

THE

# FREETHINKER

EDITED by CHAPMAN COHEN

— Founded 1881 —

VOL. LIII.—No 46

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1933

PRICE THREEPENCE

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

Views and Opinions.

Revising the Bible.

I COMMENCED last week's "Views" with the intention of dealing with one or two recent happenings in connexion with the teachings of the Bible, but never "got there" owing to want of space. The first thing I had wished to note was a quotation from a speech by Lord Raglan, delivered at the Friends' House, Boston Square, on October 26. He is reported as saying:—

We shall have to revise what is known as religious teaching since that at present involves holding up to the very young as patterns of morality such monsters of cruelty as Moses, Joshua, Samuel and David. Their atrocities, translated into plain English, exceed anything that was alleged against our enemies in the last war.

Now we may take it for granted that our yellow press would not have published this if it had not been what is considered "News" that is, if it were not something sufficiently startling to interest the newspaper reader. Also the fact of its being "news" is evidence that there are still large numbers of Christian believers whom it will surprise, if not shock. It comes as a sufficient answer to those who, like Dean Welldon, assure us that the attacks on the Bible by Bradlaugh are now out of date. They are out of date—for those who are up to date. But those who are up to date are not the majority of believers. And those breachers who are up to date usually take precious good care not to disturb the beliefs of those who still hold to the orthodox view of the Bible. In the press, or on the apologetic platform, they may express liberal views. In the pulpit, and when they are teaching children, nothing is done to disturb the view of the Bible which they say is out-of-date. Then the Bible is still, the Book of books; it is still God's word, to which the credulous and the foolish are sent for guidance.

Banning the Bible.

The next item concerns Dr. Alington, the new Dean of Durham. He has decided to ban certain parts of the Bible from the services of Durham Cathedral. Among other things he believes that Psalm 109 is unfit for a Christian service. This is where the writer prays God, with regard to his enemies,

Let his days be few and let another take his office.  
Let his children be fatherless and his wife a widow,  
let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg;  
let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places.  
Let the extortioner catch all that he hath,  
and let the strangers spoil his labour. Let there be none to extend mercy unto him; neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children.

There is plenty more of it, but I quite fail to see anything unchristian about it. The majority of Christians has always acted more faithfully in the spirit of that teaching than in any other.

But the plain statement that much of the Bible is unfit for public reading or individual guidance cannot be permitted to pass without protest. So the *Daily Express*—first in the field in the exploitation of any silly, sloppy sentiment—jumps to the defence of the Bible with a special article by Mr. James Fairlie, which is quite worthy of that other James who figures in the *Express* office. Naturally we get the good old sentimental slush that

The good Old Book is to-day, from the first word of Genesis to the last word of Revelations, the comfort of millions of men and women in every walk of life

which is equally true of beer, and might be a good argument for taking taxes off that commodity. The picture of millions of men and women who have irreplaceable comfort in the long lists of "Abraham begat Isaac, etc., etc.," in the moving incident of the bears devouring the wicked children, of the leprosy of Naaman, or the voyage of Jonah, and so forth, should be enough to disarm the critic. Readers may select scores of passages in which their special consolatory value leaps to the eye, from the talking serpent in Genesis to the lamb with seven horns and seven eyes that appears in Revelations.

But Mr. Fairlie asks—this time with that gleam of common sense which even Bibliolators cannot help displaying now and again—if we start bowdlerizing the Bible where are we to stop? He says that if we are to look at the Bible with modern eyes we shall have to eliminate the first two chapters of Genesis—I presume the two accounts of creation have brought comfort to millions also—if we wish to conform to modern standards of morality we shall have to wipe out the whole story of David (David's escapades with Bathsheba and his dancing naked before the Ark must have comforted millions of lonely souls); and then, having said something sensible, he hastens to make good—religiously good—by the following:—

The Bible cannot be edited, it is that complete unity which spells perfection. It is not a beauty reserved for erudite deans, niggling moralists, and floundering philosophers. Take one chapter from it and its divine music and its divine inspiration are destroyed. I say to the Dean of Durham, "Hands off the Bible."

That, I presume, is the up-to-date way of the modern journalist saying that every book, every chapter, every verse, every syllable, every punctuation mark of the Bible is inspired by Him Who sitteth on the throne, that its many contradictions show its divine unity, that its crude morality expresses the divine perfection, its bogus history and false science evidences the divine infallibility, and that he who takes away a letter from the Bible strikes a blow at the whole book—to say nothing of the old ladies of both sexes who find such comfort in it, and the journalists who get so much per column for testifying to the villainy of erudite deans and niggling moralists who dare to lay their impious hands upon its unapproachable beauty!

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#### Editing the Bible.

Mr. Fairlie is straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel. He reproves the Dean of Durham, and the floundering philosophers for doing what always has been done, and by every type of believer. It is only the editing of the Bible that has kept the Bible in its place among Christians, and without that editing it would have been reduced to its proper place among the world's record of mythology. There is not a single Christian sect that does not edit the Bible, and it is not honest editing such as serves to make a piece of writing intelligible by bringing out the writer's meaning, but dishonest editing belonging to that order of intellectual dishonesty that is tolerated in religion, and hardly anywhere else. This process of editing the Bible has always been with us. The very language of the English Bible has been edited, for no competent scholar would seriously claim that in our version we get the exact equivalent of the original. And when we have done with tricks of language we are met with a series of interpretations of the meaning of our text, varying from time to time, so that they may be brought into line with modern thought. To one generation the story of creation is literally true, then the "day" of the Bible becomes the analogue of a geologic period. Then the frank polytheism of the Bible becomes uncompromising monotheism, or intercourse with evil spirits becomes a moralizing discourse on the evil of bad companions. Even the rationalizing of the Bible by well-meaning teachers becomes in effect nothing more than an attempt to perpetuate the fetish book of the Churches under false pretences. So long as the Bible is what it is in this country, it is absurd to imagine that you can authoritatively teach it in schools without playing the game of the Churches. So long as it comes before them as a selected book of morals or poetry, so long we are in effect editing the Bible so as to commend it to the rising generation.

Now the only difference between this kind of editing and that which is suggested by the Dean of Durham, is that he has attempted his editing openly. And that kind of editing is not to be tolerated by many Christians. He says that certain parts of the Bible are bad and should be cut out. That is quite the wrong way to go to work. He should have eliminated what was objectionable and have said nothing about it. And if that had been done with the whole of the Bible, gradually, then one day we should have found that accepted as the real Bible; just as the Bible that now exists with advanced Christians is very different from the Bible that Christians once believed in. Mr.

Fairlie, more artful than the Dean, adopts this latter plan. He says, in effect, let us gradually introduce a new Bible by interpreting it freshly, but do not let us say anything about it. He favours the kind of editing that letters are often subjected to in newspaper offices. The kind he objects to is one that is straightforwardly and openly done.

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#### How to read the Bible.

The only person who can deal with the Bible honestly and profitably is the Freethinker. There is nothing about the Bible that is "sacred" to him, it is precisely on the level of the rest of the world's mythologies, whether these exist in the unwritten traditions of savages, or in the more sophisticated versions current among those who have learned the art of writing. Sir James Fraser in his two bulky volumes on *Folk-lore in the Old Testament* has shown well how this may be done; how one can take the beliefs of savages to throw light on the real origin and meaning of Old Testament stories, or use the Bible to illustrate the beliefs of savages. With greater daring he might take the New Testament and use it in exactly the same way. But one will have to wait for our scholars to muster up sufficient courage to do this. Sir James has said that he has been merely dragging the guns into position, and it has been left for the avowed Freethinker to fire them. So it is left for the Freethinker who cares more for truth than he does for social standing or comfort to point out that there is no possibility of understanding the Bible stories of creation, or of the origin of language, or the New Testament tales of virgin-born saviours, of casting out demons, of miraculous healing, and of crucified gods unless we trace them back to their unquestionable origin in primitive modes of thought. The true commentary on the Bible is not those provided by the "dignified clergy," whose real aim is to see by what trick of language, or distortion of meaning they can "rationalize" these primitive legends, but the now well known customs and beliefs of existing tribes of savages. The Bible is a sealed book to every one who accepts the Christian account of it. It is an open book to those who have an understanding of how its legends came into existence.

The Freethinker knows this much. The Bible is to him a case-book of religion, just as the mythologies of Greece, of Rome, of Egypt, of India, are case-books, and as the beliefs of savages are case-books that have not yet been reduced to writing. The Freethinker is an evolutionist and he recognizes that man's earliest attempts to understand the world around him are almost certain to be wrong, and have to be surrendered with even more trouble than they have been acquired. As material for the study of primitive thought the Bible is of value to all. But when we indulge in the foolish talk of "A divine unity that spells perfection," and apply that to the mass of gross superstitions which make up so much of the Bible, we are using language that belongs to the categories of either knavery or folly. It is, indeed, just that kind of talk that prevents the Bible taking its proper place in the world's mythological literature. It ruins its value for multitudes. No one to-day spends his time ridiculing or disparaging the mythology of Greece and Rome and Egypt. We take them and read them, and note in them a further stage of growth of man towards civilization, and the customary attempt to modify primitive beliefs so that they may enjoy, as religion, a little longer spell of existence. It is the trimming of "erudite Deans," the vagaries of professional apologists, and the calculated foolishness of time-serving journalists that serve to make the Bible an inevitable object of ridicule.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## See How they Run.

"These Psalms are no longer included in the Sunday selection lists at the majority of churches."

*Bishop Knox.*

"To what damned deeds religion urges men."

*Lucretius.*

In the Ages of Faith the Christian clergy did not tolerate criticism. In the eighteenth century Peter Annet, a schoolmaster, ventured to criticize the Biblical "King David" in "The History of Man after God's Own Heart," and he found theological criticism a very difficult and unprofitable proceeding. For publishing the *Free Inquirer*, he was brought before the King's Bench and sentenced to one month's imprisonment in Newgate, to stand twice in the pillory with a label "For Blasphemy," then to have a year's hard labour at Bridewell, and to find sureties for his good behaviour during the rest of his career. Annet was fortunate in getting off so lightly. Had he lived a few generations earlier, he would have been burned alive to make a Christian holiday. It is related that a woman, seeing Annet in the pillory, said: "Gracious! pilloried for blasphemy. Why, don't we all blaspheme every day?"

Since the brave, old schoolmaster was pilloried and imprisoned the Christian priests have lost much of their power, and to-day ecclesiastics have been forced to admit that the Freethinkers were right. Dr. Alington, the new Dean of Durham Cathedral, has just banned some of the "Psalms" from the services of Durham Cathedral. This ecclesiastic actually describes the censored passages as "quite clearly un-Christian." Nor is this a solitary note of defeatism from within the Christian camp. Lord Raglan, who caused a stir at the recent British Association meeting by challenging the validity of alleged Norman pedigrees, attacked the characters of some of the outstanding figures in the Christian Bible when addressing a Quaker meeting at Euston, N.W. He said:—

We shall have to revise what is known as religious teaching, since at present it involves holding up to the very young as patterns of morality such monsters of cruelty as Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and David, whose atrocities exceed anything alleged against our enemies in the last war.

These two outspoken admissions of surrender are not by any means isolated examples. Over ten years ago a special committee of the National Assembly of the Church of England (The State Church) recommended that certain omissions should be made in their Bible, and the deleted passages were described by the committee as "vindictive." The voting on this occasion for revision of the "Psalms" was forty-three against thirteen, and this decision meant the dismissal of "King David" from the position he has occupied in the Christian hierarchy for many centuries. The offensive passages included the following:—

The righteous shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.

Let his children be fatherless and his wife a widow.

Let his children be continually vagabonds and beg.

Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

It is worthy of note that the priests themselves have started to pull their own sacred book to pieces, and have begun with the Psalms. "King David" thus comes in for tardy, but none the less deserved, rebuke. For this particular David is now seen to be a thorough barbarian, and the champions of the Christian Bible are obliged to throw the old Oriental savage overboard in order to absolve their deity from the vices and crimes of his favourite. Let there be no mistake about this. As G. W. Foote said pointedly,

the career of David, "the man after God's own heart," shows what a remarkably black heart that Hebrew deity possessed.

This matter of editing and bowdlerizing the Christian Bible is a serious issue. We know where the priests are beginning with their belated censorship, but where are they going to end? Once you begin to delete the "unchristian" passages from this Bible you must go on and on, until precious little is left but the "Ten Commandments," and the so-called "Golden Rule." Even these alleged divine injunctions are open to sharp criticism, for half of the commandments are the quintessence of Priestcraft, and the "Golden Rule" was in existence before there was any Christianity. One of these alleged divine commandments is clumsily faked, for Protestants insert the injunction against graven images, and the Roman Catholics omit it, and split another command into two to make up the difference.

Where can the priests stop in their censorship? Are the outrageous curses of Deuteronomy and Jeremiah to be blue-pencilled? And what of Jael, who lured Sisera to her tent, and, under the guise of friendship, foully murdered him with a hammer? The conduct of the prophet Elisha is very questionable, and so very "unchristian." His servant took a bribe, and this is how he cursed him:—

The leprosy, therefore, of Naaman shall cleave unto thee and thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper white as snow.

Unchristian, indeed! Christ himself was not a Christian. Listen to the drastic curse passed by Jesus on Chorazin and Bethsaida:—

Woe unto thee Chorazin! Woe unto thee Bethsaida!—and thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell, for if the mighty works that had been done in thee had been done in Sodom it would have remained until this day.

There is a strong family likeness between the spirit of these fulsome threats and the full-blooded curses of the Old Testament. Indeed, Christ found nothing wrong with the Old Testament Scriptures. He quotes with approval the story of Jonah and the Whale, but he refers to the whale as a fish, whereas it is a mammal. To him, Gentiles are "dogs," and his enemies are to be consigned to a fiery hell of damnation. All this is definitely unchristian. Jesus is described as "the son of David," and David is now discovered to be no better than a gangster. O the divine comedy!

It is as plain as a pikestaff that the Freethinkers are slowly but surely forcing the Christian priests into a very dangerous position, and the clergy are in a very desperate plight. They are getting ashamed of so many parts of their own sacred scriptures. At present, it is true, the process is confined to the older books of their Bible, but before long the process of criticism will have to be extended to the Gospels themselves. When it is completed, this Bible of the Christian Religion will be a thing of shreds and patches. Then this very Oriental book will take its place on the library shelf beside the Sacred Books of other and older nations, and the clergy will have to look for honest employment.

We say "honest" employment in all seriousness. Priests are simply exploiters of suffering humanity. They do not want people to have more freedom; they wish them to have as little as possible. They do not desire them to have more happiness, because they regard happiness as a lure of the "Evil One," which must be stamped out. Their mentality is peculiar and offensive. They think that men should pay tithes, coal-royalties, ground-rents, and church-taxes, merely in order that they themselves should have a far more comfortable existence than their fellow-citizens. And

their pleasant theory is that each generation can be forced at school to regard them as sacred persons and a caste apart from other men.

Just as the germs of disease gain a hold only upon a body that is weakened, so does Priestcraft gain a hold only upon a society that is innocent and only partly-educated. The more highly accomplished nations have less use for priests than the more illiterate. The bare fact that the Republics of the world recognize the reactionary nature of Priestcraft is a sign of returning balance and sanity. Put priests into power, and there are no more heartless despots, none with a more cynical contempt for the common man.

MIMNERMUS.

## Catholic Merry England?

ROMAN CATHOLIC apologists are constantly girding at the history taught in our schools, colleges, and as presented to the general public. Mr. Hilaire Belloc, for instance, commences an article, with the observation: "I am never tired of repeating a certain truth: that history is on the side of Catholicism in England." (*The Universe*, October 20, 1933). The Catholics have a history of their own.

According to the Catholic account, the Middle Ages were the Golden Ages. Roman Catholicism, said Cobbett, in his *Protestant Reformation*, is "the religion under which England had been so great and happy for ages so numerous; that religion of charity and hospitality; that religion which had made the name of pauper unknown." And, he declared, that "the people were better off, better fed and clad, before the Reformation than they have ever been since." Dr. Coulton, who cites Cobbett, observes: "When Messrs. Chesterton and Belloc discourse on social history, they are generally quoting, consciously or unconsciously, directly or at second or third hand, from Cobbett."<sup>1</sup>

According to Catholic mythology, those were the "good old times," when England was "Merry England." Then the peasant and his master knelt at the altar, and, when the service was concluded, sported and danced on the village green, under the fatherly eye of the priest, and afterwards made merry and drank good English beer at the village Inn. There were no paupers, the necessities of the poor were provided for by the monasteries, and all was for the best, in the best of countries. Into this idyllic state of things, burst the monster, Henry VIII., who, coveting the wealth of the Church, engineered a quarrel with the poor innocent Pope, and with one sweep, confiscated the land and endowments of the Church, dispossessed the monks and priests, and appropriated their monasteries, lands and wealth. That is English history as taught in Catholic schools!

The ordinary Englishman, who has little time or opportunity, and less inclination, to study the subject, but has heard a good deal about Henry VIII. and his matrimonial adventures, is often inclined to give ear to this view of the case, especially when it is put forward with the assurance and dogmatism characteristic of the Catholic apologist. More especially is he inclined to side with him in his diatribes against the Puritanism and Calvinism which denounced, condemned, and suppressed, when it had the power, all sport and pleasure as sinful and irreligious. Then again, he has a dim recollection of tales about Robin Hood and his merry men, and jovial Friar Tuck and Maid Marian, which seem to fit in with the Catholic view.

A few years ago it would have been impossible for any ordinary person to test the question for himself. The evidence was there, but it lay in manuscripts written in archaic and obsolete English, in the muniment-rooms, Cathedral libraries and other places only open to accredited scholars. This is no longer the case. Dr. Coulton, who has made a life study of these medieval records, has in his very valuable work, *The Medieval Village*, and other works, provided a powerful antidote to the Catholic view, as we noted when the book was published in 1925. Since then the good work has been followed by Professor G. R. Owst, the Cambridge scholar, in his *Preaching in Medieval England*, published in 1926, and just recently, by a much larger volume of upwards of six hundred pages, entitled: *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England: A Neglected Chapter in the History of English Letters and of the English People*. (Cambridge University Press, 30s.) From this last work the reader will gain a better knowledge of the Middle Ages than from any work we are acquainted with. Most writers who deal with the Middle Ages, have axes to grind, and extract from the records only what suits their purpose. As Prof. Owst truly observes: "The typical text-book upon the subject seems often to bear little resemblance to the medieval library, as a student of the actual manuscripts would learn to know it." (p. viii.) And he instances the work of Prof. Ker. It has always seemed to us that Prof. Ker, in his work, *The Dark Ages*, was more concerned to hide the essential character of the Middle Ages than to reveal it. We have only one criticism to make on Prof. Owst's book; we think it is a pity that he did not follow Dr. Coulton's practice and render his quotations into Modern English. It is not every reader who can understand Medieval English.

The value of Prof. Owst's work consists in the fact that it is a compilation of an enormous number of quotations from the manuscript sermons actually preached during the Middle Ages, and dealing with all phases of life. This source of information has hitherto been quite neglected.

Take the case of providing for the poor. The preacher, Bromyard, complains that: "prelates and clergy who consume the goods of the Church that are owed to the poor upon illicit uses, namely, on prostitutes, actors and relations, to enrich them out of the patrimony of Christ," while they themselves "celebrate scarce once a year, or never at all." (p. 258.) Another preacher, Dr. John Waldeby, makes the same charge: "evil and lascivious priests," he declares, squander the alms of the faithful on foul pursuits, and "what they spend on prostitutes should be given to the poor." (p. 267.) Yet another preacher, the Franciscan Nicholas Philip, declares "most priests indulge more in sensual pleasure than do the burgesses," and "This chiefest of all, destroys the church, namely, that we see the laity are better than the clergy. For the layman would be horrified to spend his goods and his time as do the ecclesiastics on the lusts of the flesh and the vanities of the world." They greedily labour to heap together more wealth, continues Philip:—

For whom do they collect them, I ask? Certainly not to feed their parishioners, the poor and the weak, but to promote their own nephews, their sons and prostitutes; not to expend them upon study or on books, but to buy birds<sup>2</sup> and palfreys; not upon the apparel of their altars, but upon the clothing of their mistresses, whom many of them keep—not however, in hiding, but all too openly, as do other public fornicators, to the blaspheming of God, the scandal of the world, the contempt of their order, and their own infamy. (p. 269).

<sup>1</sup> G. G. Coulton: *The Medieval Village*. p. 417.

<sup>2</sup> A great deal of hunting was done with birds like the falcon,

If the poor depended for relief upon the priests and monks they came off very badly. And in any case the clergy were a monstrous burden, and had to be supported by the labour of the people.

These ancient records prove, up to the hilt, all the charges, and more, made by the opponents of the Church at the Reformation. Prof. Owst declares:—

None but those, indeed, like the present writer, who have wandered from manuscript to manuscript and library to library, only to be surfeited with such matter as our chapter has disclosed, can realize the force of the indictment. Orators, undoubtedly, have always exaggerated, and hyperbole is of the stuff and essence of satire. But when all the vesture of possible exaggeration has been stripped from off these sermons, the stark body of their naked charges stands out only the more grimly. Neither the fundamental truth nor the far-reaching influence of this clerical exposure will escape the historian's eye. He will understand, as never before, the depth of feeling which lies behind the denunciatory and satiric verse of the later Middle Ages in England. At all events he can no longer mistake it merely for the ravings of a few disgruntled heretics, or of a company of mischievous, ill-informed bards of the pavement. (pp. 284-5.)

Out of her own mouth the Church stands condemned. As our author further observes: "The modern reader may well be left wondering at the end wherein lies the peculiar crime of those Old Protestant Reformers, who saw in the Woman of Babylon, 'Mother of harlots and abominations of the Earth,' an unerring prophecy of the medieval Romish *Ecclesia*."

W. MANN.

(To be concluded.)

## Ingersoll.

*Selections from Ingersoll.* Edited by Ram Gopal. With Foreword by Har Bilas Sarada and Appreciation by G. R. Josyer.

"SELECTIONS FROM INGERSOLL," is an encyclopædia of Humanism, the quality of which is equalled by only one other book known to me—*Leaves of Grass*. There are certain writers so broad in their view-range, so philanthropic in sympathy, that it is impossible to imagine them as belonging to any sect; they are the common property of all humanity, and upon all humanity they shower their gifts. Hated only by puritans, pictists, sectarians and bigots, such rare writers are Rabelais, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Voltaire, Ingersoll, Whitman. I say here nothing about the quality of these men's work. What they have in common is the humanist attitude that embraces all humanity, with entire understanding of, and absolute forgiveness for, all that humanity's foibles and imperfections.

Of Ingersoll's genius there has never been any serious question; he was a natural wit, and a prose-poet of unequal though unique calibre. His faults—so utterly honest is he—are as obvious as his qualities. Both as writer and orator he has, indeed, only two defects, both the result of the largeness of his heart and brain—they are a tendency to redundancy in words, and a leaning towards sentimentality in expression. Having said this, let it be affirmed, with perfect truth, that Ingersoll is one of the wittiest, noblest, gentlest writers who ever covered a sheet with those invincible marks that somehow, in due season, change the course of world-history.

In this volume of over a thousand pages the reader will find all Ingersoll's views on life and its workings digested by an Indian Barrister. So full a life, such copious oratory, had necessarily to be very considerably repetitive; and this book actually gains in force and impressiveness by its omissions.

Ingersoll's message to mankind is a simple one; all great messages are ultimately simple. It is the muddle-minded who make mental complications. Word-spinning is the amusement and vocation of the moral spiders who try to lure unfortunate human flies into their fatal webs. To this species belong nearly all metaphysicians, who have been the jest of the humanwise from Lucian to Anatole France. Red tape is the adornment of the supermutt, who adores, for their own evil sakes, subdivisions, class-distinctions, grades, race-differences, and all the dreary pettifoggery wherewith the race of Green Baize Fools maintains itself at the cost of a bamboozled humanity.

All this mass-and-class business was nonsense to Ingersoll. His quarrel with religion—in all its disguises—was not so much because of its own native absurdity, as because of its snobbish and fatuous insistence upon its own exclusive claims to "save" mankind from the imaginary terrors of Bogeydom. Ingersoll's idea was that, out of some hundreds of creeds, each one claiming to be right at the expense of the rest, it was probable that all were wrong. His thesis has not been disproved; nor will it be, until one of the thousand religions produces a real live god to pronounce in its favour. That is why Humanism is immortal; and why the work of the great Humanists, Ingersoll, of course, included, always survives. With the progress of science, as Ingersoll is continually pointing out, gods tend to become extremely rare.

Like Burns, one of his idols, Ingersoll could never admit that the purpose of life was to "save" one's own personal "soul." To him such an idea was selfish, stupid egotism, calling itself religion. My own experience of life, if I may mention it here, tallies with Ingersoll's. I've never yet met a decent human who was worried about his "soul." Nor have I ever met a "soul"-merchant who was a decent, average human. "Personal religion," as the Victorians called it, is merely glorified egotism masquerading as "spirituality."

Continually this great and good writer laughs in his kindly, human way at the queer little bipeds who go strutting around, crowing about their "saviour" and their "salvation," and the rest of the meaningless jargon that has hypnotized uneducated Europe for centuries. Ingersoll's burning love for humanity burnt-up also, in its progress, the wretched rags wherewith cowering, untaught men strive to protect themselves from the assaults of their brutal, sentimental and silly deities—exaggerated simulacra of themselves. Those rags are the bloody, clinging, foul superstitions of the past; sodden in the dirty backwash of human slavishness and terror. Ingersoll spent his life in proving the inefficacy of such rags as a protection. He would have none of the god-idea. To Ingersoll religions were mental boundaries, separating man from man. He was unquestionably right. No one has yet explained satisfactorily what good, if any, religions do that could not be done immeasurably better without them. The very word "religion" is a Philistine term denoting a back-age mentality. And this, too, is Ingersoll's message. Jews, Negroes, Chinese, Americans, he ranked as equals, on the score of the common inheritance of red blood. If Europe is not to revert to barbarism, she will be forced to accept in its fullness Ingersoll's view. The alternatives before us, as foreseen and foretold by Ingersoll, are barbarism or humanism. Ingersoll insisted that science be harnessed in the service of all humanity. The correctness of his vision is manifest to-day to every thinking human. We are on the verge of chaos; only a humanism as wide and kindly as Ingersoll's can rescue us from the possibility of civilization dropping back into the abyss.

Ingersoll's creed was Agnosticism; his claim being that real knowledge of gods—if any—is impossible to mankind. To be ignorant of gods is usually to serve humanity faithfully and well; and herein Ingersoll assuredly did not fail.

There is not a page in this book that does not contain quotable and "final" epigrams. When Ingersoll writes of his heroes—Shakespeare, Burns, Lincoln, Whitman, Paine, Voltaire—he gives a picture of the real man, the man himself. He is incomparably more accurate psychologically than the scores of lumbering, overeducated University pedants, who clod-hop with heavy boots and muddy minds over the fields sown by the hand of genius. Ingersoll was not in the least erudite. He was wise instead, with the unerring, clairvoyant insight of genius. This I could prove hundreds of times by the mere process of transcribing his own words. But I shall resist almost entirely the temptation to quote. One quotation only do I permit myself:—

Men and women desire each other, and this desire is a condition of civilization, progress and happiness, and of everything of real value. But there is this profound difference in the sexes; in man this desire is the foundation of love, while in woman love is the foundation of this desire. Tolstoy seems to be a stranger to the heart of woman.

Here, for the discerning, is a whole treatise on evolutionary sociology in sixty-two words, with a penetrating and final thrust at the rankly-puritan Tolstoy thrown in. This concentrated, swift, unanswerable criticism is genuine. It is nothing else. And to Ingersoll was given by Nature the full, free, happy genius of Humanism. He is among the great hearts and great minds of humanity.

Those with hearts and brains in full working order will adore—"adore" is not here too strong a word—Ingersoll's fierce flings, cast in passionate scorn, at the hyper-sadist Calvin, founder of a new Terror; and the bleakly-stern Tolstoy, denier of Love and of happiness. To those who denied Humanity and Humanity's heritage of love Ingersoll was intellectually and emotionally merciless. He could not have hurt a fly; he was merciless to creeds and ideas that he knew to be noxious to humanity. He was a forerunner of the larger and happier and wiser race whereinto our present humanity is evolving. Physically, mentally and morally he was a great man; and he had no sort of use for any kind of gods.

The last thirty years of the nineteenth century saw a flood of Ingersoll pamphlets. A dozen publishers in England and Scotland turned out fresh pamphlets and new editions in scores. A complete set of every issue would run into six or seven hundred items; and possibly more. This noble book should bring about a revival of interest in the work of a man whose influence is to-day needed more greatly than it has ever been needed in the past.

Outwardly Ingersoll's life was uneventful. He served in the North-and-South War; he was absolutely happy domestically; and he was a very successful lawyer, whose advocacy was invariably on the right side. But there is no need here to repeat what has been so admirably said in the Ingersoll number of the *Freethinker*. A thousand pages of Ingersoll, and about Ingersoll, for six shillings is an "event" in publishing history. No reader of this journal can afford to miss this chance; it is a gift.

VICTOR B. NEUBURG.

He who knows only his own side of a question knows little of that.—*John Stuart Mill*.

## Acid Drops.

Roman Catholicism is very strong in Salford, and a part of that place has been marked by the City Council for slum clearance. The Roman Church has always been tolerant of slums, and its first thought connected with their abolition is, as one might expect, how is it going to affect the Roman Church? The City Council proposes to build new houses for those who are dispossessed by the tearing down of the disgraceful "homes" that now exist, but they do not propose to enrich the landowners of the present ground on which these delightful homes stand. Financially the question is thus between paying extravagant prices for land in the area in which these slums now exist, or building elsewhere at a more moderate rate. In passing, we may say that in our judgment the doing away with the slum type of person will be slow so long as whole bodies of slum-dwellers are transplanted *en bloc* from one place to another. They carry the slum tradition with them, and create another slum, on a little higher level. The quick and sensible manner of doing away with the slum is to *break up the aggregation of slum-dwellers*. In this way the force of a new environment of both dwelling and neighbour is brought into play.

But the Roman Church has raised strong objection to any removal of its present members which will tend to relieve them from the careful supervision of the priest. It desires them to be together, so that they can be watched, religiously, by both the priest and their fellow believers. So a series of meetings has been organized by the Roman Church, and resolutions passed that inasmuch as the Church has built Schools and Churches on this slum area, the slum-dwellers shall be rehoused on this area, otherwise if they are moved elsewhere they will return, so as to be near the Church and the Roman Catholic schools, and will create another over-crowded area.

But the Church is not prepared to pay for rebuilding new Churches and new Roman Catholic schools, so it calmly suggests that either the City Council or the Government shall subsidize the building of these new Churches and Schools, in order to permit the Roman Church to retain its flock, as free as possible from influences that would lead them away from their faith. That is the position in a nutshell, and we know enough of the Roman Church to say that in the absence of this endorsement of sectarian religious interests out of the public funds the slum clearance proposals will receive the opposition—open and secret—of that body. And as the threat of the Roman Catholic vote, on the whole an ignorant mass vote, will be used freely, it is essential that both City Councillors and parliamentary representatives should be watched pretty closely. Finally, we hope the lesson will be taken to heart by all genuine reformers that social reform will never be certain or safe until the influence of religion in politics is completely destroyed.

The position of the City of London Churches has long been a scandal, but they provide comfortable livings for a number of clergymen, and so they continue, in spite of the protests of one or two of the clergy themselves, every now and then. But the Rev. H. M. Martyn Sanders, of All Hallows-in-the-Wall thought he saw a way of getting a congregation. So he announced that he would undertake to receive and answer questions immediately after the Sunday morning service—the answers to be given from the pulpit. On November 5 the great day arrived, and Mr. Sanders found himself fronted by a raging multitude of four adults, eleven girl guides and three small children. Faced with this crowd of potential hecklers, Mr. Sanders without mounting the pulpit gave a children's address, and probably the four adults found nothing out of place in it—unless the parson carefully explained that it was meant for children.

There are forty-seven of these City Churches, and of this number, says Mr. Sanders, not more than three or four are needed. But what is to be done? If the

Churches are closed the parsons lose their job, and "a man must live." If they go into business and carry the ethics of the pulpit into the business world they might find themselves in a police court. If they go into politics and carry the mental ethics of the pulpit into that sphere they will make politics a poorer game than it is at present. And if they are out of a job they simply add to the unemployed. Pending some sound proposal, perhaps it is safer to conclude that they had better remain where they are—for the present.

We have all heard of the gravestone inscription running something like this:—

Here lies Josiah Baker,  
For sixty years a tombstone maker.  
His wife accepts the heavenly will,  
And carries on the business still,  
At Number 25, Rye Hill.  
ALL ORDERS RESPECTFULLY SOLICITED.

If the inscription should not exist in fact, the peculiar blend of piety and commercialism it exemplifies is quite common. Read on!

From the *Advertiser-Topic* of Petrolia (Canada), we take the following:—

Mr. and Mrs. S. T. Nader wish to thank all their friends for their prayers to Almighty God during illness of Mrs. Nader, also for their flowers, kindness and enquiries. They also wish to thank Dr. Donegal, Supervisor, and Staff, of the C.E.H. Hospital, especially those who attended Mrs. Nader, and the customers who patronized the store, and thus aided in paying expenses. We only stock quality goods, and will replace or refund money to any unsatisfied customer.

Written in the *Tablet* we find:—

The finer side of Bradlaugh's character shows him as a champion of the oppressed. He never spared himself when he spent his energies to help the helpless, and he laboured unceasingly for his fellow-men; but even what was best and brightest in his life is robbed of praise it would otherwise deserve by his bitterly militant Atheism.

In other words the Roman Catholic God cannot be circumvented by such things as "works," and "cauld morality." As an adjunct to the true belief they are harmless enough, but what will it avail a man if he is a useful citizen, and yet fails to get his fingers round the key to Heaven, which only belief in the correct Faith can ensure. It is this kind of moral rubbish, parading as "Theology," or "Divinity," which Bradlaugh attacked. He did not expect or wish for "praise" from anyone; praise from Roman Catholics would have disturbed him. His Atheistic crusade was based upon the firm belief that man's preoccupation with his soul was largely the cause of his acceptance of disgusting and unjust social conditions. Forces, which even the Holy Church itself is powerless to resist, are bringing the thoughtful to Bradlaugh's point of view. The timid and those who think sparingly are still concerning themselves with the state of their shrivelled little souls.

In *Gentlemen of the Press* (Murray), the author, Mr. Hutcheon, tells us that he once let the *Morning Post* go out to its readers with great disfiguring gashes showing on every copy, where the stereotyper's chisel had cut out a sensational statement found at the last moment to be untrue. There are still occasions when such an ornamentation would reflect credit on the editorship.

Our Christian contemporary, the *Daily Herald*, devotes nearly a column to the magnificent revival meeting conducted by General Higgins in a "non-stop" crusade—whatever that means. "Seven thousand bowed their heads," "a grey-haired figure with outflung arms pleading with, and sometimes challenging the Deity," "Women sobbed," men shouted, "Hallelujah and Yes, Lord," Commissioner Jeffreys "wrestled with the Lord," and so on. How beautiful it all is! How marvellous to think that in such a materialistic age as ours all the dear pious accompaniments to genuine religion can still be

seen if only one has faith and fervour enough. General Higgins' seven thousand knock Dr. Buchman's "Group" movement into a cocked hat. How many women sob at his meetings? How many men shout "Hallelujah and yes, Lord"? How many writhe on the floor possessed with the Holy Ghost? Does Dr. Buchman challenge the Deity with outflung arms? Would he dare? No, if it comes to the real thing, we put our money on General Higgins and the Salvation Army, and we are glad to say so does the *Daily Herald's* pious correspondent.

Two theological experts write to the *Daily Telegraph*, one from the Theological College at Wells, the other from the Jews College, London. Says the Christian, H. Crawshay Frost, of course the Old Testament reeks of militarism in many places, but the New Testament contains only pacifism. Says the Jew, Dr. Samuel Daiches, what's wrong with the Cursing Psalms anyhow? "They are not the curses of the Psalmist against his enemies, but the curses of the enemies against the Psalmist." Where would the world be without the guidance of our theologians?

First, Mr. Frost. All the passages where Jesus apparently approved of the use of the sword he tells us, are metaphorical; where he disapproved, they are literal. Mr. Frost says he knows this, but Mr. Frost knows no more of what Jesus really meant than the man who says the opposite. The counsel, for instance, of Jesus in favour of bodily mutilation Mr. Frost considers is obviously "figurative." But Origen did not think so, and thousands of the early faithful did not think so. Jesus, of course always means, nowadays, the up-to-date sensible thing. All the same if Jesus were in any sense God, and a prophet, when he said he came not to bring peace but a sword, and to divide families and bring discord, there is everything to be said in favour of taking him literally. For this is exactly what the acceptance of Christianity has brought about.

Next, the Jew. This professor of Biblical Exegesis thinks that the reading of Psalm 109 to-day is "by no means superfluous, and may indeed fulfil a high moral purpose." The Psalmist did not like these curses, we are told, he just chronicled them so as to impress upon our minds what was really wicked. No unassisted layman could possibly get this significance out of the 109th Psalm. But the case for the thorough-paced blackguardism of David, the man after God's Own Heart, does not rest only on this bout of cursing. It is in harmony with his divinely inspired biography.

The last dying words of David showed his reaction to enemy curses, and show how much he was "pained and tortured by the evil thoughts of his wicked enemies."

Behold, thou hast with thee, Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim: but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I swore to him by the Lord, saying I will not put thee to death with the sword.

Now therefore hold him not guiltless; for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him, but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood.

David having tricked his Maker, by passing on these instructions to Solomon, then slept with his fathers. We congratulate Dr. Daiches on his loyalty to David. Hero-worship is quite an amiable weakness, and we would not for worlds have all signs of it disappear from the face of the earth.

Of course, no one outside a theological seminary believes, nowadays, that David was the "Psalmist," and for all we know, the exigencies of biblical exegesis may have driven Dr. Daiches to the position that the Psalms were written by some other litterateur. This does not, however, relieve him of the difficulty of finding "high purpose" in 1 Kings ii. 6-9, but we are quite sure that he, or any theologian worth his salt, will be delighted at this opportunity of showing their skill.

The interpretations put upon the Psalms by Arthur Wragge in his book of drawings *Psalms for Modern Life* (Selwyn and Blount) possess just as much authority as those issuing from theological seminaries, and are certainly more useful and stimulating. From what we read these interpretations are not more fanciful than those of the Professors of Biblical Exegesis. We commend Mr. Wragge's drawing from the text "How shall we sing the Lord's Song in a Strange land?" It consists of song-birds in cages.

The *Worthing Herald* tells us :—

He is one of the many men who saw active service in Europe during the war, and on DEMOLITION prepared for ordination.

Would that many others had procrastinated so long.

Comparisons are sometimes odious, and sometimes dangerous. The Rev. Davidson Brown says that if one compares the moral, social and political condition of England to-day with that which obtained when Victoria began to reign, one will be amazed at the improvement that has taken place. That may be true. Another amazing fact is that the improvement coincides with a progressive and widespread neglect of religion and the Churches. Another amazing fact is that deplorable moral, social and political conditions of England in the past have often coincided with almost universal belief in the Christian religion.

Cardinal Bourne opened the rooth Catholic elementary school in London the other day. No difficulty seems to have been encountered in building them as far as the money needed was concerned. Something like £100,000 was collected by four priests, money as usual being plentiful in the cause of religion. But we wish to point out that if Freethinkers think they have only to sit back and hold on tight and say "nowt" to bring us sweeping victories against "reaction," they are living in a fool's paradise. The Roman Catholic Church is one of the finest organizations in the world, and it leaves nothing to chance. The policy of building schools and of training the kiddies to Roman Catholicism brings life-long believers to the fold who in turn do likewise. "Catch 'em young," is the motto and it *pays*. The moral for Freethinkers is obvious. Eternal vigilance and *make other Freethinkers*.

From the *Outspan*, South Africa, we read from the pen of Max Drennan "Neither Job nor Revelations can I abide." Mr. Drennan is Emeritus Professor of English at the Rand University. Had he been a humble bible-reader of the Douglas type, the news of how Job was smitten by the Lord with grievous boils from head to foot would have been as "consoling" to him as it, no doubt, was to both Mr. and Mrs. Job.

We rather like all these parsonic remarks about the tremendous challenge and opportunity which to-day face the Churches. In no other way could such wide publicity be given to the fact that the churches and chapels and parsons are being neglected, and that there is a widespread growth of irreligion or indifference to religion and the churches by the vast majority of people. It is really and truly noble of the parsons to advertise their failure to keep the minds of the masses bemused with the Christian superstition.

The *Daily Telegraph* tells us that there was another "impressive" scene at Lourdes on Sunday last, when 10,000 soldiers of the Great War fell on their knees before the grotto of the Virgin :—

They had come together for thanksgiving and intercession from all parts of France. Some of the pilgrims had come scatheless through the war, and were merely fulfilling a vow taken on the battlefield. The great majority, however, were sufferers from gas or shell-shock, seeking relief for shattered nerves or weakened lungs. Some were beyond any aid that Lourdes can render.

Pontifical Mass, this journal goes on to say, was celebrated for the soldier pilgrims with "great pomp."

Great Pomp!!! The American advertising booster still lags far behind the Vicar of Christ.

Says The Right-Honourable J. H. Thomas, Secretary of State for the Colonies, when Richards rides his 24<sup>th</sup> winner :—

I can say I have never felt more sincerely in congratulating a man upon an achievement.

Mr. Thomas does know what really matters.

"Men do not expect a high standard of life from an Atheist," writes the Rev. R. O. A. Jones in the *Worsborough Dale Parish Magazine*. That is, the men who listen to, and humbly believe, the Rev. R. O. A. Jones and confreres. Those who listen to Secular Lecturers, will be told that no special pre-eminence in vice (or virtue), is claimed for Atheists. Statistics are unavailable and competition in self-glorification unwholesome.

From the column entitled "Court and Society," in the *Sunday Times*, we take the following :—

At the sherry party which followed, Lady Dalrymple-Champneys had the happy thought of having red crosses on all the food, even the little wooden sticks which speared the sausages being decorated with this emblem in red satin ribbon.

Pioneers, O Pioneers!

## Fifty Years Ago.

### ACID DROPS.

WHILE the public school at Williamston (N.C.) was in session, Abner Esson, a lunatic, broke down the door, and, armed with a club, entered. He believed that he had been doomed to eternal torment unless he offered a sacrifice of 200 children; and calculated on killing twenty-eight in the schoolroom. He at once began the attempt, and girls were felled right and left by his club. He was surrounded by the boys and their teacher, and was finally overpowered after he had been knocked senseless. Some of the girls were painfully, but none, it is believed, were fatally hurt.

The Rev. R. H. Dickson is as brutal as his profession could make him. A poor old man, aged 62, applied to the Sheppey Board of Guardians for relief. He was an agricultural labourer, but unable to do much work; his wife earned a trifle every week—just enough to pay rent. The Rev. Dickson suggested that an order for the house be offered. Hearing that the poor old couple had a little furniture, the rev. gentleman added that they were not destitute. When he resided in Lancashire no relief was allowed so long as there was a chair in the house. Replying to a brother guardian, he said he would not give a man a loaf of bread as long as he had a chair to sit upon. Much to the disgust of Dickson, 2s. 6d. per week was granted to the applicant. According to the "Clergy List," this minister of God has an income of £1,724. And this is the "guardian" who sought to deny the broken-down agricultural labourer, upwards of three score years of age, the relief of half-a-crown a week!

James Duncan, of Hanover Street, Glasgow, revives the old fallacy of the founding of benevolent institutions by Christianity. With true national cuteness he inserts the qualifying adjective "modern." It is humanity, not Christianity, that has founded the hospitals. Their foundation has been due to the upgrowth of man's sympathy for man, long crushed under the fatal despotism of man's belief in God. When benevolent institutions are found to be synchronous with the rise of the earth-creed and the decay of the heaven-creed it is easy to see to which belief they are due. Well may James Duncan talk of "modern Christianity!" Does he know the date of the forming of the first hospital in Europe? That hospital, known as Les Invalides in Paris was founded in 1671. More than sixteen centuries elapsed after the death of the founder of Christian religion ere the humanity of the race triumphed over the horrible creed.

The "Freethinker," November 11, 1883.



# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL:

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A LONE WELLWISHER (Jaggan, North Queensland).—Thanks for cuttings. We like our numerous Australian friends to think that we do not neglect them.

P. J. M.—Thanks for your usual batch of cuttings.

T. BENNET.—You are under a misapprehension. No political programme has been adopted by the Conference.

A. COHEN.—We agree with you that, granting the Christian hypothesis, there is nothing unreasonable in challenging God to prove his existence by doing something—whether to strike an unbeliever dead or to send a better harvest to make no substantial difference. What annoys the believer is to have his bluff called by any real test being applied. In Bradlaugh's case the watch story was revived for the express purpose of doing him political injury.

J. MASON.—There is nothing wrong with your letter, except the fact that it puts a point of view which the average newspaper dare not publish for fear of offending its Christian readers. The only way by which holders of unpopular opinions can get a fair show in the press is by making liberal opinion among the general public more prominent than it is.

J. P. MAY.—The removal of these inhibitions is very common, and it occurs in all medical practice. But the doctor is not stupid enough to put it down to the power of Jesus. That game is left to professional, or self-seeking believers. Thanks for cutting.

W. H. SISSONS.—Mr. Cohen may be able to find a date for Bolton early in the New Year.

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

The Secular Society, Limited Office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

The National Secular Society's Office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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

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

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—

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

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

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.

On Sunday next (November 19) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Central Hall, Derby, on "Things Christians Ought to know." It is some years since Mr. Cohen was in Derby, and a good audience is expected. Admission is free, but there will be a number of reserved seats at one shilling each. Chair will be taken at 7 o'clock.

Mr. Cohen is debating with Mr. Arnold Lunn, in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, on the evening of Tuesday, November 21. The subject for discussion is "Does Science Discredit the Idea of God?" and the debate will be opened by Mr. Cohen. Admission will be sixpence or one shilling, tickets to be obtained at this office. But we do not think many tickets are now available. We warned our readers to be in time if they wished to secure tickets,

and they will have only to thank their own delay if they are unable to get them.

Another warning we gave was with regard to the six-shilling Ingersoll. This is the most wonderful six-shillings worth ever offered to Freethinkers. At the time of writing there are less than forty copies available, and we are uncertain whether we can get more, or if we can, how many. It is certain that the work cannot be reprinted at that price. We are trying to get a fresh supply, but will have to wait two or three weeks to know if that is possible.

Another addition has been made to the hundreds of thousands of books on Jesus—*The Original Jesus*, by Otto Borchert. The author, it seems, became very unsettled after reading Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, and this is his reply to that famous work. It seems that the story of Jesus as depicted in the Gospels must be true because it is so entirely incredible—"to the Jews a stumbling-block; to the Greeks foolishness." No one could possibly have invented a Jesus doing such ridiculous things as Jesus did; therefore the whole story must be true!

This delightful method of settling the authenticity and credibility of the Gospel story is not new. It was a favourite method of one of the Church Fathers, "the sillier the story, the more I believe it," and it could be applied so very effectively to the *Arabian Nights*. The story of Aladdin must be true because no one could possibly have invented his wonderful lamp; Sinbad's voyages all actually happened, because no one could possibly have believed in them—and so on. Dr. Borchert's book is, however, only one more example of the desperate attempts being made by Christians to save their absurd religion. Give up sense, reason, humour, but for heaven's sake, don't give up Jesus! But he is being given up for all that.

Mr. Cohen is busy preparing for publication in book-form, his two essays on Bradlaugh and Ingersoll. The essays will be enlarged, and will make a volume of from 200 to 250 pages. There will also be extra illustrations. Both essays have been very warmly greeted by both members of the Freethought Party and by numbers outside the movement. The essay on Ingersoll has led to something like a revival of interest in Ingersoll, and we hope that the book will prove useful from many points of view. It is hoped to have the book on sale by December 15. Readers of this paper might think of it as a Christmas or New Year's present to a Christian friend. It forms an introduction to Freethought that might be even more effective with them than a direct attack on their religious beliefs.

We are glad to learn that Mr. McLaren had a very good audience at Stockport on Sunday last. This was Mr. McLaren's first visit to Stockport, and we are not all surprised that his lecture was received with the greatest appreciation.

A lady reader of the *Freethinker*, and member of the N.S.S. is interested in the formation of a Secular Sunday Circle in the Finchley district for children between five and twelve years of age. At present it is just an idea, and parents and others willing to assist in its formation are invited to communicate by post, stating in what way they could assist, to Miss V. I. Mitchell, 57 Dollis Road, Church End, Finchley, N.3.

Birmingham Freethinkers are reminded that Mr. R. H. Rosetti speaks in the Bristol Street Council Schools to-day (November 12) at 7 p.m., on "Christianity and the Crisis." The subject is of general interest and importance, and local saints should take full advantage of the opportunity for introducing friends from different camps. Admission is free, and with questions and discussion, there is every prospect of an interesting evening.

Mr. E. C. Saphin will speak twice to-day (November 12) in the Phoenix Theatre, Burnley, on behalf of the East Lancashire Rationalist Association. At 2.45, the subject will be "What Christianity has done for Man," and at 7 o'clock, "What Man can do for Christianity." Mr. J. Clayton, of Burnley, will be in the chair. It is Mr. Saphin's first visit to Burnley, and we can assure him of a warm welcome from the local saints, and the local saints can be assured of two interesting lectures.

The West Ham Branch will hold a Social in the Earlham Hall, Earlham Grove, Forest Gate, on Saturday, November 25, and all local saints and their friends are invited. The proceedings will commence at 6.30 p.m., and an enjoyable evening of dancing, games, and musical items is promised. Admission is free. Members of the Branch will be present to welcome visitors from other Branches of the N.S.S.

## Annie Besant and Religion.

(Continued from page 723.)

### II.

Of course, it was not to be expected that, in one bound, Mrs Besant could give up all that hitherto she had held sacred. She defended Jesus in his humanity, as a man, "human child of human parents." She believed "his code of morality stands unrivalled"—as did so many other and greater Freethinkers before her. She believed all the "human" stories told of Jesus in the Gospels so long as they proved this, and like other disbelievers in the divinity of Jesus, carefully chose nearly everything that redounded to his credit, and rejected those things which did not, for she was still a Theist.

Looking through this first essay, I cannot but see how it foreshadowed almost all she wrote afterwards—not, of course, in matter, but in manner.

No doubts at the time of writing anything assailed her that she might be mistaken in this or that; she always wrote with a cocksureness which admitted no contrary opinion. And it was only after writing this essay on the Deity of Jesus that she began to pay a little more attention to the Bible itself, the source, not only of the miracles which she was obliged to give up, but also of the beautiful stories of Jesus' "unwavering love of truth, his patience with doubters" (which contradicted what she had already said about his dealings with opponents) "his personal purity, his hatred of evil," and so on.

Thus she discovered there were formidable discrepancies between the first three gospels and the fourth. They had been dealt with by numbers of Christian theologians, more or less honestly, more or less jesuitically. They had certainly been dealt with far more drastically by Freethinkers, but Mrs Besant was hardly to know that. But in the *Comparison Between the Fourth Gospel and the Three Synoptics* will be found a very able resumé of the arguments against John put together with great skill. It is a pamphlet that could still be used with deadly effect even against modern liberal "harmonizers."

Mrs. Besant's progress as a Freethinker can be traced in the first volume of her collected essays, published in 1877, called *My Path to Atheism*. She dedicated the volume to Thomas Scott, "whose name is honoured and revered wherever Freethought has spread." After Christianity she adopted a vague sort of Theism which she was unable definitely to understand, and finally, after she met Charles Bradlaugh, she found herself a complete Atheist.

It was inevitable that she should meet Bradlaugh. It would have been impossible then for anyone with

heterodox views not to have come across the famous "Iconoclast," the fearless lecturer and debater, whose Atheism was clearly expressed and proudly advocated all over England.

Her break with her husband was complete as far as she was concerned, and the account of her determination to earn her own living is pathetic. She became a governess and a cook and a housemaid—though her cooking "was better than her sweeping." She afterwards lived with her mother, whose death later was a very severe shock. Gradually, however, came the old longing to express her religious—or rather, her anti-religious—views, and so in her wanderings she met Moncure Conway, that great and splendid Freethinker whose way out of orthodoxy was not unlike her own. It was he who advised her to hear Bradlaugh, "the finest speaker of Saxon English I have ever heard, except perhaps John Bright."

Mrs. Besant, before doing so, read Mansel's *Bampton Lectures*, and she says, "found in them much to provoke doubt, nothing to induce faith." She considered Mansel's arguments on God as Infinite "thoroughly Atheistic," and, it may be added, so did many members of the Church. Fortunately for Christianity Mansel was not likely to be read by the average Christian; though, if he had been read, it is doubtful whether he would have been understood. She felt herself then capable of writing a pamphlet on the nature and existence of God, which Scott thought she was bound to do one day. As it happened, she did not publish her essay until after she had read Bradlaugh's two pamphlets, *A Plea for Atheism*, and *Is there a God?* and those who knew Bradlaugh's position, his method of expression and advocacy, and who will then compare Mrs. Besant's *On the Nature and Existence of God*, will see how thoroughly she had mastered Bradlaugh, and how marvellously well she had reproduced his ideas.

To give one very small example. Throughout his career Bradlaugh insisted on defining the terms he used. At first, it is true, he was fond of giving Spinoza's Propositions and Axioms, slightly modified perhaps. Later, however, he gave his own definitions and asked his opponent to accept them or to show where they failed as definitions or in thought. Here is a little extract from the above pamphlet:—

One fault, however, I am anxious to avoid, and that is the fault of ambiguity. The orthodox and the freethinking alike do a good deal of useless fighting from sheer misunderstanding of each other's standpoint in the controversy. It appears then to be indispensable in the prosecution of the following enquiry that the meaning of the terms used should be unmistakably distinct. I begin, therefore, by defining the technical forms of expression to be employed in my argument; the definitions may be good or bad, that is not material; all that is needed is that the sense in which the various terms are used should be clearly understood.

Could anything be more like Bradlaugh—not, of course, in terseness, which was one of his great characteristics, but in thought? This does not mean that nobody had ever thought before Bradlaugh of defining terms, for that is of the very essence of philosophy. But it does show how, directly she came under his influence she, perhaps quite unconsciously, began to assimilate his ideas and reproduce them—again perhaps quite unconsciously—as her own.

Of course, her pamphlet gave her own ideas as well, and she analyses with acuteness Mansel, with whom she brackets Bradlaugh, as she is "forced to confess that the arguments used by the one to prove the endless absurdities into which we fall when we try to comprehend the nature of God, are exactly the same arguments that are used by the other to prove that God, as

believed in by the orthodox, cannot exist." Through twenty-six pages Mrs. Besant gives closely-reasoned arguments against the orthodox ideas of Deity, bringing in all the objections thought of by herself as well as criticisms of the various "proofs" insisted upon by the pious. She concludes:—

We know nothing beyond Nature; we judge of the future by the present and the past; we are content to work now and let the work to come wait until it appears as the work to do; we find that our faculties are sufficient for fulfilling the tasks within our reach, and we cannot waste time and strength gazing into impenetrable darkness. We must needs fight against superstitions, because they hinder the advancement of the race, but we will not fall into the error of opponents and try to define the Undefinable.

It is the Gospel of Secularism, and no one at that time felt its truth more than Annie Besant. Had she been consistent, had she remembered these words, she could never have become a Theosophist. But it is doubtful whether she really understood them, whether she was not just reproducing in her slick way the ideas she heard around her, with that easy facility which distinguished all the thought and movements in which at any given moment she was interested.

H. CUTNER.

(To be continued.)

## England's Puritan Sunday.

THAT we remain the unreflecting slaves of tradition the persistence of the British Sunday proves. Although less dismal than that of Scotland, the first day of the week in England, and more so in Wales, still retains the doleful impress of a Puritan past.

The Jewish Sabbath is primarily responsible for what was, for so many generations, a day of unrelieved gloom. In ancient Babylon the seventh day of the month was sacred to the gods, and seemingly from this source the ancient Israelites derived their day of rest. The institution of the Sabbath is traditionally attributed to Moses, who acted as Jahveh's interpreter. Throughout the period covered by the *Book of Genesis* there occurs no reference to its existence. But during the Exile, and after the Captivity, its observance became obligatory. The penalty of its profanation became death (Num. xv. 32-36). In the age of Nehemiah no business could be transacted, while during the Maccabean period devout Jews even refused to act in self-defence on the holy day.

In the New Testament the strict Pharisees are portrayed as sternly censuring Jesus for performing miraculous cures on the Sabbath, as even physicians, save in critical illnesses, were forbidden to aid the sick. The statement assigned to Christ: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath," was received by strait-laced Jews with horrified amazement.

When Constantine established Christianity as the State religion, the Pagan festival long dedicated to the sun, replaced the Jewish Sabbath (Saturday) as a time of rest and special religious devotion, and Sunday was henceforth observed as a sacred institution throughout Catholic Europe.

As a rule, the early Protestant leaders favoured the relaxation of strict Sunday observance, an observance which in Catholic times had been widely disregarded. But when the Sabbatarian party obtained power in later England the Puritans appealed to the Jewish Scriptures in justification of their penal enactments against all who traded, travelled or dared to enjoy themselves on a day they deemed sacred to sermons, psalm-singing, praise and prayer.

The Act of Uniformity of Edward VI. (1552) made

Sunday attendance at Church services compulsory, for there were many even then to whom priestly ministrations were distasteful. Still, when the service was over, the common people spent the remainder of the day in sports and pastimes. Similar conditions prevailed during the succeeding Catholic reaction under Mary. It was with the accession of Elizabeth that the Puritans actively agitated for a stricter observance of Sunday.

Froude tells us that Elizabeth regarded the speculations of the theologians as so many cobwebs to the moon. A polite nothingarian, the Queen decided to steer a middle course between the Protestant and Catholic extremists. So long as her subjects attended their parish church on Sunday and acknowledged the royal supremacy, she and her advisers were indifferent to the manner in which they spent the rest of the day.

In 1569 Elizabeth granted a licence to one Powlter to provide Sunday entertainments. In 1585 Parliament passed a Bill for "the better observance of Sunday," but the Queen refused her assent. Again, in 1601, the Commons passed a measure prohibiting Sunday fairs and markets, but it never reached the Statute Book.

A contemporary diary notes a state progress of Elizabeth on Sunday. Also, Sunday plays, jousts and May Games were performed before the Queen and Court at various dates.

The Anglican Church generally supported the retention of Sunday sports and recreations, but the Puritanical section was determined on their abolition. In 1595 Nicholas Bound's *True Doctrine of the Sabbath* appeared. Then, as now, the cry of Sunday labour was employed as a pretext for depriving the people of a rational Sunday. Most men laboured in their trades or professions from Monday morning till Saturday night. For the State had already deprived the public of many of the ancient holidays set aside by the Catholic Church for general enjoyment.

Bound's book exercised considerable influence, and his contentions were mainly these: Sunday observance is required by God, for although the ritual of the old Hebrew dispensation is now obsolete, Jehovah's command to observe the Sabbath remains. All mundane matters must be dismissed from men's minds. Mental and physical toil are alike forbidden, although Bound graciously conceded the right to cook one's Sunday meals, and he sensibly disallowed the ringing of more than one church bell each day. His opponents, however, pointed to a striking inconsistency in his claims, inasmuch that, while generally prohibiting Sunday banquets and wedding festivities, he, as Whitaker admits in his *Sunday in Tudor and Stuart Times*, "relaxed his ban in favour of the nobility and gentlemen of quality."

Elizabeth's ministers strove to suppress Bound's book, and thereby succeeded in increasing its circulation and influence. Perhaps Jeremy Collier, when later reviewing the activities of Bound and his associates, justly concluded that: "The Puritans having miscarried in their open attacks upon the Church, endeavoured to carry on their designs more under covert. Their magnifying of the Sabbath-Day, as they call Sunday, was a serviceable expedient for this purpose." For we must remember that the High Anglicans were opposed to the kill-joy brigade.

Under James I., the Puritans, both within and without Parliament, became turbulent. They probably surmised that a Scottish prince would prove more plastic than the inflexible Elizabeth. But James, with all his faults, was no lover of pious misery. He was only too pleased to escape from the land of John Knox to a kingdom that had been liberalized by the humanist dramatists of his predecessor's reign.

To the disgust of the Puritans James issued his *Declaration of Sports* in 1618. This document proclaims the king's determination to maintain the old-time customs. Referring to his recent royal progress through Lancashire, then, as now, largely Catholic in sympathy, James states: "Whereas we did justly in our progress, rebuke some Puritans and precise people, and took order that the like unlawful carriage should not be used by any of them hereafter, in the prohibiting and unlawfully punishing of our Good People for using their lawful Recreations and honest exercises on Sundays and other Holy Days, after the afternoon sermon or service: we now find that two sorts of people wherewith that country is much infested (we mean Papists and Puritans) have maliciously traduced and calumniated those our just and honourable proceedings."

The Proclamation also specifies the sports and pastimes open to the people. The King's desire is that the public be not disturbed from any lawful amusement "such as dancing, either men or women, archery for men, leaping, vaulting, or any such harmless recreation, nor from having of May Games, Whitsun ales and Morris dances, and the setting up of May-poles and other sports therewith used."

Charles I. was personally opposed to Puritanism, and the drab and dreary Sunday which lingered to the middle of the nineteenth century was only established with the triumph of his antagonists. When in power the Puritans closed the theatres, abolished the festivals of Easter, Whitsun and Christmas, for they denounced them as Pagan or Popish devices, and banned every game or recreation likely to make people happy.

With the Restoration Charles II. was pestered by the Puritans to make the public moral, by Act of Parliament. Several abortive Bills were introduced to penalize those who desecrated the so-called Sabbath. In 1663 a Proclamation enjoined a stricter observance of Sunday. At last, in 1676, a measure passed the two Houses "for the better observance of the Lord's Day," and immediately received the royal assent. Under this reactionary Act many anomalies and injustices have been perpetuated, and its drastic amendment or repeal has long been a crying necessity.

In conclusion, mention may be made of the mischievous measure passed into law in the reign of George III. Under this Statute any place of amusement or even instruction to which the public may obtain admission on Sunday by payment or by tickets previously paid for is a disorderly house within the meaning of the Act.

T. F. PALMER.

## Colenso's Jubilee.

(Concluded from page 717.)

It is easy to see at this time of day that Colenso's confession that he was prompted to his work of biblical criticism by the cogent questionings of a Zulu must have been peculiarly distasteful to his fellow countrymen, adding substantially, in their eyes, to the magnitude of his offence. It was plain that no really discreet person would have found it necessary to mention such an irrelevant fact. The Englishman's belief in the inferiority of the races other than white was a *satisfying* tenet, an article of faith every whit as important as the details of their religious belief. For an English Bishop to be so unsophisticated as to allow a black savage to lay even a timid finger on the white man's religion, and so deliver a hurtful blow to his pride in his whiteness, was almost incredible. Colour, however, to Colenso, counted for just nothing. He kept different things separate, and a black man's ques-

tion called for an answer just as much as a white man's question. He also believed that equal justice should be meted out to men irrespective of their colour. Gentlemen in England believed this in an academic sense; they certainly boasted too much horse-sense to allow any such abstraction in any way to affect the divine right of the Englishman to colonize the world; and if colonization did not mean the eventual displacement on the face of the earth of all the niggers and dagos that were floating around, well, then they had simply "no use for it."

Colenso's view was that the colonizer's method of contribution towards civilization was by the preservation of whatever was good in the customs and institution of the native races and by the adaptation or abolition of the grosser elements therein in careful political stages. The process was adopted primarily for the good of the native race; he would have admitted that the colonizer also stood to gain—that was to be his reward for work well done—but that any considerable body of responsible people in England aimed deliberately at the conquest and subjection of native races, and the confiscation of their land and resources—using all the while the jargon of a lofty religious ethic—he did not believe. His ideas were, however, to undergo modification.

It is impracticable to trace here all the work that Colenso did in behalf of the native races in South Africa. Opposed to him, and what rendered his efforts largely nugatory, were two powerful factors. One, the deep-seated prejudices of his countrymen that it was their mission to inherit the earth by divine right, and that in the encompassing of that end, it was foolish to bother about means. The other, the fear, amounting to panic, of the colonists—a symptom common to all colonization—on finding themselves but 17,000 whites amongst 300,000 natives. We can, however, usefully outline his first work of this description, which can be taken as typical, on behalf of the chief of the Ama Lhubi tribe, Langalibalele. This tribe, 9,000 all told, had been placed in a location under the Drakensberg Mountains, and charged with defending the white farmers from the raids of Bushmen, a duty they had always faithfully fulfilled. When the Kimberley Diamond Mines started working, the Natalians took members of their tribe to help them work the mines, and they were paid by the mine-owners *with guns instead of money*. When the natives returned to Natal, the possession of firearms was made a grievance by the authorities, and, wherever possible, the guns were taken from them; and although they represented the men's wages for hard and honest work, no payment was made for them. Langa was summoned to Maritzburg to explain the possession of "unregistered arms." Such a summons had been issued only twice to a native chief during the previous twenty years; in each case it had been followed by the outlawry of the chief and the "eating up" of the tribe. Fresh in Langa's mind, as well, was a particularly discreditable case of breach of faith perpetrated by John Shepstone, the brother of the Secretary for Native Affairs. He was convinced that obedience to the command meant the forfeiture of his life. In his panic he determined to flee with his tribe over the borders of the Natal colony, leaving behind him as a little present to placate the whites, 200,000 acres of the finest arable land, and much rich pasture. He hoped in this way to get rid of his "obedience" to the Lieut. Governor. In this flight, his cattle-drivers in the rear, two days march behind Langa, came into contact with a force of armed Natal Volunteers, and three young whites fell by the bullets of the Lhubis.

The stage was thus set for "vengeance." By the

aid of the black allies, hundreds of Langa's tribe were killed; women, children and old men were butchered; villages were burnt and the women sent into servitude. Langa's men made no resistance at all in their own location, but all the same they were hunted out like rats. The Putini tribe that sheltered some of the unfortunates was robbed of its cattle and land. Langa himself was chased far outside the frontier where no European had ever before trod, was captured by trickery, brought 250 miles in handcuffs to Maritzburg, and put in solitary confinement until his trial, so as "to prevent his concocting a story."

It was with great difficulty that Colenso got the Lieut.-Governor to allow counsel to defend Langa. It was Colenso who really prepared the defence, but the trial was a mere burlesque of justice, a verdict against Langa being absolutely necessary to excuse the bush-whacking and cave-smoking which had already been indulged in by way of "punishment." Langa was sentenced to death for rebellion, a sentence commuted to transportation for life to Robben Island. Loath to believe that this could reflect the mind of his countrymen, Colenso came to England in 1874. He obtained apparently satisfactory audiences of the Government and received the assurance of Lord Carnarvon, Colonial Secretary, that the sentence of Langa would be set aside and the wrongs done to him and his tribe substantially redressed. Sir B. Pine, the Governor-General, was to be recalled. Colenso returned home feeling happy at the outcome of his efforts, only to find that the Cape Ministry did not intend to pay attention to the Government orders, and that the promises of Lord Carnarvon were, for all practical purposes, hollow and worthless.

Sir B. Pine was indeed recalled as promised, and Sir Garnet Wolseley was sent in his place. Wolseley's object from the first day was to "snub" Colenso, and endeavour to reduce him to a position of "insignificance" in the colony. There was much good colonizing work yet to be done, and Colenso's potentialities for mischief must be curtailed. Carnarvon, in England, on the strength of his undertakings to Colenso, had got the Bishop to promise also that he would in future refrain from ventilating any matters of this kind in the public journals. Wolseley endeavoured to keep him to his obviously conditional promise, but Colenso declined "to be bound by restrictions, expressed or implied, to which no other white man in the colony would be subject."

It was nothing to the South African colonists at that time that Colenso had been declared to be in the right and the Natal Government in the wrong on every point submitted by him to the Secretary of State. Fear, and panic possessed them, and there were even cries for the "tarring and feathering" of the Bishop. They held public meetings in Durban to register indignation. Seventy-four brave Christian ministers in Natal sent a letter to the *London Times* expressing their warm approval of everything that had been done to Langa and protesting against any attempts to set aside his sentence. Colenso was the most unpopular and most hated man in South Africa. The English Missionary Societies took advantage of this opportunity to withdraw their financial aid from Colenso and transfer it to his fundamentalist opponent, Bishop Gray. This enabled Gray to "buy up" some of Colenso's clergy, and the Bishop's power of action was practically paralysed.

The cruel "eating up" of Langa's people was but the introduction to the larger scale operations now known in our history books as the Kaffir, Basuto, Zulu and Boer Wars. Colenso remained as active as ever in his work for the natives till the end. In all his work he was judicial, calm, and free from the slightest

trace of fanaticism. His friendship and work for Cetewayo, that splendid Zulu monarch, was of the same character as that which marked his work for Langa. The civilizing stream was now, however, in full flow, and Colenso could only interpose his mop. He lived to see the annexation of Zululand "in the interests of the Zulu people," after many passages with that bloody-minded and pious monster, Sir Bartle Frere, and to have had removed from his mind any illusions as to any high principle actuating the policy of the British Government.\*

His unpopularity decreased to some extent before his death, but considerations of this kind never seemed to enter his mind. "The resolutions passed at the public meeting at Durban do not in the least trouble me; nor will they deter me from doing my duty as a man, an Englishman, and a minister of Christ in standing for the defence of any whom I believe to have been downtrodden and oppressed." His bitterest enemy never denied his being a man. As for the word "Englishman," it was still dear to Colenso, and if patriotism is going to be allowed to retain any respectable connotations, it will be precisely those connotations which Colenso attached to it. As a "minister of Christ," his Christianity was of his own pattern and weaving, and no one will deny his right to choose his nomenclature. When the pulpits of England were resounding with the usual nauseous cant about "righteous warfare," Colenso in his prayers in his own Church spoke of the "terrible scourge of war laid by our hands upon a neighbouring people," beseeched Deity to "watch over all near and dear to us, and all our fellow-men, whether black or white, engaged in this deadly struggle," and asked for the "blessings of peace to be restored to the land we have invaded."

It is a short view to look upon all Colenso's efforts as having been entirely in vain. Certainly there were many intent on making them so, and such people still exist; but the proximate results are not often the more important. One can see the value of Colenso's work in the way it inspired Dean Stanley to "face wild beasts at Ephesus." He stood up against an assembly, in 1880, of Bishops and Clergy met to further the objects of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel—that Society which boasted of hindering Colenso and supporting "genuine Missionaries"—and said:—

Long after we are dead and buried there will be one Bishop who, by his bold theology—(Interruption).

Long after we are dead and buried there will be one Bishop who, when his own interests were on one side and the interests of a poor savage chief on the other, did not hesitate to sacrifice his own; and with a manly generosity, for which this Society has not a word of sympathy, did his best to protect the suppliant, did not hesitate to come over from Africa to England to plead the cause of the poor and unfriended savage. . . . For all these things the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel appears to have no sympathy; but you may depend upon it, in the world at large, wherever Natal is mentioned, they will win admiration.

Dean Stanley could, in fact, have summarized his remarks thus:—

I tell you, churlish priests,  
A ministering angel this Colenso is  
Whilst you lie howling.

And another cleric, similarly moved to courage by his example, the Rev. Sir G. W. Cox, wrote in his *Life of Bishop Colenso*:—

Plain intimations have been given that the patience of English readers may be heavily taxed if the story

\* Those interested should obtain the *Ruin of Zululand*, by Frances Colenso. Both Colenso's daughters assisted in the good work with the same persistent courage.

is not cut short . . .

Those who remain behind him are resolved that justice shall be done to him, as fully as he strove that it should be done to Zulu chiefs and the meanest of their people.

Cox's book is, in fact, so good, that its neglect was assured.

That there was something other than "insignificant" about Colenso, that should be ever kept alive, was evidently the opinion of John Ruskin, who presented his large diamond to the Kensington Natural History Museum, on the condition that the following words should always appear on the label description of the specimen :—

The Colenso Diamond. Presented in 1887 by John Ruskin, in honour of his friend, the loyal and patiently adamant First Bishop of Natal.

It was "The Great White Queen" whom the native Races of South Africa were commanded to admire. It was "Sobantu," the Father of his people, who was loved, and revered, without command, by every Zulu man, woman and child. Speaking after his death, in 1883, the brother of Cetewayo said :—

The thing which we admired in Sobantu was that he resisted all attempts at deceiving other people. He resisted everything of this sort, and for this we all admired him greatly.

Note that what stood out in their minds was not the work he had done on their behalf, familiar with that work as they all were; they testify, first and foremost, to the simple fact that he kept faith. These words, we are told, were reported by a "half-civilized" native who heard them spoken, and were sent, without any correction by Europeans, to Miss Colenso. Half-civilized! In the process of civilization, what perils lurk.

T.H.E.

## Correspondence.

### A LIE IN THREE CHAPTERS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have asserted that the *Freethinker* is largely financed by Jews, and in a multitude of words from you I find no reason to retract.

A man may finance an undertaking even though there be hundreds of shareholders in it. I associated other Jews with my acquaintance. I did not say that he was alone in financing your paper.

You say that the *Freethinker* has never paid as an undertaking, even with hundreds of subscribers of, for the most part, small rates. Somebody must make the losses good.

In conclusion, let me say that I shall make the name of my acquaintance known in my own way. I am not sure that you would admit the truth about his origin. You were so ready to associate me with a robust type of liar. There is an old saying that they who are most ready to call "liar" are not seldom themselves strangers to the truth.

GILESA SALISBURY.

[I have headed the above letter "A Lie in Three Chapters," but we do not intend to waste space on any further chapters unless the Vicar is manly enough to apologize for his first lie, or confound his accuser by showing justification. The first statement was that a certain French Jew (a phrasing that was intended to excite anti-Semitism, and by a man whose living is gained by preaching a dead Jew) "financed" the *Freethinker*, and through it the forces of Atheism in this country. Instead of giving the name of this person, Mr. Salisbury says that a man may finance a movement irrespective of how much he gives to it. By this I take it that anyone who puts a penny in the plate in Mr. Salisbury's Church may be said to finance it. Why not even one of Mr. Salisbury's own curates could be stupid enough to take his mean-

ing to be that some Jews have subscribed to the funds of the *Freethinker*. Of course they have—Jews and Gentiles. And the contributions have been publicly acknowledged.

Mr. Salisbury's attempt to ride away and hide his falsehood by saying that he will give the name of this generous French Jew in his own way, will deceive no one. It is the attitude of a man convicted of a deliberate falsehood, hoping that some may still trust him, because he promises one day to make his honesty clear. It will not do. His parishioners may forget all about it, but we would advise the people of Eppleton to keep their eyes upon a man of this character.

Our pages are only open to Mr. Salisbury when he rebuts our charge by giving the name of the man to whom he refers.—Ed. *Freethinker*.]

## Obituary.

### EDWIN FLETCHER MOODY.

ON Friday, November 3 the remains of Edwin Fletcher Moody were interred at the West Ham Cemetery in the presence of a large number of relatives and friends. Although not a member of the N.S.S., he had been an Atheist for many years, and the whole of his thoughts and actions were moulded in accordance with his beliefs. He retained his faculties until the end, and one of the last communications to his family was that he adhered firmly to his Atheistic opinions, and had no fear of death. A Secular Service was conducted by Mr. R. H. Rosetti.

### HENRY BENJAMIN SAMUELS.

FREETHINKERS in the London area will hear with regret of the death of Henry Benjamin Samuels, which took place on October 31 from Tuberculosis following a period of failing health. He was seventy-three years of age. A convinced Atheist for many years, he had also been an active worker in the Freethought movement, and until recently was often seen on the N.S.S. platform. He was a frank and forceful type of character, and one could not be in his company long without knowing exactly where he stood as far as religion was concerned. The remains were interred at Hampstead Cemetery on Saturday, November 4, and a Secular service was read by Mr. R. H. Rosetti.

### MALCOLM LESSELS.

SUDDENLY at Belfast, on October 26, Malcolm, age twenty-three, beloved second son of John and Faith Lessels. Funeral was private, and there was no ceremony.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

### LONDON.

#### INDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, Hall No. 5, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.4) : 7.30, Miss P. W. Stella Browne—"The Psychology of Agitation."

STUDY CIRCLE (N.S.S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4) : 8.0, Monday, November 13, Mr. R. P. Turvey—"The Evil of Error."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1) : 11.0, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit.—"Social Classes and Social Standards."

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Reggiori's Restaurant, 1 Euston Road, opposite King's Cross Station) : 7.30, Archibald Robertson—"Reason: Tool or Fetish?"

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 12.0, Sunday, B. A. Le Maine. 3.30, Platform 1, Messrs. Wood and Tuson. Platform 2, B. A. Le Maine. 6.30, Messrs. Collins, Hyatt and Bryant. Wednesday, 6.30, Messrs. Collins and Wood. Friday, 6.30, Messrs Bryant and Le Maine.

#### OUTDOOR.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (The Grove, Hammersmith) : 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury—"Prayer."

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

(Continued on page 743.)

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(Continued from page 742.)

**COUNTRY.**  
**INDOOR.**

- CHESTER BRANCH N.S.S.** (Peoples' Hall, Delamere Street, 7.0, F. C. Moore, M.A.—"Religion and the Workers.")
- BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S.** (Bristol Street Council Schools) : 7.0, Mr. R. H. Rosetti (General Secretary, N.S.S.)—"Christianity and the Crisis."
- BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S.** (Cobden Hall, Cort Street, Blackburn) : Mr. J. Clayton—"The Impossible Jesus."
- BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S.** (Godwin Commercial Hotel, Godwin Street) : Sunday, November 12. The nature of the meeting will be advertised in the *Bradford Daily Telegraph* on Saturday next.
- EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION** (Phoenix Theatre, Market Street, Burnley) : 2.45, Mr. E. C. Saphin—"What Christianity has Done for Man." 7.0, "What Man Can Do for Christianity." Chairman—Mr. Jack Clayton (Burnley). Refreshments can be obtained in the Theatre.
- GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY** (East Hall, M'Lellan Galleries, Sanchiehall Street, Glasgow) : 7.0, Mr. D. M. Stewart, C.I.E., M.A.—"The Religions of India." *Freethinker* and other literature on sale at all meetings.
- HETTON** (Assembly Rooms) : 7.30, Monday, November 13, Mr. J. T. Brighton.
- LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY** (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate) : 6.30, Mr. G. Whitehead—"An Explanation of Spiritualism."
- LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S.** (Transport Hall, Islington, Liverpool, entrance in Christian Street) : 7.0, J. Wingate (Perth)—"Folly on Brownlow Hill." Reserved seats 6d. each.
- MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S.** (Clarion Cafe, Market Street) : 7.30, Mr. J. T. Brighton (Co. Durham)—"Is Sunday Sacred?"
- PADIHAM** (Co-operative Rooms, The Centre) : 7.30, Tuesday, November 14, Mr. J. Clayton.
- NORTH SHIELDS** (Labour Hall, Saville Street) : 7.0, Tuesday, November 14, Mr. J. T. Brighton.
- PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S.** (Plymouth Chambers, Hall 5, Drake Circus) : 7.0, "Women and Christianity."
- SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S.** (Co-operative Rooms, Green Street) : 7.15, Sunday, November 12, Miss E. Moore—"Blessing the Guns." Sans Street, Wesley Guild : 8.15, Monday, November 13, Mr. F. Bradford—"Superstition."

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General Secretary - **R. H. ROSETTI.**

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