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## VIEWS AND OPINIONS

### Christianity "Devaluated"

DR. BARNES, Bishop of Birmingham, "by Divine permission" and the appointment of the late Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, is the *enfant terrible* of the Church of England. To-day he has succeeded to the role formerly discharged by Dr. Inge, the "gloomy," but, now somewhat ancient ex-dean of St. Paul's, as the acknowledged spokesman and theological exponent of the "modernist" movement in the Established Church. Both as a scholar and as a man, Dr. Barnes has many claims to our respect. A distinguished mathematician, a fine historical scholar, and a master of lucid prose, the intellectual attainments of the Bishop of Birmingham are of a high order. Whilst in matters other than theology, such as war and economics, Dr. Barnes, himself a pacifist and a social reformer, has consistently displayed a socially progressive role, which, to put it mildly, is not usually associated with members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Church of England. In this last respect, Dr. Barnes incidentally compares very favourably with his fellow-modernist and intellectual equal in English Christianity, Dr. Inge, whose religion, one often feels, is merely a convenient auxiliary to his atavistic social prejudices.

In his now well-known book, *The Rise of Christianity*, and, more recently in his "Reid Lecture" at Cambridge, the Bishop of Birmingham has stated the modernist case for a reformed Christianity in line with modern knowledge, with temperate eloquence and adequate scholarship; the undisguised anger that has been aroused in more orthodox ecclesiastical circles by this bold attempt to restate Christianity so as to reconcile it both with scientific evolution and with contemporary historical scholarship, forms a convincing testimonial both to the moral courage and to the theological scholarship of the Bishop of Birmingham.

And now to what, in brief, does this attempt at theological reform which Dr. Barnes has just repeated in an address at Wolverhampton, amount to? What is the modernist case as stated by a scholar who is, beyond doubt, one of its ablest exponents?

Historically, Christianity has existed as, primarily, a theological cult: belief has been regarded as of more actual importance than practice. Upon the basis of the Bible, considered as a single book, unerring, as a single infallible record dictated by a personal God, a vast structure of dogma, a huge synthesis, as it were, of alleged supernatural information was raised, binding in all its parts upon the Faithful.

As was so aptly pointed out long ago by Mr. Bertrand Russell when, incidentally, he talked to the National Secular Society and not on the B.B.C., a change both quantitative and qualitative — a Christian was someone whose beliefs were definite and could be exactly defined, you could not be a Christian unless you believed with unshaken faith in a whole series of theological

propositions: God, the Incarnation, the Fall, the verbal inerrancy of the Scripture and the like. Whoso rejected any of this vast array of propositions, the least equally with the greatest, incurred the mortal guilt of "Heresy," and was incontinently cast out of the Christian Church. Such was, and is, the view of Christian orthodoxy.\*

Such, we repeat, is the creed of traditional Christian orthodoxy. Upon various points in connection with which the Churches, Catholic, "Orthodox" (i.e., Eastern), and Reformed, and the various theological schools quarrel with the venom ascribed to Kilkenny cats, but which, in substance, is accepted by all of them, as the Faith which, "except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved."

However, the World moves on, and Man's knowledge with it. It is a truism to Freethinkers that Copernican Astronomy, evolutionary biology, the study of comparative religion, and of early Church history, have now made this formerly impressive structure of medieval theology, obsolete and untenable. The Modernist Movement inside Christianity recognises this state of things and seeks to modify Traditional Christianity into line with modern knowledge.

Modernist theology endeavours to apply evolutionary theories to the Bible and to the Church. Modernist theologians agree that the "Infallible" Councils of the Church which drew up its canonical dogmas, represented, in reality, only the opinion of a majority at a meeting, and what sort of meetings Church Councils often were is a matter of common knowledge. In place of a static theology based on infallible authority, whether of the Bible or the Church, the Modernist seeks to substitute a "progressive" revelation in which religion evolves from modest beginnings amongst primitive peoples, up to the most advanced forms of Christianity.

It is obvious that such a conception of religion involves giving up both the verbal inspiration of the Bible and the infallibility of the Church. For the Bible obviously teaches gross errors in both science and history, and it is a matter of fact that the Christian Churches, at one time or another, have condemned virtually every major discovery of modern knowledge.

What is there left? If Genesis is unhistorical, as Dr. Barnes and his Modernist colleagues in other lands explicitly admit, then the Fall of Man portrayed therein is unhistorical, too: there never was a Garden of Eden, and the famous Snake is an "allegory"—a polite way of saying that he (or it) never existed. But the Fall of Man is the basis of the entire Christian traditional scheme, as expounded by the founder of Christian theology, the author (or authors) of the Pauline Epistles, and by countless theologians since. If mankind has come upward from the jungle, instead of downwards from fabled bliss in the Garden of Eden, and this is the only

\* Cf.—Bertrand Russell—"Why I am not a Christian"—a lecture originally delivered in 1927 under the auspices of the South London Branch of the N.S.S.

+ Cf.—Joseph Klausner—"Jesus of Nazareth."



possible deduction to be drawn from any acceptance of the evolutionary theory of human origins, then the whole, to do it justice, rigorously logical scheme of Catholic theology, the Fall, the Incarnation, of the Redeemer to save us, the Atonement, and all the rest of the rigorously interdependent dogmas that make up the Christian interpretation of the universe and of human history, just go by the board. Undoubtedly, the classic theologians would agree with us in denying that what was left could be described as Christianity!

Actually, all that is left is a presumed belief in a scientifically conditioned Deity, who can no longer work except through "scientific law," through the known order of the universe, since Dr. Barnes repudiates "miracles" as contrary to the observed uniformity of nature—a belief that Jesus was a great ethical teacher—a belief which is in no way distinctive of Christianity, since orthodox Jews like Dr. Joseph Klausner, and no doubt, many Rationalists also hold it, and, perhaps, a vague belief in "spiritual survival" which is too nebulous to be defined.

What concrete basis is there here for any distinctive "Christian" religion? It is true that Dr. Barnes in his latest pronouncement, declares that "Atheism is not a reasonable deduction, from our present knowledge." But, once miracles are abandoned, Atheism is substantially granted, for then "God" becomes the mere equivalent of the natural order of the universe and as such a superfluous tautology. And, significantly, our author follows up his declaration of faith in god with the damaging admission that "The Problem of Evil" is insoluble.

But this famous "problem" is only the recognition that the actual observable universe is not the kind of thing that a wise or good Creator could possibly have made—again *de facto* Atheism! Whilst if Jesus was only a Jewish "Socrates," why, on the Modernists' own logic, signal him out for praise denied to all other moralists?

The old Christianity was, at least, logical: you knew where you were, which is a good deal more than one can say of "Modernist" Christianity. Whilst his fellow-Christian Cripps, seeks to save the pound sterling by "devaluating" it, Dr. Barnes seeks to save Christianity by a similar process of theological "devaluation," but we gravely doubt his success.

F. A. RIDLEY.

## ON TELEPATHY

### II

OVER forty years ago, it was the Zaneigs with their "Two Minds with but a Single Thought" who caused a similar sensation to that of the Piddingtons this day. They wrote a book about their act in which mental thought transference is positively claimed. Mr. Zaneig showed how he and his wife developed their "second sight" and he insisted that highly strung nervous brainy people are ideal subjects and can develop their powers "with proper training."

The Zaneigs at first had no idea that they could "commercialise" their powers—indeed, Mr. Zaneig says he did not even know what the word "telepathy" meant. However, once they obtained stage recognition, they never looked back.

Just as in the case of the Piddingtons, critics made their confident claims that they knew how it was all done, but the Zaneigs soared from success to success. When the famous Oscar Hammerstein at last booked them for New York, the newspapers came out with flaming head-

lines—"Is it Telepathy, or what?" They answered their own query by, "Probably, what." And just like the Piddingtons, the Zaneigs were invited to tests and interrogations by many of the best New York editors. One of them even said—and this was forty years ago—that there were people who claimed "that Zaneig has a wireless telegraph apparatus on his person," but added, "anyone who knows the shortcomings of even the most perfect wireless systems will discard this notion." Thus does history repeat itself.

In any case, Mme. Zaneig, who was the "receiver," was able after some months of practice accurately to read her husband's thoughts—that is, some thoughts. Generally speaking a few colours and names of people and living things were more easily received than simple diagrams. In fact, Mr. Zaneig claimed that simple drawings gave them some of their greatest difficulties. Yet the Committee commissioned by the Society for Psychical Research managed to get many drawings correct—that is, of course, not quite so well drawn as the originals, but tolerably good.

In his book describing his experiences in India, Mr. Zaneig reports some remarkable feats of levitation and other wonders performed by holy "adepts" and Yogis. No doubt he saw many things, but if my memory serves me right, when Carl Hertz, one of the greatest of illusionists was in India, he made strenuous efforts to find these wonderful people and failed. He did see some childish conjuring, it is true, but he completely mystified the holiest Yogis with elementary sleight of hand. Needless to add, he never saw the famous Indian Rope Trick.

The Zaneigs eventually came to England, and they were amazed at the interest their act aroused. Change the name Zaneig to Piddington, and what Mr. Zaneig says need not have a word altered. They even had a record made of their performance by the Gramophone Company.

Now was their performance really "telepathy"? In his book, Mr. Zaneig says it was, and that should settle the matter. But a well-known Rationalist whom I know had opportunities of speaking with Mr. Zaneig on the problem, and he was told that there was no telepathy in their act. It was a code pure and simple. And the remarkable thing is that when Mme. Zaneig died, Mr. Zaneig married again, and in six months the second lady was as good a "receiver" as the first.

To put the matter in another way. When does the real telepathy cease and trickery or a code come in? Irving Bishop admitted that his act was not real thought transference but a trick; and Prof. Barrett was quite dissatisfied with the tests Bishop submitted to, to prove that he was—sometimes—genuine. Such a book as Mr. Zaneig wrote is quite useless to prove anything one way or another; for like the Piddingtons he wanted his act to be appreciated as "entertainment."

But what about the Upton Sinclair experiments? They took place some twenty years ago and they are described in detail in the *Bulletin XVI* published by the Boston Society for Psychic Research in 1932. The "receiver" was in most cases Mrs. Sinclair and as far as I can see the experiments were conducted most fairly. She managed to reproduce a number of drawings first sketched by a relative in a room about thirty miles away. The originals can be seen in the *Bulletin* side by side with the copies and they show extraordinary similarities. She also conducted some experiments with her husband which again were extremely successful. It is difficult to believe that there was any intention to deceive or that the sittings were not quite genuine. At the same time, it should be emphasised that not all the experiments were a success—



many, indeed, were failures. The writer of the *Bulletin* discusses the probability of guessing or coincidence; and in fact he tried what guessing could do in another series of experiments. He calls the results surprising. In most of the cases, there were no successes whatever.

Similar to these drawing experiments are the many cases found in the volumes of the Proceedings of the Society of Psychical Research, some of which are discussed by Frank Podmore in *Studies in Psychical Research*. And in addition, a number of experiments by Mr. Blackburn and a Mr. Smith are carefully described. These two gentlemen were given every opportunity to show their powers as thought transferers, and they did so, we are told, under the most stringent conditions. As Messrs. Gurney, Podmore and the others insist, "The burden of explaining these results rests upon those who deny the possibility of thought transference."

And indeed the experiments on a number of occasions were conducted with great care, and reading the written accounts, I cannot see how anyone can deny that on some occasions more or less accurate thought transference took place.

Yet what is one to say when some twenty-five years afterwards, Mr. Blackburn "confessed" that he and Smith were frauds, and that there was no telepathy whatever between him and his partner? It was an astounding confession—I remember it well for it was given much publicity at the time—and, of course, it was not accepted by Prof. Barrett, or even by Mr. Smith, who were then both alive.

This is where it is so difficult to check the "evidence." Why should Blackburn, many years after investigation into his powers, claim that he was a fraud—if he was not? What was his motive?

And here is what Myers, one of the most famous of all investigators, says in his *Phantasms of the Living*:—

The Creerys had their most startling successes at first, when the affair was a surprise and an amusement, or later at short and seemingly casual trials; the decline set in with their sense that the experiments had become matters of weighty importance to us . . . So on a minor scale, in trials among our own friends, we have seen a fortunate evening, when the spectators were interested and the percipient excited and confident, succeeded by a series of failures when the results were more anxiously awaited . . . But of course the first question for science is not whether the phenomena can be produced to order, but whether in a sufficient number of series the proportion of success to failure is markedly above the probable result of chance.

It will be seen from this extract that Myers, who conducted so many telepathic experiments himself, was not altogether satisfied, and had to search for an excuse for his failures. If telepathy is a fact, why should it not be produced "to order"? Will the reader note that though Myers found "a series of failures" in his own experiments, yet the Zancigs and the Piddingtons on the stage have always to produce their remarkable phenomena "to order"; they would lose their job if they had "a series of failures." And whatever they themselves say, their numerous followers have always maintained that their performance is pure telepathy. It is impossible to give a decided answer, that is, where their "telepathy" ends and their trickery begins.

H. CUTNER.

## EXORCIZING THE POSSESSED

(Concluded from page 392)

In a short time, Padre Ribeiro entered the dimly lighted sacristy whose only windows were two skylights in the roof. He put on a white surplice, slung his red stole over his shoulders, put the Ritual under his arm, took a statue of Our Lady of Help from the shelf and a pot containing Holy Water and the Hyssop, he then opened the door and beckoned the woman to enter.

She was a state of supreme terror. It was there, alone with his patient, that Padre Ribeiro worked, sitting on a bench and his patient kneeling at his feet.

She asked tremblingly: "Have I an Evil Spirit, Padre?"

"You have, but I will expel it. Come now, make the Sign of the Cross and say the Credo and an Act of Contrition. While she was saying the latter, he wound one end of his stole round her neck. He then roared:

"Get out Devil! Get out Devil! Get out Devil!"

"This Devil you have inside you will soon sneak away into the sea and never be heard of again."

The woman, now in a cold sweat, shivered violently and moaned and groaned.

The priest read from the Ritual, printed in red and black letters, declaiming in Latin and accompanying his words with the Sign of the Cross made on her and on on himself. When in the middle of the Latin, he pronounced the woman's name, she trembled, crushed by the mystery of the religious pomp about her.

"Lift up a prayer to Our Lady of Help, as really present here as if she had come down from Heaven," (here he placed the image of the Virgin in front of her eyes). "Beg Her to deliver you from this Evil Spirit."

There were some women who let themselves be inoculated by the decided, penetrating words of the priest, and almost at once felt relieved and often completely free from the Devil which had been tormenting them. There were others whose wills the priest had much difficulty in beating down.

In those cases, Padre Ribeiro again took up the Ritual and began to read. If this was not having the desired effect, he roared:

"It is stubborn, this filthy Devil." Then taking the hyssop and a small pewter pot of Holy Water, he directed his words to the Devil:

"Go out of this woman with this Holy Water or I'll smash you to bits!" At this he dashed the Holy Water in the face of the sufferer. If still not successful, he got up from the bench, and planting himself in the middle of the sacristy, lifted up his arms and swung round the room, stamping and roaring and bawling, with the violence of a Jupiter cleaving rocks and mountains. In an ardent desire to cure his patient and to conquer the Devil, he threw his soul into hers with the same rhythm of suffering. He worked himself up till the great beads of sweat dropped from his forehead, and the boards creaked under his sounding steps.

In the end the priest, as St. Michael with the Dragon, conquered the Evil One. He stamped his foot on the floor and called out triumphantly:

"I've got him! I've got him! I've got my foot on his belly! You are saved, poor woman, you are saved!" Again religion had won.

"Go, with God, my child, you are cleansed."

The woman's friends entered and led her away, one remaining behind to pay.

Every day people arrive at the Church of our Lady of Help to interfere with Father Ribeiro. Many, after being cured, returned to beg the Holy Man to shut the door

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of their souls so that the Devil could not again enter: "Shut the door of my soul on him, Senhor Padre," they begged.

"Come on, I'll shut it."

He read from the Ritual, making the Sign of the Cross with the sacristy key on the mouth and lips of the woman, and so the door of her soul was shut against the Evil One.

When attacks of hysteria occurred, Padre Ribeiro took mouthfuls of Holy Water and squirted it on the face of the sufferer. After he went to the lamp of the Blessed Sacrament and taking from it a spoonful of olive oil he forced it down the woman's throat. If that failed, he resorted to flagellation: taking a knotted cord, he slashed and slashed the patient with all his force. If the Devil still resisted, he grabbed her Adam's apple and roughly massaged it. His last resource was the compression of the ovaries with his two great thumbs, as hard as steel. As he worked on his patient he would say: "This is the Devil which has reached your throat," or "This is the Devil which I am driving out through your womb."

Sometimes, when the Evil Spirit was more deeply rooted, Padre Ribeiro was obliged to resort to more drastic methods; for example:—

Once a young and beautiful girl, whose parents had dragged her round to many doctors to be cured, was brought to him. Her mania was laughing: she laughed and laughed for no reason.

"Leave me alone with her," said the Holy Man.

He set to work on her, employing his various methods: he sounded her with a thousand minute, cunning questions, jumping round her till the sweat came pouring down him. She laughed and laughed. He then roared at her; he beat her; he pelted her with stones; but she still laughed. This requires force and more force, thought the Priest.

It happened to be harvest time and the labourers who were threshing Fr. Ribeiro's corn had come up to the house to quench their thirst with red wine. He called them aside and vaguely explained what he wanted of them. He then led the girl up to them, saying:

"The cause of all her trouble is a huge devil which has taken possession of her." One man said: "It could well be."

"There is no doubt about it," affirmed the Priest.

The women, leaning on their brooms, made the Sign of the Cross and screamed:

"Begone, Evil Spirit! Begone, Evil Spirit!"

He then instructed them:

"If I pat her body, I may find the point of the Devil's tail—it is the only part of him which is sensitive to the touch. If I happen to put my finger on the point, he will yell. Then all of you together must help me to drive him out. When you hear the first yell, you must frighten him off by banging your iron mallets together; those with rakes must also clash them; you, women, must then drive him up into the air with your brooms; all must shout and scream."

He led the way into the field, taking the young girl by the hand. When they arrived, he ordered her to take off her kerchief, undo her skirt at the waist, pull up her blouse and chemise at the back and then get down on her knees. She obeyed all his orders, swaying from side to side in fits of laughter.

He went over to an olive tree, and cutting some switches made three crosses with them, joining them with fibre from the reeds. He placed one on her neck, another on her closed heels and the third over her kidneys.

The crowd, filled with curiosity, circled round, the women with faces of great anguish.

"Spread out, make a bigger circle!" bawled the Priest.

The men and women spread out, while the boys and girls squatted down in front of them.

"Now not a sound out of one of you!"

The silence which fell on the crowd as they waited patiently in the burning sun, was tense and frightening. Fr. Ribeiro, in his wide, flowing cloak and large sombrero, knelt down and leaned over the girl. He began to pat her body, running all over it with his great ploughman's hands. At a certain moment, under the pressure of his fingers, hard as steel, she let out a desperate cry, as the roar of a ravenous wolf. Immediately all the crowd roared: "Get out, Devil! Begone, Devil!" at the same time banging mallets, rakes and brooms in a hysterical, leaping, jumping, Saraband.

Then amongst the din arose the thundering voice of the Priest:

"There he goes! There he goes! Now he is gone!"

In a little while, the girl, dirty, torn, mad with fear, stumbled to her feet. She shrunk back on meeting the eyes of the priest—and then began to shed tears, the first for years. She and the Priest knelt to pray. Silence fell on the crowd. Impressed by the mysterious and the occult they crouched down in fear, muttering prayers. Fear had conquered them! Marvellous fear!

Translated by N. F.

## RESPECTABILITY

### I

"LIVED respected and died lamented" was an epitaph often bestowed upon certain people in the nineteenth century. Then it was regarded as great honour to the deceased. Many living not only appreciated its conferment on others but sought it as the most desirable final encomium upon themselves.

Its employment as a form of praise coincided with the rise of the manufacturing classes after the Industrial Revolution, when personal virtues valuable in commercial society were stressed as essential; concomitants of ethical standards necessary in those employed for wages or salaries, from domestic servants and office boys up to managers of works. Such moral imperatives as honesty, probity, trustworthiness, truth-speaking, obedience, punctuality and similar were linked with capacity for hard work.

Respectability became the religion of the middle classes. Now, though less mentioned by name and changing considerably in content it remains the aspiration of large numbers of people, the principle which guides them in their social contacts.

A letter from a famous actress exists in which she records her satisfaction that her daughter has ceased to be an actress, having married a respectable man. No profession than the Thespian has ever striven so hard, and so successfully, to raise itself from the legal definition of vagabondage and the popular conception of loose-living to respectability.

The struggle for more respectability goes on, disguised in varying forms and called by different names. Many marrying couples prefer the ceremony in church because of the aura of respectability shed over it by being celebrated in a sacred building with religious rites surrounding the civil contract. For similar reasons they have their children baptised and confirmed. Although not so strongly as formerly, church attendance is regarded as a mark of respectability. To bury the dead without full parade and formalities is a breach of respectability shudderingly



avoided by people who dread lest their neighbours shall see a flaw in their cloak of respectability.

Because just as J. S. Mill in his "Liberty" defined self-regarding acts, so respectability is the incarnation of living with the eyes of other people upon one. Parsons, priests, ministers, pastors, teachers, doctors, police, councillors and Members of Parliament, public officials; all of these and many others have a diverse list of qualifications, aptitudes and duties, but chiefly in the opinion of the multitude it is necessary they be respectable. Without that they are regarded as unfit for their posts and positions.

Likewise, parents of illegitimate children often marry to ensure respectability for themselves and their otherwise bastard offspring. Especially does it safeguard the mother; in old phraseology "making an honest woman of her." The law now agrees with this, legitimising children born out of wedlock if the parents marry later. In the same way mothers remaining unmarried will prefix "Mrs." to their surnames, implying widowhood or absent husbands.

Modern social legislation is aimed at establishing and endowing respectability. Sickness, unemployment and other State insurances, old age pensions, almost without exception such legislation is reckoned at enabling people to live respectably when that is endangered by poverty or material misfortune.

## II

Nowhere is it more strongly exemplified than in education and the upbringing of children generally. The baby must be correctly and beautifully dressed and prammed. As soon as he is old enough to run about he is enjoined not to mix with poor or dirty or rough children because they are not nice. If the parents can afford it they will send him to a private school. Never have private schools flourished as they are doing to-day, testimonies to parents' craving for respectability.

State- and rate-aided schools follow the same trend. They imitate grammar and public schools, so even slum children, in accordance with the slogan: "Secondary Education for Everyone," find themselves organised into Houses, badged, capped, necktied, with prefects, sports, speech days and every adjunct of respectability which teachers and local education authorities can introduce.

By the age of twelve years children are pushed into scholarship examinations for higher grade schools, colleges, if possible universities, so as to get into salaried, pensioned, clean, non-manual jobs. Respectability rampages in fury, blows full blast through children's lives, at home and in school.

Conformably with the policy of education committees and the Ministry of Education, is that of housing committees and the Housing Department of the Ministry of Health. Go to any municipal housing estate and it will be seen to consist of hundreds and thousands of imitation middle-class villas. Each has its garden and its lawn, its semi-privacy and its amenities which make for respectability. The houses could be placed closer together, more to the acre, and blocks of flats would meet the needs conveniently, many of the rehoused families preferring contiguity with their neighbours, but reformers and housing experts put respectability first.

Suburban dwellers practise respectability fully, the women showing it in window curtains and social functions. The men keep small cars if they can afford, often when they cannot. Holidays away must be taken. Visiting they sit in Lounge or other fancifully named room, not the common Bar, where the beer is cheaper but the company not so respectable.

For the same reason, to be well dressed, shaved, permed and wearing clean collars is necessary. Resorts to cafes, restaurants and entertainments must be activated by the corresponding motive, as is nearly everything done in public from morning to night.

From birth to death respectability is the criterion and driving power of vast numbers of the populace.

A. R. WILLIAMS.

## THE NAME OR TITLE OF GOD

SOME say the word "God" has no meaning. It seems to be even so. The dictionary hesitates in regard to its origin, anyway. "Perhaps," it says, "it is the Aryan 'Ghen,' which is, to invoke, or to . . ."

From a Latin essay I wrote some years ago, when Hitler and Mussolini were prominent in the world's eye, I take this chapter and present it for inspection. This translation as to the word "God" I take from page 91 of the essay.

Where did the word come from, and has it any meaning? If so, what is it? Man is the maker, the inventor, of all words in a number of languages, that, in variety, are quasi infinite.

This statement may be held worthy of consideration as given by the French author, De Montrui. He says: "We have the word 'divinity' which indicates, points out, the godhead." Now this comes from the Sanscrit term "Dio" from which came in, afterwards, the Greek name "Theos," the Latin "Deus" and the modern "Dieu," "Dios," "Dio," etc. Sanscrit, as we know, is the ancient language of India. It has a meaning which is "one thing and the same, made together, in simultaneous energy." This word of the Sanscrit means to shine, glitter, to be radiant, and its value has neither more or less than this in significance.

These words, such as "Dio," "Deus," etc., were always applied to the Gods, or, let us say, to the divinities; and there were so spoken, at that time, when all nations of that division, nominated to-day, "Aryans," arrived at their period of star worship, especially the sun, "Dominus Astrorum," the "Lord of the Stars," as Lencia designated it.

This appellation "Aryan" means, in Sanscrit, noble, honourable, renowned, remarkable, and the Aryans are the descendants of the Indo-Germanic race (just so, and we smile, in recollection of the mountebank Hitler, appropriating it solely for the Germans). But, indeed, the stars, since they were the only things held constantly in reverence and adoration, the word "God" for these Aryans was the synonym of omnipotence, and, borne westward, it was given to these celestial beings, and held worthy of worship.

Thus it is, that whereas ideas are modified, words and expressions, however, continue, and the word that once indicated Star, now is used to reflect the Demiurge, the Craftsman of the Universe, a being without a body.

It is agreeable to pick up and look at the calm, reflective, finely-formed features of Titus Lucretius Carus, curly-headed, having a studious expression in his eyes (as depicted in a print in the British Museum) and, opening his "De Rerum Naturis," to read this:—

"Nature is seen to do all things herself, without need of the Gods." (That letter majuscule is urbane politeness.) We concur, cordially.

GEORGE F. LAWS.

(Canada).



## ACID DROPS

Head teachers of Yorkshire Grammar Schools complain that the usual black-bound Bibles presented to children when starting school are "too sombre to compete with coloured comics," and they are asking for brighter Bibles with vividly coloured illustrations. We hope their request will be granted, for we can see unending possibilities, and to show our earnestness we will offer to any publisher examples of G. W. Foote's Bible illustrations. We guarantee if these are accepted, the new Bible will more than compete with comics. For instance, an illustration of Noah in his shipyard, or Jesus walking the waters could be vividly portrayed.

A *Sunday Times* reporter has gone to the trouble of consulting the Bible on the measurements of the Ark, and it appears that he was quite serious, for he did not draw the obvious conclusion that such a small ship would not hold two animals of every species, let alone seven, as another account of that famous floating menagerie has it. Apart from the fact that the waters rose only 15 cubits, which would not be enough to flood Gray's Inn Road, the Ark, according to Genesis, was 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high. A cubit is approximately 18 inches. Apparently the animals were as well packed as the Underground during the rush hour.

In order to make sure of getting seats to hear Sir Stafford Cripps, Members of Parliament had to get to the House early last week and found themselves in time for Prayers. We hope this at least impressed them, and that they were afterwards able to concentrate on devalued pounds and atomic scares. The following schoolboy howler is worth retelling—"The business of the Commons starts with prayers, the Chaplain stands up with the Speaker and looks at the members present, and then prays for the country."

A report published by the National Council of Social Service on the activities of boys who belong to mixed clubs has a section on their religion. Between the ages of 16 and 19, it appears they are not in the least interested, but after that they begin to take some interest in going to church or chapel—though, curiously enough, youths do not appear to be particularly attracted to political movements. Fifty per cent. of the boys admitted some connection with religious organisations and only 6 per cent. with political ones. At the same time, they admitted a liking for gambling in some form or other, and quite a large proportion for a liking also of swing music, jazz, and crime stories. But intense devotion to Christianity with the sense of sin demanded by Christ appears to be wholly absent. And a good thing, too.

Readers of the *Church Times* get a shock now and then, but "Trimmer's" report from Los Angeles, we think, will not at all be liked. It appears that a man was arrested there on a "charge of assault with a deadly weapon." His wife complained to the police that he hit her with a Prayer Book.

The same journal describes a "township" near Johannesburg called Orlando where many thousands of Africans live, it seems, under appalling conditions. horses, donkeys, hens, and "unbelievably many children" everywhere. There are naturally many churches, and desperate efforts are made to bring the unfortunate natives to "Christ." All the same, the

description of the town ends with "Orlando breaks all the Ten Commandments daily, and the priests and the missionaries could tell of murder, witchcraft, fornication, drunkenness, and prostitution, if it were profitable." Obviously missionaries have completely failed to get "Christ" over—perhaps because it is not profitable.

The all-believing Fundamentalist aided by Roman and Anglo-Catholics have hitherto believed that Marriage is a Sacrament and cannot be dissolved except by death, basing this belief on "Our Lord's" teaching. In actual fact, the words put into the mouth of Jesus by Matthew does allow a cause for divorce, and commentators have had a very heavy task in trying to dispose of it. The Episcopal Church of U.S.A. are now discussing "the Church's Marriage Discipline" with regard to the revision of the marriage laws, and it is quite interesting to note how easily the *Church Times*, in an article on the subject, disposes of the inconvenient cause for divorce allowed by "Our Lord" in Matthew.

It is very simple. It now appears that "the large majority of scholars, whatever their outlook, now agree" that our Lord did not make that particular exception. That is, they throw overboard the Holy Word inspired by God Almighty when it suits them—just like any paltry and blatant Materialist! They pick and choose what they like—and yet they hold up their hands in horror when Freethinkers do the same. Still, we ought not to complain. If Jesus did not say what Matthew has reported, how can we trust anything in the Gospels?

According to the Pope, the days of "cloistered" nuns have got to cease. Here were hundreds of thousands of women, thoroughly deceived by the Church, wasting their lives in utterly useless prayers and privations; and the Pope is shrewd enough to see that they could be better employed in "worldly" affairs. Hence his decree that they now have to "work in the world." It would not be unfair to say that the poor women themselves would prefer taking their share of "secular" work like teaching and nursing. The days of devotion only to Christ Jesus are almost over.

Pasquin of the *Universe* has one of his sly tilts at another religion in the current number. He quotes a Buddhist monk conveying the glorious message that "Buddhism is a scientific religion and the key to world peace." No doubt some people in search of a religion will agree. We do not.

We wonder what the Pope will have to say over the recent outburst of Ireland's Foreign Minister: "No country can suffer partitioning according to religious beliefs. In Ireland, the religious beliefs outside the Catholic Church are certainly Christian..." We like the word "certainly," for if there is one thing the Catholic Church has always maintained, it is that all religions outside it are heresies, and therefore opposed to Christianity and should be suppressed. But perhaps Mr. McBride is also a politician. The suppression can come later.

## THINGS WE SHOULD LIKE TO KNOW—

What is the essential difference between a crowd at a murder trial and a crowd at a Society wedding?

Was Mr. William Randolph Hearst, the U.S. newspaper magnate, made a Papal Count in return for his bitter Anglo-phobia and general Fascist tendencies?



# "THE FREETHINKER"

Telephone No.: Holborn 2601.

41, Gray's Inn Road,  
London, W.C.1.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS

L. PEARCE.—We are afraid that the reputed saying of Leo X about the profitable fable of Jesus is based on unreliable evidence. So what! The Church has usually acted on the assumption.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 41, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1, and not to the Editor.

THE FREETHINKER will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad): One year, 17s.; half-year, 8s. 6d.; three-months, 4s. 4d.

Lecture Notices should reach the Office by Friday morning. The following periodicals are being received regularly, and can be consulted at "The Freethinker" office: THE TRUTH SEEKER (U.S.A.), THE FREETHINKER (U.S.A.), THE LIBERAL (U.S.A.), THE VOICE OF FREEDOM (U.S.A., German and English), PROGRESSIVE WORLD (U.S.A.), THE NEW ZEALAND RATIONALIST, THE RATIONALIST (Australia), DER FREIDENKER (Switzerland), LA RAISON (France), DON BASILIO (Italy).

## SUGAR PLUMS

On Monday evening, 24th October, London Free-thinkers should assemble in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, to give a hearty welcome to Mr. Glanville Cook, Editor of "The Australian Rationalist." Mr. Glanville Cook attended the recent International Congress of The World Union of Freethinkers in Rome, since then he has been paying a number of fraternal visits in a general tour, and on Monday, October 24, he will address the Conway Hall audience on "The Roman Catholic Church in Australian Politics," at 7.30 p.m. London Freethinkers must make a point of being present in force to give fraternal greetings to our Australian comrade. Admission is free.

Nottingham will have a visit from Mr. Harold Day, President of the Bradford Branch N.S.S., and he intends to have a busy week-end. On Saturday evening, October 15, he will speak in the Old Market Square at 6.30. On Sunday afternoon at 2.30 he will speak for the Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society in the Technical College, Shakespeare Street, on "Is Religion Necessary?" and in the evening he lectures for the local N.S.S. Branch in the Co-op. Hall, Parliament Street, on the subject, "Christianity and Atheism," at 7 o'clock. Mr. Day is always enthusiastic, has a pleasing personality, and is a worthy warrior for Freethought.

Supplies of the new N.S.S. "Christmas" cards are now to hand. We hope readers will take every advantage of this most unusual, attractive and original greeting card which is in two colours and which will, we are sure, be highly appreciated by the recipients. The cards are 6d. each, 1d. postage.

If only we had kept count of the number of times that Materialism is supposed to have been exploded, we feel sure they would fill a book. The latest champion of anti-Materialism is the Rev. J. D. Pearce Higgins, who claims that the philosophy has been blown to atoms (sounds like unconscious humour). The Rev. Mr. Higgins quite seriously claims that it has been blown sky-high by telepathy and precognition! Readers who have followed the recent discussion in *The Freethinker* on psychic research and telepathy, please consider themselves exploded.

Truth wants to know whether it is impossible for the Church of England to rid itself of the "Renegade Dean" (Dr. Hewlett Johnson) and waxes quite indignant that the Red Dean "permits himself to be used by anti-Christian propagandists without shame and has the effrontery to retain the Deanery (presented by Ramsay MacDonald) worth £2,000 a year." The leader writer really lets himself go when referring to the "Prophet motive" in connection with the Dean's royalties on his book *The Socialist Sixth of the World*, which he thinks, must be considerable. Why he should get so "het up" is beyond us, for after all, the Red Dean is not the first Christian to serve two masters.

The Pope has roundly condemned artificial insemination at the fourth International Conference of Catholic Physicians, as "immoral," a "sin against nature," and as "adultery," and any child born as the result is illegitimate. Having thus set the standard of the Conference, a Catholic physician proceeded to condemn sterilisation as a means to prevent the birth of defectives, both mental and physical. He maintained that every physician should refuse to obey any law prescribing such measures as are against the Divine law. To Catholics, it is quantity, not quality that counts. It does not seem to have struck the Conference that throughout the ages, physicians have been forced to break them, and almost without exception, medical progress has been made in direct contravention of "Divine" laws. The use of chloroform is a case in point.

In the preface to his book on St. Peter, the author, W. T. Walsh, wonders why there are more lives of St. Paul than of St. Peter. One reason; contends a reviewer of the book, is that St. Peter "is apt to become a subject of discussion in apologetics." But perhaps another reason is one disliked intensely by Christians—that St. Peter is a myth. Outside the New Testament and legendary stories of martyrs, there is not a line of evidence that he ever lived. Just like his Master.

## THE UBIQUITOUS PARSON

WE may learn from Mr. Hugh Redwood in the "News Chronicle" of August 11, 1949, of what he calls a significant experiment, and that what he describes is a sign-post to something important we may feel indisposed to deny. We may, however, see something more than Mr. Redwood sees, and also something less, and the additional thing in our vision may be something that the religious journalist would repudiate as the creation of a wanton imagination; and that we also see less than he, he might explain by reference to the blindness of those children of earth who follow not in the footsteps of the holy heroes of the New Testament.

The scene of the great experiment is Milton Abbey, near Blandford, Dorset, which, writes Mr. Redwood, shortly before the war became a centre for Divine healing under the Rev. John Maillard, an Anglican priest "set apart for the work."

We must halt here, ere we become breathless, for the pace is more than a little hurried. Firstly, let us all well note that God is not expected to heal people anywhere or anyhow. He must have a presentable, may, a very pleasant earthly habitation in which to carry out His dispensations. The atheist will suppose that the habitation is not for God, but, at best, for the unfortunate people who need to be healed, and he will not grudge



these the amenity of the place, for he will not expect healing to be as likely in relatively mean streets and dwellings; but Christian ladies and gentlemen, why does God need a centre for his healing?

Then again, what are we to think of the faith in God which is so weak that the believers are conducting an experiment to see whether it is justified? Perhaps our question is unfair though, and many of the people responsible for this activity believe in a God of limited powers, as Sir Stafford Cripps does, who probably thinks that vegetables have more to do with health than Bibles have. These devotees may want to find out just what power God has; so they have taken sick people and subjected them along with God to the experiment. Some of the sick may die of the test, but if they do, who will be able to prove it?

Then, is it certain that the experiment is so devised as to be crucial? We feel certain it is not, for the patients in the Abbey are received from the nationalised hospitals of the S.W. Metropolitan Region, and psycho analysis, relaxation, occupational therapy, and "other things," figure in the treatment. How shall we distinguish God's work from the work of doctors, nurses, orderlies, cooks, and others? There seems, in fact, no intention of making a crucial test. Presumably none of the religious persons interested in the undertaking would stand for that, and no doctor in his senses would permit it, nor would the Minister of Health or Parliament allow such an irresponsible proceeding.

We are told that at Milton Abbey there is a practical acceptance of the principle that the sickness which doctors seek to cure may be not only of the body but the soul, and that a talk with the present Warden, the Rev. G. Harding, leaves no room for doubt that in numerous cases a degree of healing otherwise impossible is attainable along these lines.

It is also asserted, and it is a matter for regret, that the British Medical Association is represented on the Churches' Council of Healing, and that the latter body has pointed out that, with the nationalisation of the medical services, the need for a greater emphasis upon the spiritual side of healing is being increasingly recognised.

That the Churches should testify to the good effect of treating the sick with an amalgam of medicine and Christianity is to be expected, but why is the B.M.A. represented on a body whose object is presumably to do this? Is not the B.M.A. a society merely of medical men, and is it generally believed among doctors that there is a need for the spiritual aspect of healing to be increasingly recognised? It is hard for an atheist to credit that. Then, are there not atheistic doctors, and have they recorded their vote in favour of this activity of the B.M.A.? It is difficult to suppose that the action of the B.M.A. was unintentional, or made under a mistaken idea of what the Churches mean by the "spiritual aspect" of healing.

As regards the condition of the patients, it can be appreciated that bodily illness may result from strain due to emotional causes, and that social maladjustment may be a factor in the sickness. Are such causes spiritual in any sense that makes the parson a fitter man to deal with the illness than the doctor or secular worker?

Would it not be wise for the B.M.A. to explain how far it subscribes to the view that there is a sickness of the soul. I hereby challenge the B.M.A. to give some medical evidence for belief in sick souls. I will indeed give £500 to any body it likes to name, if it will prove the existence of soul disease. By "soul" I mean what

the Churches mean, that is to say, an immortal entity which quits the body at death, and then yet retains the essential personality of the person whose soul it was. Has it not in its journal or archives some article on the treatment of sick souls? If it has no evidence for soul-sickness will it not then resign from the Churches' Council of Healing?

The first warden was, it is said, a priest set apart for the work. What is meant by that? Who set him apart, God or man? In this setting apart there is one important thing to note; it is that whenever there is a social activity initiated, there is usually a parson about, to move at once into a position of control. Here is manifest one of the age-long functions of the Churches. The parson is just a paid agent of his Church, which is ever on the watch for the initiation of group action, and scheming to be an important element therein. The Boy Scout Movement got well into their hands. The general idea of that Movement was to make boys virile and self-reliant, but that is likely to be impossible of fulfilment under the control of religious bodies, which inculcate the maxim of "trust and obey."

The fact is that in the case of Milton Abbey, the Churches were in possession of a valuable piece of property which they were using as a hospital or convalescent home, and they have, on the coming of nationalised hospitals, been able, against the general principle that doctors should be in charge of hospitals, and owing to the undue prestige of religious bodies in this country, fostered by our defective constitution, been able to retain their control, and thus be in an advantageous position to propagate the Christian nostrum among unwitting patients.

J. G. LUPTON.

## THE RITUAL MEAT RACKET

THE Market Committee of the Manchester Corporation has asked the Association of Municipal Corporations to conduct a national campaign against kosher killing and the institution of the humane killer.

Many people will no doubt feel inclined to tolerate the kosher slaughtering as they are used to tolerating any craziness that goes under a religious heading. But in a country where cruelty to animals is punishable, the proposal to abolish the Jewish method of animal slaughter ought to be regarded as a necessary consequence. In many countries, the majority of otherwise devout Jews has dispensed with kosher meat without any great harm to the existence of their religious community. The others called orthodox, would, if deprived of their sort of meat, probably turn vegetarians at first, but in the long run their Rabbis might be compelled gradually to abandon their strict rulings in this respect.

Two years ago, in *The Freethinker* of 30th November, 1947, I explained that animistic notions lay at the root of the kosher killing. The authors of the Old Testament considered the blood the seat of animating spirits, and that it was therefore highly dangerous to swallow these genuine Life Spirits. The kosher way of killing aims at rendering the cattle as bloodless as possible. The primitive method to this end is circumstantially described in the Talmud (Chullin). It is the essential text book of the *Shokhet*, the ritual cattle killer.

The neck of the animal—be it poultry or cattle—is bent back and with one single stroke a faultless knife with no gap must cut through the animal's windpipe, gullet (pharynx) and vascular tissues. As a result, a big jet of blood shoots out. If the subsequent examination shows that windpipe and gullet were cut correctly, but



the stroke did not cut the great artery of the neck at the same time, the slaughter cannot pass as "kosher."

The bending and cutting of the sacrificial victim's neck is also mentioned in the "Iliad"; as a result, the animal dies under prolonged fits and convulsions. With no vital part of its body destroyed, death comes from suffocation. These fits are an essential part, since they further the emptying of the blood vessels; still, anyone not yet perverted from religious superstition must feel repelled and shocked.

The apologists of this ghastly atavism maintain that the animal becomes unconscious immediately after its blood circulation to the brain has been interrupted; and it must under no circumstances be dazed before, since this would interfere with the profuse depletion of blood. The essential question, however, is: do they themselves still believe in the blood spirits? If they do not, then there is no earthly reason why the animal should not be stunned before the kill.

Let us skip the other cruel details of this kind of slaughter connected with the method to obtain kosher meat and go into a few of the subsequent regulations.

Jahveh demands the consumption of such animals only as are immaculate; there are so many defects in animals rendering them not "kosher," that only a learned shohket, and let alone an ordinary rabbi, can know them. He is therefore the only judge to whose discretion it must be left whether or not a given kill may pass as "kosher."

First of all he will inflate the lung of the slaughtered animal to examine whether there is a "hole" in it. If the lobes are not in a proper position as prescribed by the Talmud, then, even with the absence of "holes," the animal is not "kosher" and eligible for orthodox consumption. Nor is it, when the lobes were too close to the ribs so that later the lung could have become "holy." Sometimes, it may occur that only money may safeguard the owner of that animal to have it declared "kosher," since these intricate "defects" merely show after the killing.

Now let's assume the verdict is favourable. All vestiges of veins and arteries have been cut out, particularly the sinew along the socket of the hip-bone, which is considered a sacred nerve (cf. Gen. xxxii, 33; xxv, 2; xlvii, 29). Considering that the sciatic vein has innumerable ramifications from the part of the sexual organs downwards, it is safer and simpler to dispense with the hind quarters of the animal altogether.

It will be observed that kosher meat is not only a waste of food, but it is more expensive and devoid of nutritive substances. For the ritual demands that it be soaked in water for about 30 minutes. Then it is sprinkled with salt and put on an inclined plane—some sloping table which allows the last residue of blood to trickle out. After this procedure we may be assured to have a bloodless carcase which may be eaten with a clear conscience.

The orthodox Jews are not the only people exercising ritual slaughter, since animistic notions were general in early cultural stage; but even so backward a people as the Antakarana of Madagascar only use it on certain occasions such as the circumcision ceremony. With all tolerance we would hardly let totemistic head-hunters have their own way in our midst. Nor would a medicine-man be allowed to cure a clansman in Europe according to their pagan rites and superstitions. These things go beyond religious tolerance and do harm to other things. So why tolerate them with white people who claim to a certain standard of culture and education?

PERCY GORDON ROY.

## A FEW CORRECTIONS

MY article on "Rationalism" was not, as Mr. J. G. Davies asserts in his letter (*The Freethinker*, September 18), a "gibe" at the R.P.A., but at some of those who, whether as members or not of that organisation, call themselves Rationalists. Among these, if I may judge by his letter, I must include Mr. Davies, for he says: "Rationalism is not a strict definition to describe the philosophy of the godless. And of course there are different viewpoints within the rationalist fold . . . varying opinions are the hall-mark of freedom of thought." All of which is quite consonant with the type of rationalist I dealt with in my article; to which (to avoid repetition) I refer him.

But Mr. Davies commits himself to one or two other statements which are worth notice, if only as good specimens of muddled thinking. He says that my description of Agnosticism as "a doctrine which exalts acquiescent ignorance into a philosophic virtue" is "an obvious falsehood." An agnostic, he tells us "is one who, having examined the arguments in favour and against a deity, has the honesty to confess that it is beyond his ken to positively state whether or not there is such a being"; and he adds, "few agnostics willingly acquiesce to that position. They would like to know the answer, but understand they cannot fairly give it."

It is an "obvious" truth that Mr. Davies does not yet know what agnosticism is: and his cock-sure denunciation of my definition only adds another variety of rationalist to those I have already enumerated, viz., the rash rationalist.

The agnostic position is not simply one of doubt as to whether a god exists, but of positive *denial* that the existence of such a being *can be known*. To say that few agnostics willingly "acquiesce" in the position, is nonsense; for, in asserting that such an existence cannot be known, the agnostic is at once confessing his ignorance and acquiescing in it.

Again: "The agnostic is unlike the religionist for, having determined no practical way in which a god, if there be one, influences man, chooses to do without him."

But, if the agnostic can see no way in which a god can influence man, what conceivable reason has he for believing in the *possible* existence of such a being? As all rational thought must be commensurate with knowledge, what is confessedly unknown and unknowable cannot be the subject of any consideration whether of belief, denial, doubt or suspension of judgment. An existence that is manifested by no assignable act or effect is, as far as we are concerned, just—nothing.

The plain truth is, there is no logical necessity for agnosticism, for there is no debatable ground between Atheism and Theism. What is unknowable admits of no argument, *pro* or *con*. The question is simply between unbelief on the one hand and belief on the other—either a god exists or he does not.

And again: "Mr. Yates, a few paragraphs after criticising the R.P.A. formula as 'vague and diffused,' concludes his article by avowing that it has a very definite meaning. Will he please make up his mind? Will Mr. Davies please read my article again? He may then perceive why, in one sense, I call the definition vague and diffused, and why, in another sense, I allow of it. Should a more attentive perusal fail to enlighten him, I fear his case is such as no further effort on my part, or anyone else's, would remedy."

A. YATES.



## "THE FABLE OF THE BEES"

THIS book by Bernard Mandeville, physician, 1670 to 1733, and its sub-title, "Private Vices, Public Benefits" had the distinguished honour of being presented to the Grand Jury of Middlesex, who ordered it to be publicly burnt by the common hangman, as a dangerous book, and it was attacked by Bishop Berkeley of Cloyne, the professed metaphysician, who made much noise by maintaining that, all material objects exist only in the mind and his panacea for all ills was "drink tar-water"!

Berkeley's jargonistical buzzing against the "Bees" caused the Bishop to retreat hurriedly, being painfully stung by Mandeville's forceful reply, after he had published a humanitarian work, entitled, "Christianity in War," by which the author stressed in forceful language, the irregularities and injustice of church practices, causing the clergy to preach against Mandeville's propaganda, even in a special sermon, before London's Lord Mayor and the Aldermen.

Mandeville stated the dire evils of wars, and gave facts with figures showing the destruction and misery caused by one nation fighting another, as in the "Holy War" using 100,000 infantry, 10,000 cavalry and 60,000 wagons of baggage, under the orders of Alfonso III and costing the nation immense sums of money, wasted and the people impoverished.

It was estimated that during the "War of Conquest" on the Americans by the Spaniards, millions of lives were sacrificed; yet, the glory of victory was 1,000,000,000 dollars taken from the Americans and brought into Spain, and, for this valuable victory, special church services were appointed, under the Pope's blessing, for the Catholic martyrs, as Mandeville distinguishes them from heretical martyrs, brave scientists, like Bruno and Vanini burnt at the stake as an auto-da-fe, because Bruno, against contradictions in the Bible, asserted and proved that the Earth moved and not the Sun, to give day and night and the four seasons. Vanini, the brilliant Neapolitan, writer of "De Admirandis Naturali Arcanis," 1619, defied his judges and refused to recant.

Mandeville's "Bee Fable" influenced public opinion in his day, and caused many social reforms in after-times.

During Bernard Mandeville's work as a physician, in London, he published several freethought works, as:—"The Virgin Unmasked"; "Knaves Turned Honest"; and, "Freethoughts on Religion, the Church and National Happiness."

It is admirable to know of these valiant, learned Freethinkers, and their work for TRUTH.

WM. AUGUSTUS VAUGHAN.

## EXPORTS

Shakespeare we kept, but Byron we lease-lent,  
Now Europe us rewards for what we sent;  
To Europe too our Oscar Wilde we tossed;  
No second Childe Harold, he was lost.  
Consumptive Keats, the worthy school-marm's pride,  
Dwelt on Parnassus, but in Rome he died.  
Dear Percy Shelley, our brave Atheist,  
Was lost to sight in luminous thin mist.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### SOCIALISM AND COMMUNISM.

SIR.—As Mr. Ridley has favoured you with what he pleased to call "A final reply to Mr. Gallacher" it may be permissible for me to make a final reply to Mr. Ridley, on the principle laid down by Mr. Ridley himself when he says: "and dialectical reasoning automatically excludes finality."

I won't waste time or space dealing with Mr. Ridley's side-stepping, other than to say that in my letter I did not laugh at the I.L.P., although I am not averse to such a practice. I laughed at Mr. Ridley. He should read my letter again.

Mr. Ridley advises me to "think dialectically, and not as he does at present, in the terms of the static logic of 'either' 'or.'" He then goes on to express the opinion that "Marx and Engels would have taken a very poor view of Gallacher as a logician, since dialectical reasoning, we understand, ends by resolving its contradictions in a 'third front (synthesis).'" To this he adds "for dialectical reasoning automatically excludes finality, and accordingly, totalitarianism."

I don't think I have ever, in all my experience, been presented with such a hopeless muddle as is contained in this attempt of Mr. Ridley to discuss a subject on which he is, obviously, totally ignorant. Mr. Ridley seems to be quite incapable of differentiating between the process of development and the various stages in that process.

Just consider, after making certain allegations about the Soviet Union, Mr. Ridley makes use of the following:

"And as an old Socialist propagandist who frankly desires to abolish exploitation in both Britain and Russia."

Here is Mr. Ridley presenting us with "the static logic of 'either' 'or.'" Either exploitation or no exploitation—for Mr. Ridley there is no middle road—absolute, complete and final abolition of exploitation. And he presents this thought in such a way as to give the impression that he wants to persuade your readers that he is more of a totalitarian than I am.

I won't ask Mr. Ridley to "think dialectically" but I will ask him to give his mind to an understanding of the dialectic.

The dialectic may be presented as progress through contradiction, or, as it is commonly known, the "unity of opposites." It will be obvious to your readers, if not to Mr. Ridley, that before there can be unity of opposites there must be opposites, with nothing in between—no "third course"—anything in between and unity would become impossible.

Let us apply this to the all-important subject, the dominating subject, of social progress. The basic contradiction in capitalist society is the fact that we have co-operative or social production, and individual ownership of that which is produced. This contradiction can only be solved through a bitter conflict which will bring about the "synthesis" to which Mr. Ridley refers.

This will take the form of the best in each. Voluntary co-operation replacing the compulsion to work on the one side, and all the highest forms of technique that have been developed under capitalism on the other. This "unity of opposites" will give us Socialist economy.

Socialist economy can, therefore, be presented as an alternative form of economy to the economy of capitalism. Common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, as against private ownership.

But now arises the question—what form of society, what social relations will arise on this foundation of Socialist economy? That can only be a class-less society with communal relations. In other words a Communist form of society must arise from a foundation of socialist economy. Not overnight but as a process.

Therefore I will make the assertion as a challenge to all. Every Communist must be a Socialist, every Socialist must be a Communist. Let Mr. Ridley do a bit of serious thinking "free" or otherwise, on this subject before rushing again into print.—Yours, etc., WM. GALLACHER, M.P.

SIR.—After the rather lengthy discussion on the merits and otherwise of Communism, which has enlivened the columns of your magazine for the past few weeks, it is surprising to find space given to such a hysterical piece of mud-slinging as the letter by Mr. Corrick.

All that your correspondent has to say has been said so much better many years ago: From 1918 to 1928 the British newspaper reader was treated to a perfect deluge of atrocity stories by eye-witnesses who always managed to escape with their skins and memories intact. Who does not remember



the gutters flowing with blood, the priests tied to the tails of wild horses, the nuns outraged by members of the Godless organisations, etc., etc.; and who does not remember the stories, many years later, of the gallant Russians fighting with fanatical zeal in defence of the regime under which they had for so many years suffered?

But enough of this. Perhaps Mr. Corrick will explain why, after more than thirty years of the oppression he condemns, Russia is, in all respects, so strong as to excite the fear and hatred of people such as Mr. Corrick; and to cause the U.S.A. to surround her with a ring of bomber bases?—Yours, etc.,  
J. PLIMMER.

### DRIFTING TO WAR?

Sir.—Truly, the world and its ways are full of paradoxes! In the same world that cherishes the genius of Darwin, of Einstein, and countless other scientists and research-workers, there still exists the blind dogma of Moses, the rant of Isaiah, the prudery of Paul.

And how would an independent observer—for example, our man from Mars—reconcile the fact that whereas every civilised country in the world condemns war as a means of settling disputes, nearly every civilised nation is simultaneously re-arming for the next global conflict? Why is it that although the common man desires peace, he seems totally incapable of obtaining it?

Ask a man what was his personal war effort. He will reply, "I fought in the Western Desert," or "I made block-busters," or even only "I fire-watched in the office." There is practically nobody who can say that he or she did absolutely nothing.

Now ask a man what is his peace effort. What has he personally done to maintain friendly relations between nations? Ten to one, he will be stumped for an answer.

A few days ago Vyshinsky, the Soviet representative, placed before U.N.O. three resolutions, at least apparently designed to outlaw the use of the atomic-bomb. One or two phrases in the resolutions could obviously never have been agreed to by Britain and the U.S.A.: But their general intent, their essentially humanitarian sentiments, and the indisputable soundness of their aim were something which no reasoned being could contest.

What happened?

First reaction, we learn, was a boom in Wall Street armaments' shares ("Daily Express") when it was learned that the Soviet had the atomic-bomb. Secondly, a renewed wave of war-hysteria. And, finally, discussions on how best America and Britain could arm to the teeth.

The criterion employed to refute Vyshinsky's claims was the large stock-pile of atomic-bombs held by the U.S.A. compared with the assumed paucity of the Russian stock.

Politicians, diplomats and military leaders alike proclaimed their disinterest in the Russian plea on the ground that they "smelt a rat" or that they were fed up with bashing their heads against an Iron Curtain.

Yet surely it strikes the most elementary reason that if any diplomat should get too tired to continue fighting for peace—if anyone should get "brownd off" in a mission which means either happiness or misery and death for millions of people—then they should be thrown out of their jobs neck and crop.

I am not a Communist, and have no marked sympathy for the Soviet Union. But this steady drift towards a third world war by a group of nations greedy for their individual gain; bargaining for power with little thought of life; is something which must fill with horror and disgust the consciences of every genuine seeker after peace.—Yours, etc.,  
J. G. DAVIES.

### SHAKESPEARE AND GENIUS

Sir.—Hazlitt defined genius as originality; Mr. Kent as "mysticism." That the title deed to immortal fame in the works of Shakespeare is "originality" there can be no dispute.

Genius is miraculous capacity additional to the individual; ignore or deny this and consider Shakespeare as an ordinary man and it is inconceivable he could have been the author of the works that bear his name. The same is true of other men of genius—Beethoven, Turner, Keats, Burns, etc. Mr. Kent submits as evidence the knowledge of grammar, languages—geography it would be impossible for him to acquire—and the absence of any mention by his contemporaries of his fame. Prof. Raleigh gives the source of his knowledge and how easily attainable it was. Abundance of books in the shops round St. Paul's Raleigh says, "There

was no one to make an idol of him while he lived." Actors and the stage were not held in very high repute; fame came in succeeding centuries. Stratford was as isolated and out of touch as all other towns of this period. Ben Jonson knew him personally and paid him high tribute. Shakespeare's achievement was not in acquiring great knowledge by a good memory but to rival nature in creating men and women who thought and felt and acted and who were the victims of a supersubtle fate.

"Oh nature and Shakespeare; which of you imitated the other?"

Raleigh appeals to the esoteric. In reading him we are in communion with and feel the presence of the creator, who has given of himself to his characters. Foote, with his flair for the very soul of great literature, understood this. Borrow learnt languages without grammar from memory; Buckle read and mastered 20,000 books in 19 languages. Tolstoy learnt Greek in six weeks. Shakespeare could not have got his wonderful knowledge of humanity without mixing freely with all classes; he would learn geography in the taverns from the seamen in that cosmopolitan time and city. Mr. Kent's is best regarded as an essay in ironic humour comparable with Whately's "Historic Doubts Concerning Napoleon Bonaparte."—Yours, etc.,  
M. BARNARD.

### OBITUARY

I am sorry to have to report the death of Mr. Elliott Douglas of the Newcastle Branch. He had been a valuable member of N.S.S. in North-east England for many years. He was always ready to do whatever he could for the movement, no matter what it cost him, and many times he suffered for his outspoken opinions. He was cheerful and friendly, and often helped me in my pioneer work in North Shields and surrounding areas. He had been ill for quite a long time, and died in Preston Hospital. I conducted the cremation ceremony at Newcastle on Saturday, before a gathering of friends and relatives.

Our sympathy goes to his relatives and friends. They know full well the extent of their loss by his death.

J.T.B.

### LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

#### INDOOR

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Science Room, Mechanics' Institute).—Sunday, 6-45 p.m.: "Food and War." Mr. W. G. K. FORD, M.Sc.

Conway Discussion Circle (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Tuesday, October 18, 7 p.m.: "Rationalism in the 20th Century" (III), Mr. HECTOR HAWTON.

Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Co-op. Hall, Parliament Street).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: "Christianity and Atheism," Mr. HAROLD DAY (President, Bradford Branch N.S.S.).

Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society (Technical College, Shakespeare Street).—Sunday, 2-30 p.m.: "Is Religion Necessary?" Mr. HAROLD DAY (N.S.S.).

Rationalist Press Association (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Tuesday, October 18, 7 p.m.: "Reason and Belief in Social and Moral Behaviour." Third Lecture: "The Domination of Social Beliefs Over Individual Ideas," MAX GLUCKMAN, M.A., D.Phil.

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, 11 a.m.: "The End and the Means," Mr. ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON, M.A.

Wanstead (Wanstead House, George Green, E.11).—Friday, October 21, 8 p.m.: "The Medieval Myth," Mr. ALLAN SMITH.

West London Branch N.S.S. (Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.1).—Sunday, 7-15 p.m.: "Two Centuries of Secularism," Mr. ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON, M.A.

#### OUTDOOR

Kingston Branch N.S.S. (Castle Street).—Sunday, 7-30 p.m.: Mr. J. BARKER.

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Bombed site, St. Mary's Gate).—Every day, lunch-hour lectures, 1 p.m.: Messrs. BILLING and WOODCOCK.

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Platt Fields).—Sunday, 3 p.m.: Messrs. KAY, SMITH and BILLING. (Alexandra Park Gates).—Wednesday, 7 p.m.: Messrs. KAY, SMITH and BILLING.

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead Heath).—Sunday, 12 noon: Mr. L. EAVY.

Sheffield Branch N.S.S. (Barkers Pool).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: Mr. A. SAMMS.



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