetings were generally stormy. Many of the rank and file co-operators of that time

There is no counting with certainty on the justice of men who are capable of fashioning and worshipping an unjust divinity.—John Morley.

took their job seriously; their wives may have been more inclined to concentrate on the "Diddy." Still there were large numbers of both sexes who thought of the Store as "their own shop," and at the Annual Meeting they snatched at their one chance of being vocal. Copland was interested in all democratic advanced movements. He could go back to the early Bradlaugh days and had met Barker, Robert Cooper, Holyoake and other pioneers. I recollect he thought Mrs. Harriet Law to be a woman of extraordinary ability on the platform, an opinion I heard expressed by other veterans. Copland had worked hard for Secularism and all the radical working-class movements. A pamphlet he had written: Remember the Seventh Day to Keep it Gloomy, had had a wide circulation. He arranged his life sensibly, and, of necessity, simply, for, as usual, his devotion to public usefulness brought him nothing in the way of comfort. I used to visit him at Pelaw and play him chess—we were both fond of the game—but what I enjoyed more was what followed, for Copland's reminiscences were many and nutritive. I remember conducting the Secular Service over the grave of his wife—a faithful and companionable soul if ever there was one. I remember the shake of the hand he gave me afterwards, and his thanking me for the "feeling" he thought I had put into the ceremony. "I am the only one," he said, "who knows the worth of my wife. It seems wrong to me to even talk about it."

He and I frequently foregathered over the chess-board at the house of Dr. J. L. Speirs, in Bensham Road, Gateshead. Speirs was of a sturdy freethinking lineage, and was the dearest and most unpretentious of men. He was a quiet but dependable helper of the Branch. So also was Dr. Alfred Cox, who lived near. Dr. Cox has been much in the public eye since then. The last time I exchanged a word with him was at the Memorial Meeting at Conway Hall to Mr. J. M. Robertson, on which occasion he paid his public tribute.

Ralph Young, the Secretary of the Northumberland Miners' Association, was a regular figure at Branch Outings and Social Gatherings. His name was a household word in thousands of Northumbrian homes. He had been personal friend of Charles Bradlaugh, and had admiration for him this side idolatry. He spoke to a meeting of our members and friends with Bradlaugh as his theme, dealing with him mainly as a politician, for Ralph belonged to the Radical wing of the Liberal Party. At Young's house there regularly foregathered most interesting groups of people. There you met colliers, business-men, professional men, journalists, etc., with one strand running through them all, that of genuine intellectual hospitality. Young exercised discrimination in his friends: for in them there never could be detected any snobbery, plain or inverted. Women, of course, were there; at that time the suffragette movement was gaining momentum. Ralph Young died suddenly at a football match—he watched with interest occasionally the wonder-team of those days wearing the black and white stripes. I was present at a Secular Service read by Martin Weatherburn in, I think, the Northumberland Miners' Hall. At the graveside, speeches were given by Charles Fenwick, M.P., and other Miners' Leaders. Young had had to handle men and affairs—he was in innumerable labour disputes—and was renowned far away from Tyneside for his practical sagacity.

Mention has been made of Martin Weatherburn. He was the brother-in-law of Thomas Burt, M.P., "The Pitman come to Parliament." Martin was a life-long Secularist, steeped in the Bradlaugh tradition. The Northumberland (and Durham) miners were famed for their men of intelligence and integrity. Local patriotism can make many bubble reputations,

but those who met Thomas Burt, Ralph Young, Martin Weatherburn, T. Dixon (*père*), R. H. Wharrier, Matthew Sankey, A. Shiel, to name but a few who come back to memory, know the reputation to be well-gained. They were indeed "sea-green incorruptibles."

T. H. ELSTON

(To be continued)

Making good Christians

AVERAGE CHRISTIAN LADY: "I had a pleasant journey all the way to Pembroke. You are looking well."

Her Sister: "How are all in London? How are the two boys?"

A.C.L.: "Very well. Harold, as you know, is now nearly sixteen, and Charles a few months over fourteen."

H.S.: "What are your plans for their future?"

A.C.L.: "I should like to see them enter the Church and eventually become Vicars. Both have been confirmed and take Holy Communion regularly. I am training them to become good Christians."

H.S.: "I am sorry you could not bring them with you."

A.C.L.: "Their cousins in Scotland were anxious to see them, so I decided that they should see Scotland before coming to Wales. I travelled with them a part of the way to Perth."

H.S.: "Their railway fares must have cost a lot."

A.C.L.: "Yes; but I did not pay their full fares."

H.S.: "How did you manage that?"

A.C.L.: "I took half-tickets."

H.S.: "But they are both over age, and are not entitled to travel at a reduced rate."

A.C.L.: "I know that, but I always ask for half-tickets whenever they travel with me, and the booking clerks issue them without demur. Of course I keep the boys out of their sight."

H.S.: "But how do they escape the ticket examiners?"

A.C.L.: "I have only once been challenged over Harold, and then I assumed a lord countenance, and said truthfully that the boy looked older than his age. After a little discussion the examiner accepted my word. Even in omnibuses I have no difficulty in procuring half-tickets for them."

H.S.: "What do the boys say about it?"

A.C.L.: "They think it is great fun."

H.S.: "The money you have saved over their fares must have helped you to purchase your nice new travelling coat."

A.C.L.: "Between ourselves, the coat cost me very little."

H.S.: "How?"

A.C.L.: "One day while standing near the fire my old one caught fire accidentally, and was burned slightly. It occurred to me that if it had been damaged badly I could recover its full value from the Insurance Company, so I deliberately gave it another and more complete scorching. The Insurance Company paid up, and did not ask any awkward questions."

H.S.: "Has it ever occurred to you that you have been systematically cheating Railway, Omnibus, and Insurance Companies?"

A.C.L.: "Cheating! I call it economizing."

H.S.: "You say you are training your boys to become good Christians. This means that by the time they reach manhood their minds will be so saturated with superstition that they will treat the nonsensical

biblical stories and absurd dogmas instilled into them in their youth as demonstrated facts, and will not deign to examine the overwhelming evidence available against their reality. Superstition is, and always has been, the enemy of reason, and an impediment to enlightenment and progress. If the boys were mine I would give them a systematic non-theological course of instruction, making the formation of character my chief aim. Your method of economizing at the expense of others would receive no encouragement. Honesty is a necessity in any decent form of social life."

PRO REASON.

Acid Drops

Mr. Chamberlain has placed on record his profound faith in the honesty, truthfulness, and good will of Mussolini. Well, it is admitted, nay, it is triumphantly proclaimed in the Government-controlled Italian press, that it is mainly an Italian attack that is being delivered on Barcelona. And here is a report of what was seen by William Forrest, special correspondent of the *News-Chronicle*, after the village of Santa Coloma had been taken by the Italian troops.

After our withdrawal from Santa Coloma we occupied some nearby houses from which we had a clear view of the village. In the village were several hundred refugees who had not been able to move on in time.

They were all rounded up by the legionaries of the Littorio Division and herded into the village square. Then up came a troop of men carrying machine-guns. The guns were trained on the mass of refugees.

We could see the women raising their hands in entreaty and the children trying to hide behind their mothers' skirts. But all in vain. The machine-guns opened fire and in a few moments the square was littered with the dead.

The number of victims must have been about 250. It was a spectacle Dantesque in its horror, which those of us who saw it will never forget.

We have no doubt that Mr. Chamberlain would reply that our Government has no official information (that is Mussolini has not reported to our Ambassador in Rome that the above slaughter occurred), but in this matter we much prefer to take the word of Mr. Forrest. And Julian Streicher's paper, as quoted by Mr. Vernon Bartlett, says:—

... At Munich for the first time the decisions to be taken for European equilibrium escaped from the hands of Britain. When Franco will have reconquered all his territory the country north of Gibraltar will also escape—and for ever—from British control.

Let the partisans of an ostrich policy bury their heads in the sand... in their hysterical fear of a second Munich. But the second Munich will come, because come it must!

But to do Germany justice it has always boasted that Munich, which gave Germany a free hand in Eastern Europe, was a German-dictated "settlement."

We do not think that anyone will accuse the *Church Times* of being a warmonger. Its comment in the issue for January 20, on Mr. Chamberlain's policy of friendly visits to Mussolini and Hitler is the more significant. No one, of course, but Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax know exactly what occurred, but the *Church Times* says, while he was still in Italy the Italian press (it must be remembered that in both Italy and Germany the press is told what to print, and may not print anything else), increased the venomous nature of its attacks on France, and we are told that Mussolini assured our Prime Minister that he would not tolerate a Spanish victory. In other words, he intends sending a continuous supply of men and arms to Spain. The *Church Times* also says that no sensible person doubts that Franco has "sold his

country" to Italy and Germany, or believes that when the war is over "Italy will abandon the Balearic Islands, or that Germany will give up the economic control of the Basque iron ore, or abandon the possibility of establishing submarine bases on the Spanish coast." It is difficult to think that Mr. Chamberlain is foolish enough to believe otherwise.

It may be remembered that when Mr. Baldwin assumed the Premiership, after Ramsay Macdonald had retired from that post, he announced that he intended to stop the policy of these personal jaunts abroad, because he believed they did more harm than good. Mr. Chamberlain, because he knows that Hitler and Mussolini do not favour open discussions with democratic countries, has reverted to this vicious policy, and with what results? Consider! Just before Hitler marched to Vienna, Lord Halifax paid him a private visit. What transpired? No one knows. But we may judge. When Hitler announced his intention of attacking Czechoslovakia Mr. Chamberlain paid Hitler three visits, and there was a propaganda of panic undertaken in this country, which reduced masses of the public to a "let-us-avoid-war-at-any-cost-and-at-any price" state of mind. Result Hitler received more than he could ever have hoped to obtain in so short a time, and was given a free hand in Eastern Europe. Next, Mr. Chamberlain visits Rome, and is used there, as he was used in Germany, to allay by the sight of his friendliness with the dictators, the uneasiness of the Italian and German public; and Mussolini no longer takes the trouble to disguise his increased support to the Spanish insurgents. And there is no longer much disguise of the fact that the trouble in Palestine, and among the Arabs generally, is openly organized and subsidized by Italy and Germany.

What Germany really thinks of Mr. Chamberlain's visit, and how much it really desires peace—save with those it is not yet prepared to attack—is seen in the prosecution of Pastor Niemoller. He is in prison charged with having *during the September crisis week* prayed that peace would be given to Europe. That, of course, cut right across what the German people were told then and after, that it was because Hitler made it quite clear that he would go to war, and Chamberlain, seeing the strong man he was up against, at once gave way.

The harassed editor of a Roman Catholic paper has given the following reply to one of his readers:—

"Christmas" means "Christ's Mass." December 25 was a great solar feast in Pagan Rome, and this may have prompted the Christian Church to celebrate the date of Christ's birth on that day.

This is enough to make the late G. K. Chesterton rise up from his grave in righteous wrath for no one poked more fun than he at "solar myths." But we are glad to see that even the Roman Church is beginning to learn—and repeat in their own journals what Freethinkers have pointed out for over two centuries.

Here is another gem from the same journal:—

J.D.K.—God permits some to go to Hell because even that manifests some of His attributes and thus redounds to His greater glory in a way which we do not understand. (2) Purgatory will continue until the Last Day but not beyond. Those who then go to Purgatory will make up in intensity of suffering what they lack in duration.

And to think that there are some human beings taken in with this kind of drivel!

Mr. Frank Owen, who is, we are told, one of the highest paid journalists in England, has managed to work into his account of Mussolini in the *Evening Standard* the exploded Christian lie about Ferrer. It is, of course, a platitude to say that one can never catch up with a good healthy Christian lie, but with such a "great" journalist like Mr. Owen, one would have thought that he at least knew the facts about Ferrer. This is what he says:—

The Socialist world was in a state of uproar over the execution by the Spanish Government of Francisco Ferrer, the anarchist agitator, who had tried to launch an uprising in Barcelona.

Ferrer was not an "anarchist agitator," and he never tried to launch "an uprising" in Barcelona. He was executed primarily at the investigation of the Roman Catholic Church, which objected violently to the establishment of Secular schools in Spain—a project which Ferrer had set his heart upon. The witnesses who testified against him were Christian perjurers, and his execution shocked the civilized world to such an extent that a few years later the case against Ferrer was quashed in the Courts, and he himself proved to be entirely innocent. But we do not suppose that even a knowledge of the truth will prevent any real Christian journalist from spreading lies about Ferrer when the occasion demands. For Ferrer was, of course, a Freethinker.

That true Aryan German newspaper, the *Schwarze Corps*, which has done its best to incite to loot and murder the unfortunate Jews in Germany, now forecasts their fate:—

They will soon eat up their capital and become criminals. . . . When this stage is reached we should then be faced by the hard necessity of exterminating the Jewish underworld by those methods which we always use when dealing with criminals, namely fire and sword . . . the result would be the final end of Jewry and its total destruction.

It need hardly be said that to destroy the Jews the Aryan *Schwarze Corps* would see first that they cannot hit back. There never have been braver people than this kind of Aryan—so long as the other fellow is not armed.

We have often wondered why certain people are in the House of Commons. Mr. R. J. Russell says it was "Christian citizenship" that took him there, and, getting still more precise, adds "I came here as a Methodist." But we wonder whether during his candidature Mr. Russell was honest enough to tell the electors that he stood as a Christian, and if he went into the House he would place the interests of the Methodist Church first. We are willing to wager otherwise. If he had done so we fancy he would never have got into the House at all, for there are large bodies of professing Christians who would quite rightly say that the question of getting into the House of Commons is not primarily a question of Christianity, and ought not to be treated as such. It is a question of common citizenship, which, in this country, covers a much larger body of voters than Christians. We have little hesitation in suspecting that Mr. Russell won his election on false pretences.

The Rev. Harry Fosdick writes in the *Christian World* on "Secularism the Common Enemy." He says we are facing the complete secularizing of the opinions, the practices and the emotions of mankind. Well, why not? Mr. Fosdick may remember that his own Protestant Christianity arose precisely because the emotions, the practices and opinions of mankind had been secularized, for whatever was good about Protestantism arose from this secularization of life. Would Mr. Fosdick like to see the old state of things renewed? Unless he does, he is just playing with words and misleading those who are foolish enough to look to him for guidance.

The Mayor of Leyton is evidently a very religious man, and his sense of responsibility, both moral and intellectual is what one might expect from a very religious man. By that we mean that he is not above using his position as Mayor to influence events with which as Mayor he is not concerned. Thus, when he was elected Mayor he immediately called for prayer from his chaplain—being evidently under the impression that God had demonstrated his wisdom in the selection of the Mayor. A little less religion and a little better sense of moral responsibility would have reminded him that he was elected to the Council for secular, not religious purposes,

and that to use his office for the advancement of his religion is, morally, on a level with the man who gets on the Council for the purposes of pushing his business interests.

The Mayor has now headed a movement for the "Back to Religion" movement, and once again will use his office for a purpose that is quite unjustifiable. We do not expect that he will see anything unjustifiable in what he is doing, but that is only a further example of the extent to which religion warps a man's sense of moral sensibility. We suggest that the Mayor looks into the history of Leyton, at the time when it was far more religious than it is to-day, and see which has advanced most since then, the sense of social responsibility or the belief in the Christian Church. He will find, if he does not already know, that forty years ago the affairs of the district were dominated by the chapels and the church. They are both much weaker now.

An American student for the priesthood in Innsbruck, Austria, has described in the *Universe* the way in which the Hitler gang suppressed and occupied the famous Jesuit Seminary there, and a heartrending story it is, for most of the inmates were old men. We hold no brief for Jesuitism, or for any brand of religion, but the motives behind these suppressions are just pure robbery and sadistic cruelty. But this is what the student says about the Jews:—

Things are getting worse and worse in Innsbruck. The Jews are being murdered openly in the streets, and two nights before I left I could hear the agonizing shrieks of Jews outside my window as the Hitler secret police were amusing themselves by throwing the Jews in the river. Three of the poor devils were drowned.

What a beautiful picture this must present to the kindly and hospitable Tyrolese, of the Germany in which Austria has now been absorbed. How happy the gay-hearted music-loving Austrians must feel to be under the lash of such masters!

The Rev. Dr. W. Landsell Wardle, Manchester, President of the Methodist Conference, in his New Year message advocates the closing down of large churches with small congregations, in order to build churches in places to which people have migrated.

"I would never in the future," he adds, "build a church to hold more than 300 to 400 persons, on the ground—the curious ground if you like—that people delight to go where there is no room for them! People like to go to a successful church and not to one that is obviously weak or declining."

Is this a subtle plan to disguise the fact of so many more or less empty churches? Clergy of various denominations are becoming increasingly active to adopt business ideas as they find the orthodox ministry failing. Some of their plans are analogous to a commercial board endeavoring to find ways and means to prop up a tottering firm. One day we shall find what remains of church institutions administered in purely secular fashion, and a "gospel" of pure Atheism preached which the preachers will claim to be exactly what their religion stood for all the time!

"Briton, Ealing," wrote to the *Daily Telegraph*, the other day:—

As a member of a Catholic family I recently went to purchase a set of figures for a Crib. I asked if they were made in England, and was shown the box marked "Made in Holland." On the base of each figure was a printed paper slip marked "Made in Holland." While I was assembling the Crib one of the paper slips became detached and underneath it I found engraved "Germany." Had I known the real origin of the articles I would not have purchased them.

Yet there might have been consolation for "Briton" if he had ascertained who really made his Catholic toys; they might have been made by Jews, as they are to a great extent in England.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

To Circulating and Distributing the *Freethinker*.—A. H. Deacon, 58.

CZECHO RELIEF FUND.—Mrs. O. H. Piper and Daughter, £2; Glasgow Friends (per Mrs. Whitefield), 30s.

Will Mr. Anderson, of West Lothian, send on his address for the copies of the paper to be forwarded, as his letter has been mislaid.

J. MARSH.—Thanks for address of a likely new reader; paper being sent for four weeks.

T. H. W.—The Church declaring war on superstition reads like a music hall gag. May deal with the pamphlets later.

J. SHARPLES.—We never imagined that the Bishop of London stood alone, only that he was the most perfect specimen of his kind.

V. WILSON.—Received, but regret too lengthy for use.

J. W. GAINES (Boston, U.S.A.)—Thanks for communication. It is a welcome sign of the times, but it is to be hoped that it will not stop there, if it does it acts later as a dam against further progress.

F. H. RAINBOW.—We share your comments. If those who are by courtesy representatives of the people showed a little more intellectual self-respect, public life would be much better than it is.

J. DELL.—Will appear next week.

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

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

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.

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

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London E.C.4, and not to the Editor.

The "*Freethinker*" will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.

The offices of the National Secular Society and the Secular Society Limited, are now at 68 Farringdon Street, London E.C.4. Telephone: Central 1367.

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

Sugar Plums

Although the *Freethinker* always bears a Sunday date, it is on sale in London on Wednesday, and all over the country on Thursday or Friday. There is, therefore, time to remind those who will be attending the Society's Annual Dinner, that there will be a reception at 6.30, and Dinner will be served at 7 sharp. There will be a plan of the tables exhibited so that diners may easily find their places. All we can hope now is for decent weather. We shall create a record if the function is anything but a highly enjoyable one.

May we call the special attention of our readers to the offer we are making in order to secure new subscribers. Until March 31 a year's subscription, 15s., will give the subscriber the right to five-shillingworth of publications issued by the Pioneer Press. This is an offer to new subscribers only. We have made this offer on previous years, with satisfactory results. On these occasions those of our readers who were interested enough have

taken the opportunity of paying for a year's subscription for a friend or acquaintance, whom they hoped by this means to make regular readers of the *Freethinker*. The books which go with the subscription, may go to any address that is given. There are two full months to go before this offer is withdrawn, and we should like to see a thousand of our regular readers take advantage of this proposal.

We have received the following letter, which we publish in this column. First, because a faulty conception of Causation is fairly common among those who are apt to flatter themselves that they thoroughly understand the question, second, because a right conception of Causation is essential to a scientific Atheism, and, third, because Mr. Kerr puts his misunderstanding of Causation in as clear a manner as I have seen. There is no mistaking where his confusion lies, or difficulty in exhibiting it. These are commendable qualities in a letter. Mr. Kerr writes:—

In your issue of January 22 you say: "No amount of knowledge of the properties of oxygen and hydrogen would have enabled anyone to foresee that in certain conditions water would emerge"

That seems to me the very negation of modern science. According to the physicists of the present-day, water, hydrogen, oxygen, and all other objects in the universe, are composed entirely of protons and electrons, and differ from one another only in the mathematical arrangement of their particles. In fact, all objects in the universe differ from one another only as the different arrangements of glass in a kaleidoscope differ from one another. That means that every object in the universe could, with sufficient knowledge, be transformed into any other object in the universe. It therefore seems evident that anyone with a complete knowledge of the properties of oxygen and hydrogen would know how to convert them, not only into water, but into gold, coal, a copy of the *Freethinker*, or any other object in the universe.

We are not going to reargue our case for the conception of Causation as expressed in recent articles, and more elaborately in *Materialism Re-stated*, but simply point out to Mr. Kerr, and others, that we were never so foolish as to deny at any time or anywhere that once it is known what properties will "emerge" from a combination of unlike factors, it is possible to foretell the result of any future assemblage of these factors. The properties of hydrogen and oxygen were known before it was shown that water was just H₂O. but that did not enable any chemist to foretell the properties of water, from a knowledge of the properties of H and O. Once the fact of the emergence was known, it was for ever after possible to foretell the result of combining the requisite factors. A.B.C.D. will each have their distinctive qualities, but we know of no process in science, or in the history of science, that has enabled anyone at any time to foretell what the interaction of A.B.C.D. will produce prior to the experience of what they do produce. It is the product of the combination that is the question of issue, not a knowledge of A.B.C.D. separately. We must thank Mr. Kerr for having expressed his misunderstanding so clearly, and so given opportunity for a simple and conclusive solution of his difficulty, which may also be the difficulty of others.

We see that a hunt is going on right through Italy to capture and destroy 30,000 copies of an Italian dictionary, which was discovered to supply a definition of "anti-Semites," as "ill-bred people who fight the Jews." Such a book ought to be suppressed. Can anyone imagine English gentlemen such as Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Halifax, Lord Redesdale, etc., as professing friendship, joining in hunting parties, and publicly proclaiming their faith in the good-faith of Hitler and Co., if they were "ill-bred"? Their torture of little children, old men, and women, the wholesale confiscation of their means of living, are no disproof of this—evidence—the friendship expressed by the parties named. We have come to a pretty pass if men whose professed aim is to "purify" their country are to be called ill-bred. We suppose that our Government will express its opinion in the matter by

ordering all copies of the said book to be seized at the customs and burned. The policy of appeasement must be pursued.

Two new issues of the "Thinker's Library" have just been issued by Messrs. Watts & Co. One is an abridged edition of Dr. Henry Maudsley's well known *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings*, which we can commend to our readers. It is rather a pity that the book was not reprinted at 2s. 6d., since that might have enabled the whole of the work to appear, and although the subject has been carried a great deal further since Dr. Maudsley wrote it is well worth reprinting. The second volume is a selection of essays by Havelock Ellis, with the title of, *Morals, Manners, and Men*. There is no need to commend Havelock Ellis's work to *Freethinker* readers. Each volume is published at one shilling.

Mr. G. Bedborough will pay a return visit to Birmingham to-day (January 29), and will lecture in the Bristol Street Schools at 7 p.m., on "Hell." The local N.S.S. Branch is putting in some very good work, and deserves the support of every Birmingham Secularist alive to the importance of a strong Freethought movement in that area. Good audiences are a real encouragement to those doing the organizing work, and lead to a greater volume of work being accomplished.

Congratulations to the mobile police officer who, at Middlesex Sessions on January 11, declined the oath, but gave his evidence after affirming. It is rather a sad reflection when an expression of honesty in relation to religion calls forth a word of public approval, but many in the same situation would have been afraid of prejudicing themselves with their "superiors." Religious folk for the most part still rank conformity as higher than intellectual honesty.

Power

Love of power is the chief danger of the educator, as of the politician; the man who can be trusted in education must care for his pupils on their own account, not merely as potential soldiers in an army of propagandists for a cause. Fichte and the powerful men who have inherited his ideals, when they see children, think, "Here is material I can manipulate, that I can teach to behave like a machine in furtherance of my purposes; for the moment I may be impeded by joy of life, spontaneity, the impulse to play, the desire to live for purposes springing from within, not imposed from without; but all this, after the years of schooling that I shall impose, will be dead; fancy, imagination, art, and the power of thought shall have been destroyed by obedience; the death of joy shall have bred receptiveness to fanaticism; in the end I shall my human material as passive as stone from a quarry or coal from a mine. In the battles to which I shall lead them, some will die, some will live; those who die will die exultantly, as heroes, those who live will live on as my slaves, with that deep mental slavery to which my schools will have accustomed them." All this, to any person with natural affection for the young, is horrible; just as we teach children to avoid being destroyed by motor cars if they can, so we should teach them to avoid being destroyed by cruel fanatics, and to this end we should seek to produce independence of mind, somewhat sceptical and wholly scientific, and to preserve, as far as possible, the instinctive joy of life that is natural to healthy children. This is the task of a liberal education; to give a sense of the value of things other than domination, to help to create wise citizens of a free community, and through the combination of citizenship with liberty in individual creativeness to enable men to give to human life that splendour which some few have shown that it can achieve.

*From "Power; a New Social Analysis,"
by Bertrand Russell.*

Faith Healing

DEFEATED on the score of logic and scientific fact, the religionist may make a direct appeal to the evidence for the miraculous which he claims is available in modern times.

What is a miracle? A miracle, we are told,¹ is not a violation of law, but an intrusion of the divine will, God intervening as we intervene when we lift a knife from the table. God *uses* natural law to effect changes which nature could not effect.

But since the motive force comes from outside nature, it might surely be said to constitute a violation. The force which goes to the human arm to lift a knife is in quite a different category. It is totally in accordance with natural law, depending on chemical energy supplied by the body, itself part of nature.

Mr. Lunn, a Roman Catholic, is entitled to argue, as he does argue, that if there is a God he *may* perform miracles. But this line of justification rests on the tenacity of the Aquinate proofs from which he starts, and collapses with *their* collapse. Whether Mr. Lunn can successfully defend them may be investigated in his debate with Haldane. He also assumes them, but is not pressed to defend them, in his equally entertaining, if rather less instructive, debate with Dr. Joad ("Is Christianity 'True?'").

I think we may remark two types of what are ordinarily called miracles, namely (1) violations of physical law, and (2) healing by faith. Now any consideration of the reports of miraculous occurrences must be attended by a consideration of the mental atmosphere in which they originated. Stories which gained credence after the death of Dr. Faustus would not be countenanced to-day, for instance. This aspect of the matter, it is important to realize, may touch *both* types of "miracles." But it is equally important to understand that it does not necessarily invalidate the second type. In other words, some of the material of the second class must be dissociated from the realm of "miracle." To remove it to the sphere of miracle and myth is to set a limit to what we can ever know to be physically possible.

Let us consider some of the most remarkable of the repeated cures at Lourdes, the subject of Fr. Woodlock's pamphlets. An ulcer is cured at the second bath; the foot, dislocated hip joint and knee follow the next day. The spontaneous reduction of a dislocated hip, and the comparatively sudden healing of a spreading chronic ulcer are claimed to be quite outside the reach of any possible medical science. A victim of an advanced lupus has a dry, new skin, though still red, after the first bath, according to Dr. d'Hombres. A woman dying of tuberculosis is restored to health after one immersion. There is a sudden cure of a six-months' blindness, optic atrophy due, according to Fr. Woodlock, to "some cerebral cause." After the cure the retinae still presented the appearance of the disease, so that, according to Dr. Lainez, the victim ought to be blind. The function having returned, it would seem to be God's little joke, according to Fr. Woodlock. Apart from Lourdes there is the interesting case of the Flemish peasant whose leg was shattered in 1863. After a lapse of seven years he was cured with apparent suddenness after praying in a Cathedral, his object of faith being the Virgin Mary.

The rather dogmatic tone of Fr. Woodlock's comment is exposed by Haldane. The remarkable element in all these cures is their swiftness. Says Woodlock, "No discovery can ever upset the well-established laws of growth and healing." But Prof. L. Evans has since induced rats to grow to gigantic sizes

¹ A. Lunn, *Science and the Supernatural*.

after maturity by injection of growth hormone. Extract from the ovary and placenta is able to bring a newly-weaned rat to sexual maturity in four days, whereas from 36 to 80 days are normally necessary. The reverse is possible: rats can be grown to enormous size and development at the expense of sexual maturity. So much for the "well-established laws of growth." The essential process of wound healing is cell proliferation, and the idea that this cannot go beyond certain limits set by the rate of the heart-beat is challenged by Haldane, who points out that normally the period of most rapid cell division is in the early embryo, before the heart has even developed. So much for the "well-established" laws of healing. So if under special circumstances human tissues grow very quickly, though less quickly than those of a rapidly growing plant, what natural law is broken?

Fr. Woodlock says we know there are certain things nature *can't* do, even if we do not know all she can do. Fr. Woodlock knows that "Suggestion does not kill microbes or heal a gastric ulcer." But, maintains Haldane, bacteria *have* been killed by suggestion.

What suggestion can do has been capably exploited by Coué and in psychotherapy. The confidence that improvement or cure is to take place can be drawn either from oneself (autosuggestion) or from another person or object. The object may be a material one, such as a charm, or it may be a magic formula. Ultimately all suggestion of this kind is autosuggestion. It may advantageously be associated with ritual and formula ("Every day in every way . . ."). Dr. Joad tells that he once got rid of a wart by having complete faith in the incantation of some quack at a country fair. I find it difficult to account for the prevalence of the belief in "king's evil" (scrofula) from the time of Edward the Confessor right down to Charles II, except on the theory that suggestion occasionally produced improvement following the king's touch.

At the stage of hypnotic suggestion even more remarkable phenomena are possible. Under hypnosis a lighted cigarette has been found not to blister the fingers. Kraft Ebing produced a burn in a hypnotized subject by applying cold metal which he described as hot. Pierre Janet found small vesicles on the feet and breasts of an ecstatic woman in imitation of Christ's wounds, while in another the blood circulation behaved as though the subject were herself undergoing crucifixion.²

The best results are obtained in people of permanently (hyperemotional) or temporarily (cyclothmic—oscillatory) unstable constitution. (If it should prove that such constitutions tend to disappear biologically this would possibly be an additional explanation of why faith-cures are, in proportion to the present population, less common and less spectacular than in remote ages, granting their validity).

This unstability may be artificially induced in psychotherapy, which few would deny is more successful than Lourdes.

Before commenting on the Lourdes cases, it might be worth quoting from Prof. J. Leuba: "The Medical Bureau in Lourdes makes a great show of scientific rigour in matters of evidence, but we have not yet heard of a single crucial case—a case in which the psychological forces known to be present could not be regarded as sufficient—where the suspicion of error or deception did not remain." No medical institution could survive long on the achievements of Lourdes.

In the case of the blind woman restored to sight Haldane observes that 10 per cent upwards of these cases recover to a large extent without treatment, the victims being often able to read. The fact that the

function was restored before the material appearances he takes to show that the medical men at Lourdes may not be expert diagnosticians, for when the disc has these atrophic signs it never recovers its normal appearance even when sight is resumed. A woman whose retinae have that appearance need not, therefore, be blind.

What has been said about growth and healing serves to put the other cures in an altogether different light. The question to be solved is, what is the physiological mechanism whereby healing is accelerated or initiated by suggestion? Haldane suggests an abnormal activity of the vaso-motor nerves, which can influence the permeability of the blood vessels.

If Lourdes proves the Virgin Mary, Mohammedan fakirs and fire-walkers prove Allah, and all kinds of non-Christian Powers are proved by all religious cures which do not happen to be under the auspices of Christianity. If a Christian Science³ cure can be effected without the aid of the Virgin, so can others, and if secular cures can be obtained without religious ritual or belief of any kind, the contention that religion is an essential element is not tenable. A French literary gentleman once enunciated the maxim, *Aimez quelqu'un; n'importe qui*. And so the secret of faith-healing might be put: Believe in something; no matter what. Leuba relates how a drunken Scotsman was cured and converted. The appeal was not to God or to any religious motive whatever. It was to his nationality. "I don't believe you're a Scotsman." McDonald flared with indignation. "You must have some Irish blood." McDonald was incensed with wrath. "No true Scotsman would behave as you do." It was enough, McDonald proved he was a true Scot by discarding the habit of a lifetime, and was duly booked as a convert to Christ.

I make one final observation which seems rather to clinch the whole argument about religious healing. Metalnikoff has turned the acquisition of immunity into conditioned reflex in the animal, which is saved from death by a particular ritual, in the absence of which the animal dies.

G. H. TAYLOR

³ Mrs. Eddy was cured by Dr. Quimby, who himself learned hypnotic suggestion from Charcot.

Animal Colouration

I AM sorry to say that in spite of Mr. Bonner's reply to critics, I still find difficulty in understanding what he is wanting to convey, due no doubt to the lack of knowledge of Continental research of which he speaks and to which I plead guilty.

In attempting to express a new interpretation of some of the factors affecting lineage trends, it is necessary that the outline should be clearly depicted in words rigidly defined and properly applied, so that the nature of the departure from accepted theories may be properly grasped.

I still maintain that the results of the experiments mentioned do not necessarily prove the new ideas right and the old ones wrong. They may support the idea that there has been inter-action in the race trend of insect and insect enemy, so that, on the one hand the visual faculties of the attacker are specially developed to make it aware of some minute, and to us imperceptible, departure from the usual in its prey that leads it to it; and on the other to a more and more close approximation in succeeding generations, to the appearance of the mimicked object, leaf, stick, etc.

Such specialized development could well result in the seemingly grossly more conspicuous food object

² Reported in Leuba's *God or Man*.

being quite ignored, or if there is present in their make up the same small unusualness possessed by the controls to advertise their food value then their enemies might take toll in equal ratio. If the figures had been all in favour of the conspicuous but less usual food object, then one might conjecture that training and heredity had resulted in the faculties being concentrated on very slight occasional defects in the opposing camouflage, to the exclusion of quick awareness of the monstrously unusual forms as equally desirable food.

This brings me back to the points stated before, no two objects are completely identical, no two living forms are exact reproductions the one of the other, all groupings into species, varieties, and like divisions are made by classifiers who find it a convenience for study and understanding to ignore innumerable small differences and concentrate on noting only the characteristics common to all in one category. It is very important however that the features purposely evaded should not subsequently be forgotten or too much belittled, for it seems that it is through these differences in the main that the changes called evolutionary, take effect; for there will be elimination if the difference amounts to a sufficiently grave lack of accord with environment. Natural Selection means the elimination by the processes of nature of those units so far out of adjustment that they do not mature and reproduce. Agreed the lack of adjustment may arise from an increased potency in the forces against which the organism has to contend for survival, agreed also that such changes can be cataclysmic or catastrophic, to such an extent that there is high mortality or complete extinction to all in the area, even though they differ but little from their progenitors.

Mr. Bonner speaks of (1) Factors which cause changes in "living organisms." Am I right in interpreting this as factors which lead to the removal of individuals with some detrimental factors, so that eventually as generation succeeds generation, the one time recognisable characteristics become replaced by other and different ones? If this is what Mr. Bonner wished to convey, then I am better prepared to examine the statement of Professor Cuenot's theory "that it offers environment as a factor capable of producing evolutionary changes." Note first of all, if I have got Mr. Bonner's meaning, that the changes are not instigated by environment but are an effect of environment forces on mutational differences, often quite small, leading to weakness and extinction if adverse, or if advantageous to strong maturity.

There is nothing occult about it, environment is not some deity shaping living things of some set purpose to some predetermined end; environment is not an entity, all activities contiguous but external to an organism are embraced under this one word or heading; nor is it new or novel to assert that living organisms are influenced by environment.

Darwin, in setting out his facts supporting the theory of Natural Selection did far more than "consider the consequences of such changes," he suggested how in nature changes occurred in the specific leading to widespread variation, and at length to an altered species once again, and the natural selection referred to in the full title of *The Origin of Species* is selection in regard to environment.

Mr. Bonner, as many who deal with successive changes that have come to be classed as racial trends, is bemused by the belief that words of classification denote some actual object, some thing existing in actuality, such as race, species, or type; but these are words of use only to convey some generalized theory based on observed facts.

Our esteemed Editor has repeatedly pointed out how detrimental policies often owe their origin to misunderstandings arising when a word of general and

vague application is erroneously used, often by those who should know better, as having an exact value; hence the foolish aspirations for the preservation of British, Nordic, Jewish, Aryan, etc., races, when with a certainty such races have not yet emerged as distinct varieties of the genus *Homo sapiens*.

If an isolation of the Nazi-ruled people, or an isolation of those Soviet-ruled, is splendidly if artificially, preserved for a few hundred thousand years or longer, then the environmental forces of which ruler control would not be least, might cause the emergence of varieties of men distinguishable because incapable of independent thought, and devoid of the capacity of initiative, since in the period named all who showed atavistic trends to such freedom would be either killed or sterilized by the overlords, thus diminishing and eventually eliminating this tainted stock.

DON FISHER

"Insanity and Crime"

Sennacieca Revuo ("Nationless Review") is one of the monthlies of the Workers' Esperanto Movement, which is known as S.A.T., "Sennacieca Asocio Tutmonda"—("Nationless World Association"). In the December number of "S.R." there is—as usual—much interesting matter. One article was written in a Lithuanian prison; another comes from Poland. Both articles are in the fact-reporting style, which is now known as "raportage." Both also show how little we know about the extent, in Europe, of that "Nazi" Fascist Terror which our "Inner Cabinet" so shamelessly supports. Our present Government seems to try to be the friend of Nazi Tyranny and Terror in every region of our World.

Another article, "Insanity and Crime"—which is to be continued—deals with the "United Front" of the churches and its relations to Political Re-action. It is by "Satano kaj S.A.T. ano," which may be translated "Satan and S.A.T. member"; but a pun in one language is rarely one in another. I have Englished it for our readers, not only because it should be of interest to them; but also because "S. and S." asks that it be translated into National Languages for publication. Some sentences are nearly as long as those of Bernard Shaw; but I have tried to make these clear. Also, I do not agree—so far as the British Free-thought Movement is concerned—with his criticism of our weapons and methods. About the Netherlands (Holland) it may be true; but, in any case, our readers can form their own opinion.

"Insanity and Crime."

Preface.—At the present day, when the Churches—based upon the most dissimilar principles—are coming together, throughout the Globe, in a great 'World League of Churches': when they are thus forming a strong United Front against their common enemy, the Disbelievers, who under the names of Atheist, Godless, and Freethought Unions are spreading more and more: the further continuance of the tolerance exhibited by them hitherto (? A.Z.) is not sufficient for the Churches. The fate of Spain certainly shows, most painfully, that the Church, in that struggle to defend its declining power, fights not by Spiritual (intellectual? A.Z.) weapons, but endeavours to overcome us by force or to exterminate us. Almost every day similar information reaches us, not only from Spain, but from many other countries. Also in the small Netherlands, where spiritual (intellectual? A.Z.) freedom—won by our Ancestors in long years of terrible struggle—was one of the most sacred

(valued? A.Z.) possessions of the people, propagandist excursions of Freethinkers have been rendered impossible by the instigated Catholic mob. In the centre of the country, a meeting of Freethinkers was broken-up by armed bandits; and the authorities did not punish the criminals.

"The Church Unions, which constitute the most powerful Group in the Government of the country, after that also choked-off the Freethought voice from the Wireless, and threatened to discharge any State Officials who are members of the Freethought Union 'The Daybreak,' or who attend its meetings.

"I recall these facts to show you what methods our opponents use, and to make clear that the old weapons against the Churches are no longer suitable. If we do not wish to be defeated or exterminated; then it is our serious duty to fight against 'the Plague of the Creed' with the most effective weapons; and it is not sufficient to fight only with the old ones, however sharp and successful for their purpose these may have been in the past. We must also think about weapons which penetrate still more deadly certain—in the sense of human reason—than those hitherto used, to clear that curse away for ever from our social life.

"Relying on this principle I have chosen the subject formulated below; and I ask all who have an opportunity, and who approve of my opinion to translate the contents into their National Languages, and to get it published in magazines which stand upon an anti-Religious basis. Still, I must make an exception for the translation into the Netherlands tongue (Dutch, A.Z.) of those parts or expressions which might conflict with the Netherland Blasphemy Law. That sort of translation is forbidden by the Author; and for disregard of this any translator must be personally responsible.

"Was, or is, the Belief in several,
or in one, Gods a symptom of Insanity?"

"If we desire to answer this double question, namely: Was that kind of Belief a symptom of Insanity for our Ancestors? and secondly: is it such for the human of the twentieth century? before everything we must agree about what we mean by the word 'Insanity.'

"This I shall try to explain in this way: The human sees, hears, smells, tastes, and feels, by the organs appropriate to the purpose: the eyes, the ears, the nose, the mouth (palate and tongue), the touch organs (hands and feet). By means of our organs of perception we can form an idea, not only about the Earth on which we live, and about the objects which surround us here, but the eye—unaided or improved by the use of a telescope—can also form an idea about that which we experience of the Universe outside the limits of the atmosphere surrounding our Earth.

"The consecutive impressions of the eye and other organs imprinted on the brain form there a series of pictures bound together, which are known by the name, 'memory.' Such picture-sequences are not merely locked-up in the brain as in some kind of record, but there they are also worked-up, compared, set in order, and re-arranged; and, out of these processes in the brain known under the names 'thinking' and 'reflecting,' the human makes conclusions or judgments. That we express by the definition, that the human is a reasoning being."

Englished by ATHOS ZENOO

(To be continued)

For there is a true Church wherever one hand meets another helpfully, and that is the only holy or Mother Church which ever was, or ever shall be.—Ruskin.

Correspondence

ENGLAND AND GERMANY

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—In your issue of January 15 the writer of "Acid Drops" says that Hitler would have had "a certain and rapid disaster if he had been foolish enough to go to war."

I should like to know what military authorities he can adduce in favour of that view, as all I have read are of a different opinion.

It is obvious that the war in its early months would have been entirely in the air, for we could not invade Germany by land, Russia is divided from Germany by hundreds of miles of neutral territory, and nobody imagines that France could get across the Rhine in any measurable time.

According to the United States War Office, an extremely reliable authority, Germany and Italy had six times as many military aeroplanes as France and Britain in the last week of September.

Even with equal numbers we should be at a great disadvantage, for Berlin is twice as far from England as London is from Germany, and we could hardly get at any of the great German towns without crossing Holland or Belgium, a breach of international law, which our Government would have been very unwilling to commit.

It therefore seems evident that in the early months of the war Germany and Italy would have had an overwhelming advantage, unless Russia had been able and willing to perform miracles in our behalf. I think that would be rather too much to expect.

Could we have survived those early months, until we could have made Germany and Italy feel our naval blockade? If you will read the "Penguin" called *The Air Defence of Britain*, by Charlton, Garratt and Fletcher, two at least of whom are Socialists, I think you will be convinced that we could not have survived. The enemy could have smashed our towns into atoms and destroyed our food supply, long before we could have done anything effective in reply.

R. B. KERR.

[We publish the above letter, but we do not place as much reliance upon German bluff as Mr. Kerr appears to do, neither are we as impressed with the propaganda of fear that has been carried on in this country. The curious thing is that Mr. Kerr with his ability for believing what Germany wishes us to believe should pay so little attention to all the facts in the other direction.—Ed.]

National Secular Society

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD JANUARY 19, 1939

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

Also present: Messrs. Clifton, Elstob, Bryant, Preece, Seibert, Ebury, Silvester, Bedborough, Horowitz, Griffiths, Mrs. Grant, Mrs. Quinton, and the Secretary.

Minutes of the previous meeting read and accepted. The monthly Financial Statement presented.

New members were admitted to Edinburgh, Blackburn, Liverpool, Manchester, North London, South London Branches, and the Parent Society. Correspondence from various sources was dealt with, and instructions given. An invitation to send delegates to a Conference on the Civil Rights of Black-coated Workers was accepted, and Messrs. Elstob and Bryant were appointed. Mrs. Grant informed the meeting that the recent International Congress of the World Union of Freethinkers held in London had been given prominence, as an item of news in a wireless broadcast from Czecho-Slovakia at the time. Progress in arrangements for the Annual Dinner, Annual Conference, and other matters were reported, and the meeting closed.

The next meeting of the Executive was fixed for Thursday, February 16.

R. H. ROSETTI,

General Secretary.

DEFYING THE LIGHTNING: A FRUSTRATED EXPERIMENT

The evening in 1878 or thereabouts, I, being then in my earliest twenties, was at a bachelor party of young men of the professional class in the house of a doctor in the Kensingtonian quarter of London. They fell to talking about religious revivals; and an anecdote was related of a man who, having incautiously scoffed at the mission of Messrs. Moody and Sankey, a then famous firm of American evangelists, was subsequently carried home on a shutter, slain by divine vengeance as a blasphemer. A timid minority, without quite venturing to question the truth of the incident—for they naturally did not care to run the risk of going home on shutters themselves—nevertheless showed a certain disposition to cavil at those who exalted in it, and something approaching to an argument began.

At last it was alleged by the most evangelical of the disputants that Charles Bradlaugh, the most formidable Atheist on the Secularist platform, had taken out his watch publicly and challenged the Almighty to strike him dead in five minutes if he really existed and disapproved of Atheism. The leader of the cavillers, with great heat, repudiated this as a gross calumny, declaring that Bradlaugh had repeatedly and indignantly contradicted it, and implying that the Atheist champion was far too pious a man to commit such a blasphemy. This exquisite confusion of ideas roused my sense of comedy. It was clear to me that the challenge attributed to Charles Bradlaugh was a scientific experiment of a quite simple, straightforward and proper kind to ascertain whether the expression of Atheistic opinions really did involve any personal risk. It was certainly the method taught in the Bible, Elijah having confuted the prophets of Baal in precisely that way, with every circumstance of bitter mockery of their God when he failed to send down fire from heaven. Accordingly I said that if the question at issue were whether the penalty of questioning the theology of Messrs. Moody and Sankey was to be struck dead on the spot by an incensed deity, nothing could effect a more convincing settlement of it than the very obvious experiment attributed to Mr. Bradlaugh, and that consequently if he had not tried it, he ought to have tried it. The omission, I added, was one which could easily be remedied there and then, as I happened to share Mr. Bradlaugh's views as to the absurdity of the belief in these violent interferences with the order of nature by a short-tempered and thin-skinned supernatural deity. Therefore—and at that point I took out my watch.

The effect was electrical. Neither sceptics nor devotees were prepared to abide the result of the experiment. In vain did I urge the pious to trust in the accuracy of their deity's aim with a thunderbolt, and the justice of discrimination between the innocent and the guilty. In vain did I appeal to the sceptics to accept the logical outcome of their scepticism it soon appeared that when thunderbolts were in question there were no sceptics. Our host, seeing that his guests would vanish precipitately if the impious challenge were uttered, leaving him alone with a solitary infidel under sentence of extermination in five minutes, interposed and forbade the experiment, pleading at the same time for a change of subject. I, of course, complied, but could not refrain from remarking that though the dreadful words had not been uttered, yet, as the thought had been formulated in my mind, it was very doubtful whether the consequences could be averted by sealing my lips. However, the rest appeared to feel that the game would be played according to the rules, and that it mattered very little what I thought so long as I said nothing. Only the leader of the evangelical party, I thought, was a little preoccupied until five minutes had elapsed and the weather was still calm.

by G. B. Shaw, 1921. (Page 32).
From the Preface to "Back to Methusalem."

So densely is the world thronged that any shifting of position, even the best warranted advance, hurts somebody's heels.—Thomas Hardy.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

OUTDOOR

KINGSTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place): 7.30, A Lecture. Weather permitting.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond): 11.30, Sunday, Mr. L. Ebury. Parliament Hill Fields, 3.30, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes, Collins, Tuson and Mrs. N. Buxton.

INDOOR

NORTH LONDON BRANCH (The Cricketers' Arms, Inverness Street, Camden Town, N.W.1): 7.30, Debate—"Is Marxism Unsound?" Affir.: H. Cutner. Neg.: R. Roberts.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Alexandra Hotel, South Side, Clapham Common, S.W.4): 7.30, Debate—"Does Man Survive Death?" Affir.: Mr. Barbanell, Editor *Psychic News*; Neg.: Mr. F. P. Corrigan, N.S.S.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W. C.1): 11.0, John Katz, B.A.—"What is Civilization?"

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.): 7.30, Mrs. M. Saran—"The Moral Basis of Politics."

COUNTRY

INDOOR

BERKENHEAD (Witfal) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane): 7.0, D. Robinson (Liverpool)—"Christianity and Politics."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Bristol Street Schools): 7.0, Mr. G. Bedborough (London)—"Hell."

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. (Jubilee Assembly Hall, Blackburn): 7.30, Monday, January 30. Debate—"That Human Personality Survives the Tomb." Affir.: Rev. B. Kingslake (New Church). Neg.: Mr. J. Clayton (N.S.S.). Literature for sale.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Laycock's Forum, Kirkgate): 7.15, Mr. L. Hardman (Leeds)—"The Bible Libel."

CLITHEROE (The Labour Club): 7.45, Mr. J. Clayton—"The Soul in the Making."

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Free Gardeners' Hall, Picardy Place, Edinburgh): 7.0, Mr. F. Smithies (Edinburgh)—"Through Science to Philosophy."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow): 7.0, Dr. Maurice Friedlander, M.A.—"Zionism and Internationalism."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Miss Edith Moore—"The Holy Helpmate of Fascism."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington, Liverpool, entrance in Christian Street): 7.0, Rev. W. Bashant (Liverpool).

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (King's Café, 64-66 Oxford Road, Manchester, near All Saints Church): 7.0, Mr. R. H. S. Standfast (Birkenhead)—"God and the Psychologists."

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PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

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

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

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

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

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

The following is a quite sufficient form for anyone who desires to benefit the Society by legacy:—

I hereby give and bequeath (*Here insert particulars of legacy*), free of all death duties, to the Trustees of the National Secular Society for all or any of the purposes of the Trust Deed of the said Society.

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

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

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

MEMBERSHIP

Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

I desire to join the National Secular Society, and I pledge myself, if admitted as a member, to co-operate in promoting its objects.

Name

Address

Occupation

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