

# THE FREETHINKER

EDITED *by* CHAPMAN COHEN  
 — Founded 1881 —

VOL. LIX.—No. 38

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1939

PRICE THREEPENCE

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

Views and Opinions

The Situation

In the course of a hurried note last week I said that the Armistice of 1918 was at an end. There was no attempt at wit in the choice of that word. It was a statement of a neglected fact. Since 1918 there have been many wars (China, Abyssinia, Spain and South America have been the principal ones) and we have been in a war atmosphere almost as demoralizing as war itself. We have also had the world propaganda of both Italy and Germany, which at home found expression in a calculated brutality and glorification of war such as we have never before witnessed. Together with the cross-currents of political interests, a real peace has been impossible. Thanks to both these elements collective action against war, which is now being demonstrated as the only method by which the Fascist terror may be defeated, was denounced as a midsummer night's dream. Now internal organization and external collective action are adopted with a speed and thoroughness which is a testimony to the worthlessness of the statesmanship formerly in existence. We must unite to make war, but a real living peace may be left to look after itself. We have not the slightest doubt but that the Allies will repeat their victory over Germany, but if they make the peace in no better manner than they did before, it will leave the world little better than they found it. If we must have a successful war, let us see to it that we have an equally successful peace.

Once again, at the opening of another war, I protest against the theory that war is the product of one man's activity, even though the immediate explosion is caused by such a semi-lunatic as Adolf Hitler. To make this assumption is to lead the general mind off the track at the outset. Such men as Hitler are the scum that society may throw to the surface, and it should be treated as a cook treats scum in the cooking—it should be thrown on one side as soon as noticed. In life events explain men, and the origin of the criminal gang against which we are now fight-

ing is in the world they found established. Let us bear these things in mind at the opening of a new war.

\* \* \*

Fascism the Enemy

I think that, after the long period of suspense, and the conviction that it was only by a major operation that the civilized States could clear itself of the Fascist cancer, many must have heard the news, "We are at war with Germany" with a sense of relief. Its end may lead to something nearer a real peace than we have ever seen. A victory for Germany is unthinkable. Not even the educated Germans who are left in Germany can believe victory possible. The utmost Germans can hope for is that Hitler may be bought off by being given something, and I do not think that any statesman would dare arrange such a "peace." It would revive a policy of bluster, lying and brutality on the one side, and demonstrated weakness on the other. To pay by instalments is the very worst way of defeating blackmail. Munich and Czechoslovakia have not been without their lessons.

For that reason I am pleased to see that we have had a declaration that our aim is the destruction of German Nazism. I wish it had been said differently, but one must take it as a politician's way of speaking the truth. German Nazism is, after all, only a local form of Fascism, and I prefer the plainer term.

Whether in Germany or elsewhere Fascism is one, using the same methods, denying to men and women the same rights, seeking to achieve its aims by lying, deceit and murder. I know it will be said that statesmen in other lands lie and deceive and make war. I agree, but homage is paid to better methods by a certain shamefacedness, and lying and deceit are not openly practised as a first principle of national life. Whether the relations between ourselves be that of armed warfare, or a demoralizing state of armed watchfulness the situation is much the same. No country in which the people maintain any form of self-government, no country in which a professed democracy exists, can live on such terms as should exist between civilized States. There must be maintained an armed force sufficient to keep the Fascist beast in check. This is not an encirclement which aims at curtailing the life of a foreign nation; it is the kind of encirclement that an efficient police force maintains against branded criminals.

For these reasons, and for others that have been given, a real peace between ourselves and a Fascist country is a practical impossibility. The more extensive Fascist territory is the greater danger to it from non-Fascist ideas. Fascism is bound to fight for the destruction of those ideas which act with such deadly effect on its own existence. However docile the German people may become by iron training, their docility is weakened and finally destroyed, if the contact between it and the non-Fascist countries is permitted to continue. Self-preservation thus urges Fascism in the

direction of world domination. Fascism is largely a war of ideas. It has so far established itself by a rigorous exclusion of antagonistic ideas; to keep this ascendancy it must not merely exclude non-Fascist ideas, it must fight for their destruction.

### Propaganda

I think that the finest bit of propaganda that has yet been done is the distribution of millions of pamphlets over Germany. It is a far more deadly assault on the existence of Fascism than the bravery of British, French and German soldiers, and it will still further arouse a people who have had their intelligence dulled with lies. But it would be a fatal error to assume that Hitler has the German people solidly behind him. That is a story which has formed a large part of the propaganda of our home-bred and subsidized Fascists. It is a lie, and they know it is a lie. They know that Germany is to-day fighting a battle on four fronts, on the land, on the sea, in the air, and at home. Ten thousand million shells would not do the work of these ten million leaflets. Fascism has driven from Germany some of its best brains in medicine, science, literature, and philosophy, and we know from the fate of Spain after it had driven out the Moors and the Jews, the kind of nemesis that that brings to a nation.

Our propaganda should be intensified. It should be made quite clear that the German *people* may have a real peace and not a peace of revenge. But there should be no peace with the Hitler gang however much their British friends and supporters may plead. In the case of the Kaiser the dishonest cry was raised, "Hang the Kaiser." The Kaiser was not hanged, and no one with intelligence ever expected that he would be, not even if he had followed the example of Napoleon and delivered himself up to the Allies. He and those with him had been ruthless enough in their warfare, but the Kaiser—poor thing though he was—had not committed the crime that Fascists have committed among their own people. The Kaiser had not outraged women, deliberately starved and murdered children and old people as a vital part of his policy. Poland may, in the course of events, become a second Belgium, but that will not destroy the Polish spirit any more than the German rule destroyed the spirit of the Belgians.

There must be no treaty with Hitler and his gang. As I said last week, it should be part of our propaganda that no peace will be made with Hitler and his principal supporters. They must be dealt with as criminals are dealt with—unless their own people deal with them. But to deal with the present rulers of Germany as one does with those who have blundered, to conclude a treaty that would leave the present rulers of Germany in power would be to mock at whatever is left in the world in the shape of decency. It may be that when the German position gets worse we may hear that Hitler has committed suicide. That will be a camouflage for murder. Hitler is too great a coward, too paltry in mind, to seek a way out in that fashion.

\* \* \*

### Grave and Gay

The Government decided to close cinemas, theatres, and places of entertainment—to be modified later, in order to permit some to be open in certain areas. I hope that permission will be enlarged as soon as possible. There are some things that are too serious to be taken solemnly, and war is one of them. The man with a long face has not, of necessity, greater courage than the one with a smile in the face of danger. Our soldiers showed that in the last war laughter was often an escape from insanity. The

people will not be better stiffened to bear things because they are shut out from amusements, and we are having in our towns and cities too much of a great darkness that hinders locomotion and saps strength. There is nothing like darkness for encouraging fear, and we cannot all have elaborately built dug-outs with amusements provided. It is good to know that at the leading West-end hotels there are underground rooms with entertainments and meals as usual. But we are not habitués of these establishments, and a shilling at the pictures runs more in our line. After all, grim determination need not be identified with a sanctified solemnity.

Bernard Shaw and Oswald Stoll have protested against the Churches being opened while theatres are closed. Presumably the Government thinks that people do not go to Church for entertainment—unless they are Freethinkers—and that there would be no overcrowding, in any case. The *Church Times* reproves Messrs. Shaw and Stoll, by pointing out that Churches are not run for profit, and in these times "men and women should not be encouraged to giggle at Hollywood gangster films." This seems to me a very poor plea. If everyone went to Church and watched an Anglo-Catholic performance there would be more people giggling than there are at a gangster film. It is a question of an all-round sense of humour, and there will, we expect, be many more people than usual giggling in Church when the parson tells them to be calm, for they are in the hands of the Lord, and then remember the sandbags stacked outside in case the Lord does not hear the signal that there is a raid on.

We also note that with regard to Conscriptio the Government has relieved from service, all over forty, women, the blind, the insane—and clergymen. I should not like that if I were a parson. "Service essential to the country" would be enough to relieve them of army duty. But perhaps the Government did not have the courage to exempt the clergy on that ground. So the profession is exempted as a whole. It looks better.

Just before the declaration of war the Archbishop of Canterbury said, and he *ought* to know, that,

If in the inscrutable providence of God the awful scourge of war is to fall upon Europe, we may look upon it as a judgment upon us for the neglect of the laws of God's kingdom.

He is also satisfied that we "deserve some measure of judgment," and throws out the hint to God that if we commit our cause to him, if we come out on the winning side, we will, as a nation, "be more loyal to His Sovereign Will." Nothing could be fairer. If God will do his part of the job, we, in return, will give "loyal service," that is we will sing his praise and advertise his power with all the fervency of anyone advertising a new cure for indigestion. This is an excellent suggestion for one who has discovered the *inscrutable* purpose of God and knows that he is giving us a war because we have not pleased him, just as a sample of what he may know when he gets his "dander rized."

But it does sound rather like the rule of Hitler. Hundreds or thousands are in Concentration Camps, Poland is being invaded, other countries have been taken, all because their inhabitants would not act as Hitler wished. God and Hitler seem to work on the same lines. Mind it is not I who say that God has given us this war. I am an Atheist who never blames God for anything. It is one of his fifteen-thousand-pounds-a-year servants who makes the charge. But to one who cannot scrutinize the *inscrutable* it does seem a rather monstrous proceeding for Providence to blast hundreds of thousands of human beings out of existence because some of us

have offended him. Some of those affected have been good men—his servant the Archbishop, for instance. For really, while I do not think much of the Archbishop from an intellectual point of view, I do not think his sins are important enough to have plunged the world into war. And the poor little children who have been sent from their homes because "Providence" has got riled with some of their elders. What have they done? Let us hope that God is not so bad as the Archbishop thinks he is. Or better still, let us hope that he does not exist. The world without God is bad enough, but a world with God, particularly the Archbishop's God is an almost inconceivable horror. The Archbishop may be worthy of the God he pictures, but it would be only if God is worthy of the Archbishop.

But I have said that the more serious the occasion, the greater the need for a laugh. So perhaps we ought to thank the Archbishop for being so humorous a person and with so humorous a God.

CHAPMAN COHEN

## Humbug's High Priestess

Rough work, Iconoclasm, but the only way to get at truth.—O. W. Holmes.

When you kneel in front of a priest, always keep your hands in your pockets.—Voltaire.

VOLTAIRE, who had lived in England, said that this country had a hundred religions and one sauce. Since his day the numbers of both religions and sauces have increased largely. *Whitaker's Almanac* used to print a list of these fancy religions, as revealed by the places of worship, and it ran to several columns of small type, but has omitted the feature of late years. There were Quakers and Shakers, Four-Square Gossellers, Spiritualists, Peculiar People, three brands of Methodists (since amalgamated) Swedenborgians, Muggletonians, Catholics and Anglo-Catholics, Latter-Day Saints, Elin Tabernacles, Christian Scientists, Church and Salvation Armies, and a lot of others, too numerous to quote. Only two of these bodies show any real signs of vitality, the Spiritualists, who batten in the poorer districts, and the Christian Scientists, who much prefer clients who possess banking-accounts. Just as Unitarianism was described as "a feather-bed to catch a falling Christian," so both the Spiritists and the Christian Scientists attract people whose faith in Orthodoxy is failing.

There is one curious feature in Christian Science. It is neither Christian nor Scientific, but it happens to be a craze that has become fashionable. The reason is not so far to seek. It is a saucy attempt to build a bridge between religion and science, between the abracadabra of superstition and the reasoned conclusions of ordered thought. People who had been brought up as Christians, and were disturbed as to its veracity and authenticity, hailed the new evangel because it appeared to confirm their luke-warm faith. For Christian Science was, in its way, a novelty. Superficially, it was a gospel of reconciliation. It was founded by a woman, and not by a man, and her name was Mary Baker Glover Eddy.

As the lady herself hailed from the United States, that land of fancy religions, the new evangel was not hid under a bushel. It was spread abroad by the approved methods of patent-medicine advertising, and in time became popular. The newest of new Bibles, *Christian Science, A Key to the Scriptures*, of which the American lady was the author, appeared in 1866 and has passed its two hundredth edition. There are

five hundred pages in this revelation, and its success throws a searchlight on the credulity and psychology of the religious public.

The new evangel has been received by tens of thousands of half-educated religious men and women, reverent of learning, but quite unable to discriminate it from its adulterated imitation. And Mrs. Eddy, quite as indiscriminating as any of her readers, was equipped admirably by a nodding acquaintance with theology, metaphysics, and a sham-scientific vocabulary, and a tenacious memory, to give them the very thing they longed for. Words were Mrs. Eddy's stock-in-trade. Her pomp of court and her priesthood were verbosity. She revelled in polysyllabic words. To a reader familiar with the sober use of scientific terms, her definitions and explanations are delirious jargon. They are the bastard offspring of a hectic imagination playing, in the light of half-grasped ideas from the scientists, upon resonant polysyllables. For example, here is her idea of a scientific definition:—

Matter, mythology, mortality; another name for mortal mind; illusion, intelligence, substance, and life in non-intelligence and mortality; sensation in the sensationless; mind originating in matter; the opposite of truth: the opposite of God; that of which mortal mind takes no cognizance; that of which mortal mind sees, feels, tastes, and smells in belief.

The author of this sheer nonsense has been hailed by enthusiastic believers as "second only to Christ." And this, mark you, after writing that matter, mythology, and mortality are synonymous. The pathological nature of the new evangel is shown by another quotation:—

The metaphysics of Christian Science prove the rule by inversion.

For example:—

There is no pain in truth, and there is no truth in pain.

Yet Mrs. Eddy, with pain, regrets that ontology receives less attention than physiology, and relates the following improving anecdote, worthy of the saucy and mendacious Baron Munchausen:—

It is related that a father, anxious to try such an experiment, plunged his infant babe, only a few hours old, into water for several minutes, and repeated this operation daily, until the child could remain under water twenty minutes, moving and playing without harm, like a fish. Parents should remember this, and so learn how to develop their children properly on dry land.

Of such material are revelations from heaven made. What, in the name of sanity and common sense, did Mrs. Eddy suppose ontology to mean? It is fitting that such a teacher should give her disciples a form of prayer and a confession of faith which bear a strong resemblance to Christian teaching. The high-priestess of the new faith strutted in borrowed plumes, talked sheer nonsense, and charged three hundred dollars for a dozen lessons. For Ma Eddy was a religious boss. No oil-king, no provision profiteer, no gangster, ever kept a keener eye or a tighter fist on money, the only material thing in existence which Christian Science allows to be real. Nothing has been seen quite like it since the ex-Methodist, Joanna Southcott, fooled her pious dupes into believing that she was to become the mother of yet another Messiah.

Fortunately, the high-priestess of the newest and most successful form of religious quackery did not escape ridicule, that most effective form of criticism. Mark Twain tried to convince the lady-saviour's devotees that they might be mistaken. This is the way Mark burlesqued the Yankee Abracadabra:—

There is an account of the restoration to perfect health, in a single night, of a fatally injured horse, by the application of Christian Science. I can stand a good deal, but I recognize that the ice is getting thin here. That horse had as many as fifty claims; how could he demonstrate over them? Could he do the All Good, Good Good, Good Gracious, Liver, Bones, Truth, all down but nine, set them up on the other alley? Could he intone the scientific Statement of Being? Now, could he? Wouldn't it give him a relapse? Let us draw the line at horses. Horses and furniture.

This is genuine fun, and more effective than reams of prosaic, solid argument. It never affected the enormous popularity of the Eddy Evangel. For when a person joins the Christian Science temples, he must leave his brains at home. He must leave them locked up in an iron safe. If he should forget himself, and think but once, the bye-laws provide that he shall be expelled.

We set out in a spirit of inquiry to make a serious examination of the claims made by Ma Eddy. But this paradoxical and nonsensical system makes us giddy and tired; for of all the strange, frantic, and incomprehensible books which have come from the half-crazy brains of religious ego-maniacs, this book is one of the silliest. It is more incoherent than the ravings of Joanna Southcott. Beside it Joe Smith's *Book of Mormon* is a plain, unvarnished tale. *The Forty Coming Wonders* of Prophet Baxter is shrinking modesty compared with the impudent claims of Mary Eddy. This Yankee Bible fairly takes the breath away, and makes the head swim. No other less colloquial phrase so aptly describes the effect of claims so far transcending sanity. One reels back from the insane heights of "Christian Science" to the simplicity of a rational system like Secularism, suited to sane people, and freed from the absurdities of Superstition.

MIMNERMUS

## The Fear of Death

I REMEMBER reading once of a Christian missionary in one of the cities in the Western States of America, holding forth to a few people who had gathered round to listen. He began telling the tale of the gospel message of salvation, and the awful consequences of its rejection—a hell of fire and brimstone, enduring throughout eternity. One of his audience was an Indian, who mounted a near-by erection, and made a speech, in which he said: "Friends, this gentleman is attempting to mislead you. He is seeking to work upon your fears by describing the horrors of some hell of which he knows nothing, any more than you and I. His doctrine is one of cowardice and fear, and not one of bravery and courage. When, he asked, in derision, did any of the braves of our people ever show signs of fear in the face of death?"

I was reminded of this incident by reading a Chinese story in one of the monthlies for May. It told of a Chinaman in one of the Malay States, who was under sentence of death for murder. He had always borne a good character; and as this crime had been committed in defence of his honour, he was not regarded by his friends and those who knew him, as a criminal. But he had taken the law into his own hands, and was therefore guilty. While he was in prison, a young parson arrived in the district, having been appointed to the mission school, where two of the prisoner's little girls attended. Learning from them the sad plight of their parent, he obtained permission from the

Governor of the prison to visit him. So this man of mysteries began to tell him of one Jesus Christ, who was able to save to the uttermost just such sinners as himself. The prisoner had probably heard from his daughter the name of Jesus Christ—as they pronounced it—and probably thought it was some influential person connected with the mission. "You sure about that?" asked the Chinaman. "Quite sure," said the parson. The visits were repeated, and every time, the Chinaman asked: You quite sure about that friend of yours? On the last occasion, and being again assured, he asked the parson for a piece of paper and pencil. On being supplied, he wrote something on it, and told him to take it to the Goldsmith's Street, and hand it in at the address given. The assistant in attendance took it to someone in the back shop, when the proprietor appeared, and without any questions being asked, the parson was handed the equivalent of £500, English money.

Utterly dumbfounded at the turn events had taken, in his dilemma he thought it best to consult the Prison Governor. This official seems to have grasped the situation at once, and judged that the conversations with the prisoner had been the cause of a most regrettable misunderstanding, the parson being utterly ignorant of the inner workings of the Chinese mind. Without attempting to explain his error, the Governor abruptly asked him if he had any money. The parson replied that he had a small income in his own right, and also an allowance from the mission. Well, said the Governor, I would advise you to make your way into China, and stay there for about three years: learn their language, read their literature and classics; mix freely with all classes of the community, learned and unlearned, and try to understand the general trend of their thoughts; and at the end of that time, you may—I don't say you will—but you may, glimpse something of the curious workings of Chinese mentality.

The fateful morning of the execution arrived. We have a Yorkshire saying: There's nowt like a good funeral; and the Chinese have the same weakness for investing death with pomp and ceremony. Now, owing to the foolish promises of the parson, and the hopes he had raised in the prisoner's mind of an early release, no preparations had been made for the final obsequies—or so the dejected Chinaman thought. But the Governor, knowing the situation, had, a few days before, set a staff to work to prepare a funeral in keeping with the prisoner's social position. When the condemned man entered the room, the Governor quietly led him to the window, and let him see the magnificent array of funeral equipages he had arranged for the occasion. The Chinaman was overjoyed; and stepping into the middle of the room, facing the Governor, he made a most remarkable and touching speech. He thanked him effusively for all the kindness that had been shown to him during his imprisonment, and also for the care that had been extended to his wife, and family; and, above all, for the trouble he had taken in providing—what is dear to a Chinaman's heart—a grand funeral. And turning round, he went bravely and without fear, to pay the penalty of the law. Like the Red Indian, the Chinaman had no fear of death.

JOSEPH BRYCE

My worthy friend, gray are all theories  
And green alone Life's golden tree.—Goethe.

I, for one, think it abominable that any man in modern England should be prosecuted for blasphemy.

G. K. Chesterton.

Peter Annet



Further Notes

THERE is an attractive virility, robustness and vigour throughout Annet's works; his keen humour keeps springing up like the crystal clear waters of a fountain inexhaustible—sparkling and glittering with iridescent lustre in sunlight. Leslie Stephen asserts Annet "is a coarse but forcible writer." This is in keeping with this pedantic but unreliable critic. To this superior and patronizing individual all popular Freethought writers are coarse. His treatment of Paine shows this, and was exposed by J. M. Robertson. Annet was but another example of Stephen's academic patronage. In the following instance, extracted from the *Free Enquirer*, Annet was dealing with a coarse subject which called for plain language.

But in the next miracle, which is a lousy one, Moses outdid them [the Egyptian Magicians]. You must take your optic glass to discern them, they are very little creatures. Aaron makes them by striking the dust of the land with his magic wand, and all the dust of the earth throughout all the land of Egypt, becomes lice, so that men and beasts now swarm with vermin. See! Pharaoh's magicians try to make lice, but they cannot: therefore they told the King that this lousy miracle was done by the finger of God; but the King, without intreating him to kill them with his thumb, scratched himself again, though it makes one itch to think of it. This singular wonder, however, had no wonderful effect, more than the others; But this seems a less miracle than any of the rest; for what miracle could it be for the lousy Israelites to infect the Egyptians with lice.

Other instances could be cited, for by plain dealing with unsavoury incidents in the Bible narrative, Annet succeeded in proving how ridiculous was the prevailing belief in Divine inspiration and revelation. Flowery and poetical language would have veiled the horrors and villainies he had set out to unmask. Only hypocrites would wish to whitewash the black baseness and vicious careers of the bloody tyrants and crafty criminals who are set up as model heroes and "Men of God" in Holy (!) Writ.

As a Satirist, Annet is far greater than Pope or even Byron. He was greater as a Man and his purpose, the greatest imaginable—to enlighten and free humanity from false faiths and fears. He did not waste his talents and energies in sneering and mud-slinging at insignificant individuals who annoyed him; he never indulged in spiteful petty animosities.

He aimed his arrows with unerring accuracy of vision and aim at Superstition—the creeds of the Christian Churches—made up of myths, magic and mysteries. He never missed his mark. Sometimes his attacks are scathingly vitriolic—so were Voltaire's and so, too, were the winged shafts of Lucian, the greatest satirist the world has ever known. Like Lucian, Annet devoted his genius to attacking the tyranny of superstition—the matured form of a parasitic growth that was in its infancy while Lucian was annihilating the old Greek gods. Like Lucian, Annet gave of his best to free humanity from fear and illusions and to promote human happiness.

Two intimate personal letters written by Peter Annet to an unnamed friend in Wiltshire, were published fifteen years after his death, in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. They were prefaced by a short letter, unfortunately—like the other contributions to that Journal—only initialled. I am indebted to Mr. H. Cutner, author of *Pagan Elements in Christianity* (Pioneer Press), a well-known contributor to the *Freethinker*, for having made complete copies of them for me in the British Museum.

It is evident from these letters that Annet either had resided at Salisbury, held some position or stayed there for some considerable time at an earlier date; that he made a circle of good friends in that town, who remained loyal to him through his long life, and who readily helped to relieve his sufferings and went when in prison.

With regard to the Poem on the *Fall of Man*, we endeavoured in vain to trace it or to discover anything about it—whether it was ever published, or what became of the manuscript.

Peter Annet's earlier Necessitarian poem (1739) proves that he was a true Poet, and without doubt he displayed a virile treatment of his theme, and a magnificent mastery of logic as well as language in his blank verse.

Page 250. *Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. 54 (1784).

TWO ORIGINAL LETTERS FROM PETER ANNET

Salisbury, March 24

MR. URBAN,

In answer to the enquiries of your correspondent, F.X., after Peter Annet,\* I send you copies of two original letters to a gentleman of this city. At the time of his persecution he was thought to be so hardly dealt by, that a subscription was made, and sent him in Newgate, from some liberal minds in this neighbourhood. Peter told the gentleman who delivered the benefaction, that Lord B—e had been applied to for a *noli prosequi*; but his answer was, that "the Bishop came foaming at the mouth against this man, and what could he do?" Archbishop Secker afterwards so far repented him of the evil, that he relieved Peter Annet of his distress, to the day of his death. If his head had not been bruised, he would not have wanted a plaister.

Yours, etc., A.B.

Spring Gardens, August 7, 1756

DEAR SIR,

You will, I hope, pardon the trouble I give you by this letter. I am much obliged to you for the favour of yours, and take the contents kindly, particularly that I have not outlived the remembrance of my friends. The pamphlet I ordered, those at Salisbury I know to be not worthy their acceptance, respecting the value or matter contained in it. It

\* Of whom see *Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. XXXII. p. 560.

was intended as pap for babes, not meat for strong men. I was willing to make the best I could of a bad cause, to induce men to embrace a good one. It is the most christian piece that ever I wrote, or shall write. That, and another like it, which lies by me in manuscript, have cost me the most study of any, and I like them the least. I must own they are rather legal than legitimate offspring, the production of art than nature; and this last has told the least of any, so that I intend to print no more; but yet I have such affection to the children of my spirit, which are many, that I would fain bequeath them to some that will have mercy on them, and show them such compassion as that they may be known to the world, though I would not have their friend be a sufferer. But I must leave all that to fate or chance. I care not which it is nor what it is called. I am now writing on the fall of man, in blank verse. But it is far different from Milton in sense. I wish it was equal to his poetic genius; but of that you must expect it to fall abundantly short. Besides, it is much a question of whether truth can shine away the lustre of falsehood; for this is all glorious within, and that without. As it wants no scenes or gaudy embellishments to the lovers of it, its intrinsic value and glory being sufficient to those that know it, so it never courts popular applause, the praise of fools and knaves who make up the mob, the vulgar, the crowd of mankind. I believe it is the last work that I shall attempt; and if my zeal and cogitations can be conquered, as I would have them, it will be so. I was born with the seeds of strong passions, which growing up with me, could not prevent my displaying them in time. But these have been of the softer kind, and nothing yet abated by age: and, therefore, religion having been early implanted in my nature, which works up the passions, and love and resentment too, I have felt to make keen impressions in my disposition; and therefore, perhaps, I am more stung with jealousy when my friends seem to desert me, than men in common are. I unbosom to you my breast; I impart to you the weakness of my soul; I melt while I express it. I cannot read any love affairs, where that passion is strongly expressed, but I am as strongly affected; so as it gives tears to my eyes, and pain in my heart, even to the taking away my stomach for food; and for some time giving me the head-ach, and this weakness is insurmountable; and it may be too, that I prefer the friendship of friends, and an honest reputation, beyond wealth. The love of money is nothing to me, but the love of friends is much; yet the hatred of enemies I despise. I will, therefore, put you and my friends in the way, since you desire it, of returning what you are pleased to call my civilities; that is, that some or other of them would let me hear from them now and then. Let me not be dead to them before I die. And if I could serve you or them, in anything here in town, I should be glad to do it, for I have now abundance of time and liberty, Mr. Kilby being gone with Lord Loudon to America, to supply the army there (which is to consist of 20,000 men) with provisions. In the meantime he has thought fit to continue me in my post: so that I have, as I said, all things, and abound; that is, all that I want. It is not that I am lifted up above my station as a servant, or abound in worldly goods or wealth, but to let you understand that I am contented in my place; which, if I had lost by his going abroad, a worthy gentleman, in my way of thinking too, would have repaired, by making me the steward of his estate, and then I must have lived wholly in the country. This was agreed to, on condition Mr. Kilby was willing to part with me, concerning which he and that gentleman had a conference. But he not caring to part with me, I remain where I was.

I thank you greatly for the offer you make of enriching my small library with some piece that I may count valuable, which when I have well considered, I shall let you know (or Mr. Easton), that you may not conceive that I esteem lightly of your favours, which are offered as a token of your friendship for

me, though now and then a letter that I am not forgotten, but remain in it, would be a sufficient gratification to me, for my love to my friends is really disinterested; but in cases of want it is good to have them, and I am very desirous of keeping those few I have. I am very glad that nobody has lessened the affection of my friends to me, and hope to preserve such a moral character till I die, or at least to deserve it, that nothing but malice, or ignorance, and orthodoxy, may vainly endeavour to blast it; my letter is so long, that I must desire you to take it as it is, with all its faults, without the polish of a second writing. Let me sometimes hear from my friends in Salisbury, and always be pleased to esteem me their, and Sir, your most obliged and faithful humble servant,

PETER ANNET.

November 30, 1762

SIR,

I make bold to inform you how my cause has terminated respecting my sentence. Thursday before last I had an order to appear at the Court of King's Bench, where the first information annexed to the third number of the *Free Enquirer* was read, and the quotations from that paper, and a part of that which descants upon these words, "Why judge ye not in yourselves that which is right," and some blackening of the whole by the King's Counsel—I was committed to the King's Bench Prison till the last day of the term, when, being brought again, after two Judges had laid their heads together some time, and the subject of the *Free Enquirer* was highly aggravated by the Attorney-General, who gave them to understand that he had received directions from his M—y to oblige the offender to suffer exemplary punishment, I was sentenced to Newgate for a month, to stand in the pillory, once at the Royal Exchange, and once at Charing Cross; to be committed, after that, to the house of correction for a twelve-month, to pay a fine of 6s. 8d., and give security for my good behaviour during life. So that I am now among ironed felons in Newgate, though in what they call The Master's Side. I hope GOD and my friends will support me through all. My respects to your brothers and friends. I am, Sir, your obliged humble servant,

PETER ANNET

These letters have never been reprinted; they certainly afford a vivid and realistic presentation of Annet's attractive personality, especially as they were confidential communications—written without any idea of future publication.

Mr. Robert Bennet, Editor of *The Salisbury and Winchester Journal* (founded 1729), has favoured the writer with an extract from that paper, dated January 30, 1769, which reads:—

The late Mr. Peter Annet, who died a few days ago at Lambeth, enjoyed the friendship of the late Archbishop of Canterbury for several years before His Grace's death, insomuch that he left him an handsome annuity in his last will, and assured him, that he took no part in the prosecution which was carried on against him, some years ago, for his Deistical writings, in consequence of which he had stood in the pillory.

We have great pleasure in recording this. It is one of those very, very rare occasions when humanity triumphed over religious animosity, and succoured the victim of priestly persecution.

Annet benefited for a very short period by Secker's generosity, since the latter died towards the end of 1768, and Peter died in January, 1769.

ELLA TWYNAM

(Author of *Peter Annet*, Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4)

## Letters to a Christian Friend

### (15) LEAVING THINGS TO GOD

MY DEAR CHARLES,

We have now, fortunately, got through the principal teachings of Jesus, to be considered from a social point of view; but it has taken more "bites" than I anticipated, and we must hustle if we are going to dispose of the rest of the Gospels in respectable time.

In Matthew v. 33-37, Jesus tells his listeners to "swear not at all," but to let their manner of speech be "Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." This was a favourite teaching of the Jewish sect of the Essenes, from whom Jesus may have adopted it; and the Talmud has, "The Yea of the godly is Yea, and his Nay is Nay" (Ruth rabba, iii, 18) and "He who is given to oaths will end in perjury" (Nedarim, 20).

Not a bad idea, either, this prohibition of formal and religious oaths; yet it has always been religious people, and particularly Christians and Christian courts, who have been most eager to impose religious oaths on believers and unbelievers alike. You will probably know something of what they did to Charles Bradlaugh over the oath question in Parliament. Nor does one find many Christians to-day proposing the abolition of all formal and religious oaths.

To encourage a belief that a person will be more truthful under a promise than without, and even more truthful on oath to God, would seem also to encourage its opposite number that when not on oath or even under a promise, a person need not be so careful whether he speaks the truth or not!

At Matthew vi. 25 we have:—

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought (Revised Version, Be not anxious; Douay Version, Be not solicitous) for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not better (or, of much more value) than they? (Luke's parallel account has "ravens," the birds most execrated by the Jews, and this is nearer Old Testament parallels.)

Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

Therefore take no thought (or, be not anxious, R.V.; or, solicitous, D.V.—and again below), saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (for after all these things do the Gentiles seek); for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof (Matt vi. 25-34).

These are so obviously stock religious teachings that we can almost ignore them—which no doubt you will be only too glad to do! Remember, however, that these teachings have for centuries been drummed into people as the word of God and the supreme wisdom of the universe. Freethinkers have been sent to

prison, to death, and worse for suggesting otherwise.

Even the Revised Version, which tones down the "take no thought for the morrow, for your life, etc." of the Authorized Version to "be not anxious for the morrow, etc.," is not exactly an encouragement to thrift and other social virtues by which we try to safeguard the future of our families against that deadly feeling of insecurity—one of the biggest curses in the world to-day, and the most prolific producer of fear, discontent, and cruelty. Leaving things to God and not worrying about to-morrow may sound all very well to the sentimental religious believer; but if to-morrow happens to be rent day and you haven't got the money, you know darn well that God isn't going to pay it for you.

The next time you feel all sentimental about Jesus as a great social teacher, Charles, just toddle along to some of our worst slums, find a family of half-starved white-faced, anxious people whose father and sons have probably forgotten what work is like, and, in as cheery a tone as you can manage, tell them: "Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (for after all these things do the well-fed and the well-clothed seek). . . . But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." You might then amble along to some of the means test committees and watch them at work.

Besides, we know enough about the sad fate of only too many "fowls of the air," and the plight of so many bedraggled lilies to be taken in by any guff about God's watchful care. Only children and religious believers can be deceived by this carefully one-sided view of Nature, for Nature has ugliness as well as beauty, pain as well as pleasure.

Concluding the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew, Jesus tells of the broad way that leads to destruction, and the strait and narrow way" which leadeth unto life"; warns his listeners against false prophets (ravening wolves in sheep's clothing); illustrates his warning with a description of the good fruit borne by the good tree and the evil fruit borne by the corrupt tree (vii. 13-20); and adds:—

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matt. vii. 21-23—again Jesus might have been reminded of his teaching, "Love your enemies"; what an old twister the fellow really is!

So, he says, those who hear his words and follow them are like the wise man who built his house on rock, but those who do not carry them out are like the foolish man who built his house on the sand. This ends the so-called Sermon, and it is recorded that "the multitudes were astonished at his teaching." So am I! At least, I am not astonished at the teachings, but at their modern misinterpreters, who "strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel."

All the best in these dark days. Affectionately,

R. H. S. STANDEFAST

To find the true we must first let go the false.

Gerald Massey.

The delusions of Christianity are fatal to genius and originality: they limit thought.—Shelley.

## Acid Drops

We realize the difficulty the average man or woman has to appreciate a principle that is not expressed in a person. But we are likely to have to pay dearly if we permit the use of "Hitler's war" to gain too great a currency, or to reiterate the cry that this war is caused by one man. The *Times* is stressing this view in leading articles, and through its correspondence columns this idea is ventilated. We have to remember that while praise of Hitler and Fascism is for the moment silenced, those who indulged in this pastime are still here, and with the cessation of the war will once more become vocal.

In "Views and Opinions" we give reasons why Fascism must be an enemy to progressive civilization wherever it exists, and it is this we should bear clearly and constantly in mind, that Fascism is the inevitable enemy of civilized human life. To win the war, get rid of Hitler, and leave Fascism in power would be the greatest act of betrayal the world has seen for centuries. If our analysis of Fascism is correct, and we believe it is, one might as well talk of living in harmony with burglary after the leader of a gang has been imprisoned, as talk of peace with Fascism when Hitler disappears from the scene. Fascism, whether called Nazism or Hitlerism is irreconcilable with peaceful and progressive civilization. We must keep that constantly before us, during the war and after the war.

We agree with a religious contemporary that we are not fighting so much for Poland as against a threat to ourselves, and to a free society wherever it exists. This statement is not invalidated by saying that at present there is no such thing as a free society. So we meet the criticism that we are fighting for the right for a people to mould the society to which they belong to remould the social structure, by recognized methods, as their collective wisdom or unwisdom may desire. That is the principle which we have always advocated, and in proportion as that principle may be illustrated in action, society is free.

But the religious journal from which we are quoting says that among the things for which we are fighting are the "ideals of the Christian religion," and that is simply not true. There are many hundreds of thousands of people who are not fighting for the Christian religion, who would rather be fighting against it. People who do not believe in Christianity or any of its specific doctrines. It is a libel upon them to say otherwise. It is a pity that religious papers cannot deal fairly with those who are united with them, not in religious opinions or religious ideals, but in their devotion to human ones.

The *Times* is also cited as saying that the world is menaced by "The hoariest and most illusory aspirations of pagan nationalism." That is not merely untrue, it must be a deliberate falsehood. The description can only apply to Rome, and the one thing that Rome was free from was a nationalism such as is now leading Europe to ruin. The Romans built up an empire, but gave the rights of citizenship to all who came within its sway. It had no distinctions of "race" or colour, and it preached the benefits of peace even while lauding the soldier. The use of such terms as "Pagan" and "Paganism," is an exhibition of what might be be-nighted ignorance, but it is probably nothing more than an illustration of the way which Christian training has given lies the place that should be occupied by standard truths.

If the literary and art treasures in the Vatican were in the possession of an ordinary individual, or an Atheist, he would take every precaution to protect them by placing them in a bomb-proof shelter, darkening the windows where they were housed, etc. But as the Vatican is honoured by the presence of the Pope, who is God's representative on earth the Vatican is behaving exactly as would anyone who is not under the special guardian-

ship of God and the Holy angels. The measures taken, we read "are similar to those in Rome"—and other cities.

The particularly important question—important to a particular brand of parson—whether soldiers should be allowed to have cinema performances on Sunday, has been decided in favour of them by prohibiting cinemas altogether. Probably the late President of the Lord's Day Observance Society will feel that God is on his side, and as the Archbishop of Canterbury has said that the war is God's judgment on this generation, they may feel that when the war is over Sunday cinemas will be repealed. But, on the other hand, if Sunday Cinemas are resumed we see no reason why soldiers should be denied a freedom that is enjoyed by civilians, particularly when not even the wildest of the sour specimens of religious foolishness can assert that the soldier who attends a cinema is of less value than one who does not. We like the somewhat acid comment of the *Church Times*, "There are possibly better ways of spending Sunday evening than going to the cinema. There are certainly many worse ways, of which loafing at street corners, to which the Lord's Day Observance Society apparently has no objection, is one."

The Salvation Army has always been attentive to advertising, and large sums of money must have been spent by it for this purpose. We remember the case of the late Harold Begbie who for some time acted as fudge man for the Army. He served the Army well in the press, and his procedure was simple. The Army told him a number of yarns about the Army. That was, of course, first-hand information. The next move was for Begbie to repeat the yarns as a result of his own independent investigation. He did not say they were in so many words, but it was curious that his stories were told in exactly Salvation Army style, and those journalists who were acquainted with the facts must have smiled many a smile.

This ability for advertising, which incidentally threw some light on the character of the modern popular press, was shown in the recent election of a new Chief for the Army. Although it occurred while the nation was on the brink of war, the "Army" managed to get a day-by-day publicity that could not have been better done had the election been of serious consequence to the world. There is nothing that cannot get good press notices, if it is properly managed, and there is money behind it.

A correspondent who has spent a few days at Felixstow tells us that Felixstow has an up-to-date Punch-and-Judy showman who makes Punch utter some unusually frank comments on current events. It is not surprising perhaps to learn that the big-wigs including some clerical and other Sabbatarians wish to suppress this unusual Punch. While his licence cannot easily be revoked, the Corporation can and will prevent puritanical and juvenile ears from being assailed on Sundays on the Sands. The sea-side showman will be silenced while the comical clergy will be allowed freedom to pollute educated ears with their antiquated abominations Sundays and week-days.

Air Raid Warnings have been occurring when people are in Church. The reactions have differed, and so has clerical technique. We remember in one of his earlier works Mark Twain narrated how a minister faced up to a similar interruption. The rumblings of an earthquake were heard in the far distance, and caused restlessness in the congregation. The preacher reminded them that if death were about to strike them there could be no better place for the visitation than where they were at that moment. Another rumble resulted in many of his flock leaving the building. "I repeat, brethren," said the minister, "What better place could one be in at a time like this, than God's tabernacle?" A deafening clap was then heard. The cleric completed his sentence, "But outside is good enough for me," and slid down the handrail leading from his rostrum.

**To get a New Subscriber is to make a New Friend**



# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTÉ

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4  
Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2,412.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. A. WILLIAMS.—Received, as you will see. Thanks.

A. ZENOO.—We congratulate you on your note in the *Keighley News*. The public has a very short memory, and needs reminding of these things.

J. ALMOND.—We agree with you that the Democracies have been very slow in crying "halt" to Fascism. It was plain to anyone whose judgment was not blinded by other interests that a stand should have been taken long since.

To Advertising and Circulating the *Freethinker*.—T. Griffiths, 108.

D. HARPER AND H. V. CREECH.—Thanks for addresses of likely new readers; paper being sent for four weeks.

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.

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.

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

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

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

The last issue of the *Freethinker* was got out under some local difficulties. The final preparations are made on Tuesday, we go to press first thing Wednesday morning, and the paper is distributed on Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning. Tuesday's work went off all right, but the air-raid on Wednesday disorganized things, and the paper was late in getting into circulation. We hope all subscribers duly received their copies. We shall be pleased if those who have not received the paper, after waiting a reasonable time, will communicate with us and we will see that copies are sent from the office.

Our difficulties are only just commencing, and we can make no complete statement of them. Perhaps we may never be able to do so, owing to changing circumstances. We shall have to meet them as they arise, and whatever help we feel our friends can give we shall not hesitate to ask. The paper trouble looks like being the first difficulty, and an increase of expense—which means increased loss—follows. Here again, we know we can rely upon the co-operation of our friends. So long as papers continue, we are sanguine enough to think the *Freethinker* will be among them.

There have been many enquiries about Mr. Cohen's health. He desires to inform his friends that he has felt much better since war was declared than he did before that date. He has slept better than before the crisis ended and war decided upon. He slept through part of both alarms, and but for Mrs. Cohen waking him, might have slept right through them. In the case of the first he was asleep again within fifteen minutes of the "all clear," and might have done the same with the second, but for the fact that it was late enough in the morning for him to get up for the day. So far the war with its difficulties has served as a tonic. If a man can't sleep well during a war he is behaving very foolishly. He needs sleep much more than during peace, and it is very silly not to get it. His real concern is for his books. And that is connected only with the possibility of an incendiary bomb. He is thinking of distributing them—at least the best—in different places. They can't all be burned. From a wrecked house they may be recovered. But he does not intend to pay Hitler the compliment of being nervous. The war has wrecked his chance of a holiday, but he may manage to get away for a few week-ends while the weather continues suitable. At other times he will carry on as usual.

The *Livingstone Mail* (East Africa) reprints our "Views and Opinions" on "The Jew and To-day," with suitable acknowledgements. This is a departure from the British method of rehashing without acknowledgement.

Here is a little bit of what Mark Twain would call "horse sense," from a book published in 1894, *The Gypsy Road, A Journey from Krakow to Coblenz*, by E. H. New.

It is not always remarked, as Dr. Johnson would say, that criminals, when they attack classes rather than individuals, show praiseworthy qualities of organization, and should receive at least some of the credit given to Cromwell, or Frederick, or Napoleon, in the corresponding stages of their career. The successful general, moreover, is supported by Government funds and vast majority of public favour; your struggling revolutionary has not even the aid of a policeman. At any rate, it is high time to set crime on a uniform basis of condemnation, and not to sing a *Te Deum* for an impiedal hecatomb, and then put a rope round the neck of a political assassin.

A lady member of the N.S.S. writes, "I have just pasted a 'Peace upon Earth' card on my gas mask box—May I suggest fellow members do the same." The card referred to is an artistically designed post card with a quotation from Thomas Hardy as follows:

Peace upon earth was said. We sing it,  
And pay a million priests to bring it.  
After two thousand years of mass  
We've got as far as poison-gas.

May we add that the suggestion if carried out would also provide a quick and easy way of identification of one's gas mask. The card may be obtained from the Pioneer Press or offices of the N.S.S., at the rate of ninepence per dozen.

In the current number of the *Reader's Digest*, Dr. Alex Carrel, M.D., writes fascinatingly on "How to Live." His point of view is typified by his early reference to the "soul." He says:—

It is time to discard the erroneous belief that the body is composed of separate organs, and is distinct from the soul.

Dr. Carrel believes that every part of a human being is affected by every other part, and that you cannot treat the emotions as if they were independent of the physical organs and parts of the body. Dr. Carrel is a famous scientist and Nobel prize winner.

## The Function of Freethought

MOST men would probably confess that political freedom, that is to say the right to speak freely and to act in opposition, is a noble ideal rather than a practical necessity. It is made to appear that whereas each man claims his freedom as a matter of right, the freedom he accords to other men is a matter of toleration. But if this is the best that can be said for liberty of opinion, then we shall find that liberty of opinion is a luxury, safe only in pleasant times when men can be tolerant because they are not deeply and vitally concerned.

As a matter of historic fact, there is a much stronger foundation for the great constitutional right of freedom of speech. The compelling reason why, if liberty of opinion did not exist, we should have to invent it, why it will eventually have to be restored in all civilized countries where it is now suppressed, is that we must protect the right of our opponents to speak because we must hear what they have to say.

We miss the whole point when we imagine that we tolerate the freedom of our political opponents as we tolerate a howling baby next door, as we put up with the blasts from our neighbour's radio because we are too peaceable to heave a brick through the window. If this were all there is to freedom of opinion, it would be difficult to say whether we are tolerant because we are magnanimous or because we are lazy, whether we have the hospitality of an inquiring mind or the indifference of an empty mind. If we wish to understand why freedom is necessary in a civilized society, we must begin by realizing that because freedom of discussion improves our own opinions, the liberties of other men are our own vital necessity. . . .

This is the creative principle of freedom of speech, not that it is a system for the tolerating of error, but that it is a system for finding the truth. It may not produce the truth, or the whole truth all the time, or often, or in some cases ever. But if the truth can be found, there is no other system which will normally and habitually find so much truth.

In a totalitarian state the people are being addressed through one broadcasting system by one man and his chosen subordinates. The orators speak. The audience listens but cannot and dare not speak back. It is a system of one-way communication. Nothing comes back to the rulers from the people except the cheers.

On the walls of the houses of Italian peasants one may see inscribed in large letters the legend, "Mussolini is always right." But if that legend is taken seriously by Italian ambassadors, by the Italian General Staff and by the Ministry of Finance, then all one can say is heaven help Mussolini, heaven help Italy. . . .

If the democratic alternative to the totalitarian one-way broadcasts is a row of separate soapboxes, then I submit that the alternative is unworkable. It is not true that liberty has developed among civilized men when anyone is free to hire a hall where he may expound his opinions to those who are willing to listen. On the contrary, freedom of speech is established to achieve its essential purpose only when different opinions are expounded in the same hall to the same audience.

For while the right to talk may be the beginning of freedom, the necessity of listening is what makes the right important. No man can care profoundly that every fool should say what he likes. Nothing has been accomplished if the wisest man proclaims his wisdom in the middle of the Sahara Desert. This is the shadow. We have the substance of liberty when the fool is compelled to listen to the wise men and learn, when the wise man is compelled to take account of the

fool, and to instruct him, when the wise man can increase his wisdom by hearing the judgment of his peers.

Freedom of speech is best conceived by having in mind a place like the American Congress, an assembly where opposing views are represented; or the British Parliament, where men who are free to speak are also compelled to answer; or a gathering of scientists where the data, the hypothesis and the conclusion are submitted to men competent to judge them.

The essence of freedom of opinion is not in mere toleration as such, but in the debate which toleration provides. This can readily be understood when we remember how differently we feel and act about different media of communication. We find that in so far as the medium makes difficult the confrontation of opinion in debate, we are driven toward censorship and regulation. . . .

The preservation of freedom of opinion is not only a matter of abstract legal rights, but is also, and very urgently, a matter of organizing sufficient debate. For experience tells us that it is only when freedom of opinion becomes the compulsion to debate that the seed which our fathers planted has produced its fruit. When that is understood, freedom will be cherished not because it is a vent for our opinions, but because it is the surest method of correcting them. . . .

The reason for dwelling on all this is that if we are to preserve democracy, we must understand its principles. And the principle which distinguishes it from all other forms of government is that in a democracy the opposition is not only tolerated as constitutional but must be maintained because it is indispensable.

The democratic system cannot be operated without effective opposition. For in making the great experiment of governing people by consent rather than by coercion, it is not sufficient that the party in power should have a majority. It is just as necessary that the party in power should listen to the minority and be moved by the criticisms of the minority. It must remember that the minority may become the majority. . . .

The unity of a free people depends upon a sufficiently even balance of political power to make it impracticable for the administration to be arbitrary, and for the opposition to be revolutionary and irreconcilable. Where that balance no longer exists, democracy perishes. For unless all the citizens of a state are forced by circumstances to compromise, unless by habit and necessity they have to give and take, freedom cannot be maintained.

WALTER LIPPMANN

From the *Atlantic Monthly*

## God's Only Begotten Son

THE Trinity has long been known as a shady institution. God the Holy Ghost may well be relegated to the shady mists the name suggests. The "sin against the Holy Ghost" has ceased to worry anybody, because nobody could ever define it. Perhaps the "only Begotten Son" will some day disappear for a similar reason.

The "fatherhood" of God the Father is only a courtesy title like the Marquis of Hartington or Father McNab; God is really a bachelor. Jesus as the son of a bachelor needs little explanation. Such things often happen. But the Trinity! The God-head! And still more the Incarnation—these are the real conundrums of Christianity.

Unthinking and unstudious Christians accept these and plenty of other puzzles, seeing in them neither enigma nor vagueness, just as Bishop Watson's con-

temporary declared that the Bible needed no Apology. But the Incarnation has its learned defenders. The professors of Christian Colleges find themselves faced with the impossible task of teaching illogical creeds by ordinary scholastic methods. Even in the churches there are students of history, teachers of logic, and others who feel compelled to throw overboard the ancient terminology even if they cannot afford to discard the old creeds.

Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick is, of course, a cultured man. He preaches in New York's finest church-building to congregations of Fifth Avenue plutocrats . . . and their friends. He preaches eloquently, and writes admirably, expressing orthodox views with originality of phraseology. His recent article in the *Christian World* is characteristic of his form of advocacy. It is called "What Does the Divinity of Jesus Mean?"

The article is a continuation of his many Radio talks. He begins by assuring us that he gets

endless inquiries sent by radio listeners. They want to know what the "divinity" or "deity" of Jesus means. They have heard about it all their lives in the Church's creeds, hymns and sermons. Some believe it, but are not quite sure what they are believing. Some disbelieve it, but are not sure what they are disbelieving. What does it mean? they ask.

It would be pleasant to be able to say that Dr. Fosdick ANSWERS these "endless inquiries." We regret to find he confuses instead of answering: no believer will feel any more "sure" than before, no unbeliever will find an "answer," and instead of saying "what it means" we get nothing but the further mystification of an already most mystical mist.

There is no definiteness in Dr. Fosdick's cloudy rhetoric which purports to "explain" any aspect of Jesus. He declares that:—

To call Him an accident in the universe seems to me preposterous. At any rate, I personally must range myself with those first Disciples who looked through Him and saw in Him "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.

It may be, as Dr. Fosdick says, preposterous to call anybody an "accident," but nothing could be quite so preposterous as the remainder of our quotation. Nor does the preacher suggest any means by which we could do what he says, he and the Disciples did: it is impracticable as well as preposterous.

Dr. Fosdick is emphatic in his statement that "the Divinity of Jesus was not physical"—and he seems to think that his repudiation of the doctrine of the Virgin Birth in some measure strengthens this view. But it leaves the Incarnation unexplained. After all the very word "incarnation" has no meaning unless it refers to something (literally "carnal"). What then was God to do with Jesus?

God did not simply send Jesus; He was not simply with Jesus; He came in Jesus. God can come into human life because He has come into human life.

All of which would appear to indicate that Jesus was only human, and that God was "in Jesus" exactly as God is "in" any other human being. This idea might also be the inspiration of Dr. Fosdick's claim that

Jesus is indeed, an extraordinarily good man. His goodness was the only thing He had with which to make an impress on the world.

Why not let it go at that? It would imply that "God" is merely another word for good human qualities. We should then be left with the simple problem of comparing the good qualities of a character named Jesus, with those of other historical, legendary and fictional heroes.

But Dr. Fosdick set out to say what the "deity" or "divinity" of Jesus means. This chatter about goodness would never help a theologian. "If Jesus was only a good man," says Dr. Fosdick, he would "tower there, solitary alone—an isolated phenomenon." Exactly! And that sort of thing would build no churches anywhere. With another reference to "a convinced and singing faith," Dr. Fosdick weakly refers his readers to the Nicene Creed, and the Gospels. Jesus, of course, is God or nothing—neither a good man nor any other sort of man.

The mental gymnastics which clerical "intellectuals" exercise on this subject has its entertaining side too. Dr. Maude Royden (perhaps the most independent of all clerics) asserts "Had Christ appeared among the bushmen of Australia, He could have achieved nothing"—adding, "But then He could not have appeared among them"<sup>1</sup> She rather spoils the humour of this scientific standpoint by believing that "we can believe in the divinity of Christ" for reasons which involve our knowing all about God's reasons and motives. In the end, Dr. Royden comes down on the orthodox side:—

He is unique. He is God's only-begotten Son.

The very words "only," "only-begotten," and "unique" make nonsense of the claim that we are all God's children, and that He is equally the Father of us all.

Dr. Royden says she believes in Christ's "divinity," but boggles at the idea of believing in His "deity"—The orthodox will overlook this hair-splitting distinction—particularly as she accepts "the divinity of Christ as most clearly stated in the Gospel of St. John." We admire her parting "kick": "the same gospel strongly insists on the divinity of the ordinary man," but it does weaken her "Jesus is unique"<sup>2</sup>

Another modernist—the Rev. J. R. C. Webb—admits<sup>3</sup>

There is no portrait of Jesus, there is no historic Jesus to believe about, apart from his effect on the world . . . the evidence of bare fact is extraordinarily small.

But somehow, Mr. Webb still believes "there is enormous circumstantial evidence of the Resurrection." It looks as if the God Jesus may not have lived or died, but only rose from the dead, like the soldier who was denied his pension for the year 1916 because he could only prove he was alive in the years 1915 and 1917.

The Dean of St. Paul's regards the divinity of Christ as "a great perplexity and a source of intellectual and spiritual light." The intellectual value of such a source seems considerably qualified by Dr. Matthews' admission that:—

I cannot pretend that I have a satisfactory answer to the question of how God could become Man. It remains a great paradox, a stumbling-block to the reason.<sup>3</sup>

But then the Dean stumbles over this "block" by believing in "the life of the world to come," but disbelieving "in the pictures of that life which have encouraged or terrified a simple people." He throws no light at all on the "paradox" of "how God could become man."

Father Woodlock, when asked by the *News-Chronicle* to state his present-day beliefs, referred readers to

<sup>1</sup> *I Believe in God*, by Dr. A. Maude Royden, London, Ernest Benn.

<sup>2</sup> *What to Believe*, a volume of essays issued by the *Modern Churchman*—article on "The Historic Jesus."

<sup>3</sup> *What I Believe*, by various writers. London, F. Muller, Ltd.—article by Dr. W. R. Matthews.

"The Twopenny Catechism." This, of course, quite clearly defines what all Catholics must believe, in words dogmatic, unreasonable and uncompromising:—

Answer to Question 33: Jesus Christ is truly God.  
Ditto. 34: He has one and the same nature with God the Father.  
Ditto 35: Jesus was always God.

Those who wish to get a true perspective of Christian opinion should bear three things in mind:—

(1) Fundamentalist belief in Jesus as God remains unaffected by what is called "Modernist" views. These Fundamentalists include the entire Roman Catholic multitude (in itself the largest of all Christian sects), and the vast majority of all other bodies of Christians, not merely the ancient ones, but such eccentrics as Four-Square Elimites, Christadelphians, to say nothing of Groupers, and the mad-hatter Russellites, Father Messiahists, etc.

(2) All the creeds of all the churches remain unchanged. Even the Bishop of Birmingham and Dr. Inge repeat these creeds and cannot repudiate the Church's authoritative view of Christ's divinity while they officiate in Church services.

(3) There always have been some Christians—Unitarians, etc.—who said ages ago much that "Modernists" are saying to-day. But in ancient days heretics were persecuted and excommunicated. Nowadays multitudes have voluntarily left the churches because they ceased to attach any value or importance to Christian dogmas.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH

## Some Recent Books

(Concluded from page 588)

SOME of the experiments will appear to the lay mind trifling, but nothing is perhaps too trifling if it is going to result in finding cures for seasickness, stuttering, drunkenness, claustrophobia, and the perhaps far reaching effects of the emotional reactions to words (e.g. "Bolshy," "traitor," "majesty"). In establishing desirable, or abolishing undesirable reactions, it is also possible to put the subject off his guard by making him unaware of the accompanying conditioning stimulus.

Behaviourist methods are being practised in many centres to-day. In Germany Mobius taught a pike to live peaceably with a minnow in the same case (here a case of response *elimination*, not integration). Horses have been taught not to buck before now, granted, but the behaviourist proceeds with the maximum expertness obtainable, and many tools and appliances are used, as by Prof. Weber of Harvard, and by Hudgins with his dynamometer. Human purposes are never lost sight of. Work has already been done towards immunizing steeplejacks and structural workers from the emotional effects of height.

Different schools of psychology may conceivably draw different conclusions from the data. For instance, response sometimes wears out by repetition—a feature, doubtless, of the higher class of animal. Pavlov's dog eventually ceased to secrete saliva to the presentation of a stimulus without food: the Gestalists (Köhler, Koffka, Sander, etc.) call this "a falling out of the configuration into the general background."

While the experts differ there are many ways in which the amateur or novice may interest himself, even if only for amusement, though he will not expect results of the same consistency as the expert, especially if his subject is a mature animal. Some

simple cases are discussed in E. M. Smith's *Mind in Animals*. The withdrawal of a tube worm or a tortoise on the passing of a shadow offers scope for the elimination of that response. A spider can be taught when to leave and when not to leave its web.

Learning is always helped by motive. McDougal, for example, found that a rat in a tank of water will escape by route A, five times practised, rather than route B (ten times practised, and more recently) if the latter escape has been accompanied by an electric shock. A hungry rat, again, will learn more quickly. Nor is there any need to drag in the concept of consciousness; motivation in very low forms of life may function without conscious awareness.

In the way that, other things equal, one sleeps better in one's own home, a definite environment or atmosphere will enable human beings to learn more quickly. A host of environmental concomitants favour every response. Perhaps you "bagged" your favourite desk at school, or perhaps you go to your favourite position at a cinema or lecture hall, or have a favourite place at meals (if so, you will probably digest your food there).

One researcher, Wilson, has found that nonsense-syllables are remembered better if the subject is taken to the place where he learned them—in this case it was a room where an oil of peppermint odour was sensed. He found memory ten times as effective when the words were recalled in the same atmosphere.

In a previous *Freethinker* we mentioned a cruel experiment whereby Watson's rat, though rendered blind, deaf and osmotic, found its way out of a cage by means of a space receptor located behind the middle ear. Macfarlane has shown it can either run or swim out, and Lashley has even gone further in showing that with the cerebellum (co-ordination centre) injured, the rat, unable to keep balance, can roll out.

At this point it would rather appear that the scientist himself is suffering from a conditioned response, resulting in his becoming coldly callous to the sufferings and mutilations of the creatures he deals with. The layman can only hope that the same animals are not used further, and that the same experiment is not repeated on others.

It has been suggested that such tests are not tests of intelligence at all, but of mere mechanical movement, and the same criticism applies to Thorndike's cat which, trapped in a cage, accidentally touches a button and escapes, thereafter remembering the movement. Another cat was also freed on licking itself, but when release was withheld for a considerable time the response wore down to mere tongue protrusion. It is claimed that intelligence is only tested when we prove that the animal can foresee effects.

The answer to this is Köhler's and Kellogg's work on apes (see Köhler's *The Mentality of Apes*). Their behaviour even allows the use of the word ingenuity. That is, they prove that they foresee the effects by cutting down, or eliminating, unnecessary parts of the mechanical procedure. They will also improvise simple appliances. They surpass the dog in many ways: for instance they will easily recover food if suspended on a string. The number of repetitions needed for mastering a procedure is naturally lower with the higher animal (i.e., higher in terms of brain complexity), and each new problem need not be mastered *de novo*.

One of Köhler's chimpanzees hit upon the idea of catapulting on a trapeze, clutching the food en route. "Sultan," his most ingenious ape, put two sticks together by a groove (having first done it by accident) and improvised a long stick out of several short ones. Köhler claims some power of abstract thought in these chimpanzees.

Before leaving the subject of psychology there is a popular notion debunked in the work, *Human Psychology*. It is the notion that we can improve our memory. "The bare retentive power of the mind, since it is the functional correlate of structural changes in the brain, is determined by an inherited plasticity of nerve tissue. . . . Once laid down in the germ plasm it is fixed for the lifetime." Consequently memory cannot be improved; it can only be impaired. There are aids to memory, motives for remembering, but no ways of augmenting the original plasticity. Training may get the best out of what is there, environmental circumstances may render it easier to remember, but the retentive power is limited. Hence there is no analogy with muscle development.

The more complex mental functions are not forgotten in the book, though naturally less is known about them, and common perceptual associative thinking, merging gradually into rational thought, is dealt with faithfully.

*George Santayana* (G. W. Howgate; Oxford University Press, 1938; 363 pp., 16s.) is a fairly thorough study of a philosopher who is a self-styled materialist. We have before in these columns given a brief exposition of his system and will only add that in this book there is much biographical content. Santayana, poet, philosopher and moralist, clothes his ideas in felicitous language: nevertheless, his philosophy is perhaps too abstruse for the average reader, and particularly his treatment of "Essence." He was born in Madrid, taught in America, where he contributed to the newer realist school of thought, and is now resident in Italy.

*Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings* (H. Maudsley; abridged edition in *The Thinker's Library*, 1939, by Watts; 149 pp., 1s.). This is founded on the revised edition of 1896 and the name of Maudsley stands for sanity in psychology. At a time when myth was being propagated, his *Physiology of the Mind* first edition, 1867) was a clearing of the path for a sound scientific analysis of human behaviour; it was entirely free from vague introspectionism, then an unusual merit in a book dealing with mind, and was a straightforward defence of the physiological method. Many philosophers, too, came within the scope of his criticism. In the work under notice there is an exposition, in three parts, of the ways in which we mortals can fall into error; fallacies of the sound mind, of the unsound mind, and of the ecstatic and "intuitional." As presented, the book makes easy and profitable reading. The complete omission of the first section, much of which "stands to sense," might have left room for extra matter concerning mysticism, which perhaps is more puzzling than the ordinary everyday errors of observation.

*The Papacy in Politics To-day* (J. McCabe; R.P.A., Second Edition, 1939). A few footnotes at the end of a chapter bring the first edition ('37) up to date. Mr. McCabe casts his eye round many lands and packs into his pages an unanswerable indictment. Following the story about Lord Beaverbrook, the later one is that Mr. McCabe looks under his bed each night in search of a Papist Plot.

It is to be hoped that this book is read widely among political movements.

*Leonard Nelson* (International Publishing Co., 6d., London, 1939). Nelson's *Politics and Education* is in some respects the "Bible" of the political movement he founded, the Militant Socialist International. Nelson drew from Kant via Fries, and this book contains an introductory notice of his life and work, followed by important extracts from his writings and speeches. For 16 years, until his death in 1927, he was a university lecturer in philosophy. The party, founded in 1926, removed to Denmark following the rise of Hitler to power. There are several brands of

Socialism afoot, and perhaps none more utterly opposed to clericalism. The present booklet is given largely to Nelson's criticism of Democracy as a form of government, and the introduction brings out the connexion with the existing situation. Democracy, it is claimed, nurtures Fascism and clericalism. This is the kind of booklet that would make an admirable basis of discussion for a students' circle or debating centre, without the risk of losing contact with the practical questions of the day.

Two other works, *Nature and Nurture* (Prof. I. H. Hogben; Allen and Unwin, 1939; 143 pp. 6s. 6d.) and *Heredity and Politics* (Prof. J. B. S. Haldane; Allen and Unwin, 1938; 7s. 6d.) are of such import, especially in regard to any movement for eugenic reform, that they require special treatment.

G. H. TAYLOR

### Book Notes

*Judas*, a Novel by Eric Linklater, London: Cape.

MR. LINKLATER'S favourite hero, Don Juan, takes a back seat this time, unless Judas is meant for one of Don Juan's aliases. We see no reason why Mr. Linklater should not write his fiction to add to the Gospel fictions about the mysterious character of Judas. While we acknowledge that the present author adds immeasurably to revealed "truth"—in fact his long story makes the Apostles' story look like a tiny paragraph in the gossip column of the *Nazareth News*—he throws no light at all on the old problems. He fails to knock logic into the strange God Jesus's choosing a thief and traitor to be cashier and Disciple. Nor is this lengthy narrative explicative of why Judas had to be paid good money to identify a man (or god) perfectly well known to multitudes; Mr. Linklater even says that Caiaphas employed spies to watch Jesus. We were half-hoping that the novelist would help us to decide between the contradictions about Judas apparent in the gospels. For instance how did Judas die? Alas, Mr. Linklater selects Hanging as Judas's fate. Acts i. 16-25 gives a nastier fate to the traitor. There is, of course, no evidence at all. What we like about Mr. Linklater's story is that all the characters speak nice up-to-date American "slanguage." "You're making a hell of a mistake, said Simon." (p. 125). "This morning, said Rednose, I got a poke in the guts" (p. 120). And a gentleman named Cushi gives Jesus a handsome testimonial: "You've got the idea that He's a common ignorant Agitator with a one-track mind. Well, he isn't. He's got the only decent brain that's been born in this blasted country for five hundred years," and Simon agrees that "that business about the coin was clever, but it didn't mean anything" (Cushi had called it "just eye-wash"). Let us add that it is a decidedly readable book—almost the last page expressing one character's view—original but noteworthy: "It was strange, thought Amplias, that of the Twelve, only Judas had hanged himself." Amplias anticipates the probable wonder of sane men in future times.

G.B.

### Correspondence

X-RAY EYES, OR FUN AT THE FAIR  
TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—I have before suggested that if "the man with X-ray eyes" can really read through a folded cloth, it should make no difference if the cloth covered the print. A challenge to this effect also appeared in a Birkenhead paper following a lecture I gave there. I do not know how many imitators Kuda Bux has, but I met a case at a seaside resort in August, advertised as the boy with X-ray eyes, "baffled doctors," etc., etc.

The preliminaries consisted of the old game of naming,

while blindfolded, the articles and colour thereof taken by a confederate from the audience: I take it readers are well aware of how this is done.

Next came the offer to read, and I at once presented a book covered with a kerchief and asked for the second par. on p. 221, at which page the book was open. I said I should prefer that the controller did not handle the book, but he replied he would conduct matters in his own way.

The book was placed before the X-ray eyes, and the boss started on a speech to the audience about my being obstinate. I took up a position where I could keep watch on the book, and saw that the cover was not dislodged. Meanwhile the temper of the showman was rapidly rising. Finally the blindfolded wonder read out the following enlightening statement: "Two-two-two."

That concluded the proceedings so far as the managers were concerned, and with a gesture of triumph I was offered the book back. I immediately reminded the audience that the number 221 had been supplied by men in the hearing of everyone, and again asked for the second par. The controller said he had finished with me, and would have me thrown out.

I repeated my original request and made clear to the audience the meaning and purpose of the proposed test. An appeal was then made by the controller to the sympathy of the audience, e.g., the boy was only 15. I replied that X-ray eyes functioned as well at 15 as at 50, if not better, and persisted with my original request.

Numerous red herrings characterized a further speech, e.g., £50, I think, if I could read with my eyes bunged up with dough (Mr. Harry Price has, I understand, a simple theory to cover the dough, when the eyes are actually used). I said that the bandages and dough could be removed, giving the boy the unrestricted use of his eyes, and I would offer the same test.

The showmen, reinforced from neighbouring stalls, were by now wildly angry, and with some buffeting and plenty of adjectives. I was given a lurid picture of my immediate fate if I did not get one. Their truculence abated somewhat when I asked the one who had "been a hoaxer" (an old tale) if he would be interested to learn that I had packed the audience with a few pals who could each "hand it out a bit."

Apparently fearing to lose the confidence of his customers the controller affected to agree to a new test, and I accordingly chose another page and covered it as before. While speaking to the audience he placed the book in front of the X-ray eyes, and in the same movement casually removed the cover. I pointed this out at once to the audience, most of whom were now, I dare say, as sceptical as I.

Being finally met with a blunt refusal to carry out the test, I said I was satisfied to have established my point and was prepared to leave. A silly attempt was made to withhold the book, until I remarked, what was a fact, that it belonged to the local council, who would have to be informed of the circumstances of its disappearance.

As far as I could see the show broke up at this point, and I noticed arguments, and even fighting postures, outside as I left, having had a good 3d. worth of enjoyment. Apart from that, I think much good is done by making people sceptical of what they read and hear, for I have no doubt at all that up to 80 or 90 per cent of those who pay to see such performances believe they are seeing something supernatural if not supernatural.

G. H. TAYLOR

#### CURRENCY AND WHEAT

SIR,—I cannot too warmly thank you for the opportunity to place the subject of the currency and the wheat standard before thousands of the acutest intellects in the world. The two critics I thank also. Neither of them has suggested an alternative unless Mr. Fraser thinks the present system is better. My first critic opposed on the plea of cost and perishability. Well the Peruvians under the Incas as Prescott tells us kept a six years supply of corn in advance, and they had, I think, no sheets of stainless steel, no aluminium, no poison gas to control insects, no air conditioning apparatus. Surely

we can do what they did. Neither Cobbett nor Cobden approved of a paper currency without backing.

Mr. Fraser's criticism is more detailed, but partly contradicts the other. He thinks a man or nation could hoard wheat to another's detriment! How, he does not say. I venture to think it impossible.

Mr. Fraser says between the symbol and the wealth it symbolizes there is an unbridgeable gulf. In 1910 I took notes to the Bank of England and got gold for them. Where was the gulf? There should not be and there was not any. Our troubles arise when there is no bridge, and that is what happens when all wealth is the backing. You can never reach agreement as to relative value in peace or war. Mr. Fraser says all wealth is now at the back of our currency. When did the Bank of England become the owner of all the wealth in the land? And if I took notes there, what wealth could I obtain? Possibly some silver coins, useless outside Britain.

W. W. KENSETT

### National Secular Society

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD SEPTEMBER 7, 1939

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

Also present: Messrs. Clifton, Hornibrook, Elstob, Bryant, Preece, Seibert, Ebury, Bedborough, Griffiths, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and accepted. Financial Statement presented.

New members were admitted to Glasgow, Kingston, Southend, North London, West London, West Ham Branches and the Parent Society.

Permission was given for the formation of a Branch of the society at Southend-on-Sea, to be known as the Southend and District Branch of the N.S.S.

Correspondence was dealt with from Bradford, Blackburn, Swansea, Staffs, and West Ham.

The Report of the Sub-Committee on Motion 9 from the Annual Conference was presented and accepted. The President pressed that the matter be put aside for the time being, and after discussion the meeting accepted.

In view of the lighting regulations it was agreed that the next meeting of the Executive be held on a Sunday as the most convenient day for members.

The proceedings then closed.

R. H. ROSETTI,

General Secretary.

### SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

#### LONDON

##### OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mrs. E. Grant.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30. Parliament Hill Fields, Hampstead, 3.30, Mr. T. Ebury will speak at these meetings.

#### COUNTRY

##### OUTDOOR

BRIERFIELD MARKET: 3.15, Sunday, Mr. J. Clayton.

BURNLEY MARKET: 6.30, Sunday, Mr. J. Clayton.

HUNCOAT: 6.15, Monday, Mr. J. Clayton.

SCOUTBOTTOM: 6.15, Friday, Mr. J. Clayton.

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It may safely be said that only a small minority of present-day Freethinkers are acquainted with the lives of those men and women, to whom they, and the English speaking peoples owe so much. Annet and Hetherington bore aloft the flag of Freethought at a time when men had to face imprisonment for daring to question the claims of the Church. But these two men did more than that. They were among the founders of modern democracy in this country, and it is one of the disgraces of our history that their work has been so generally slurred over, when it is not completely ignored. These two pamphlets will introduce, to those who need the introduction, two doughty fighters in the best of all causes.

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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 1865 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.

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Address .....

Occupation .....

Dated this.....day of.....19...

This declaration should be transmitted to the Secretary with a subscription.

P.S.—Beyond a minimum of Two Shillings per year every member is left to fix his own subscription according to his means and interest in the cause.

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# POSSESSION

Demoniacal and Other, among Primitive Races, in Antiquity,  
the Middle Ages and Modern Times

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