

# THE FREETHINKER

• EDITED *by* CHAPMAN COHEN •

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

	Page
<i>The Kirk's Alarm—The Editor</i> - - - - -	17
<i>Ma Eddy's Mummery—Mimnermus</i> - - - - -	19
<i>The Historian of the Inquisition—T. F. Palmer</i> - - - - -	20
<i>The Fortieth Estate—T. H. Elstob</i> - - - - -	21
<i>Anarchy and Order—W. W. Kensett</i> - - - - -	22
<i>Freack Religions—H. Cutner</i> - - - - -	26
<i>Metaphysics and Theology—J. Reeves</i> - - - - -	27
<i>History as it Should be Written—George Wallace</i> - - - - -	27
<i>On Suicide—Norman Roberts</i> - - - - -	29

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

Views and Opinions

**The Kirk's Alarm**

It is likely that 1937 will be a lively and eventful year. The logic of fact may assert itself, and many men may take up a more definite attitude towards important questions than they have yet assumed. Opinion is like money, it is of little value unless used. Fanaticism often owes its success quite as much to the indolence of logical opinion as to its own inherent strength. In this respect we may well reframe, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon," to read, "No man can serve a principle by professing it in private and ignoring it in practice." Principles will not look after themselves. During the past few years we have seen in many parts of the world principles which we had come to take as unquestionable, not merely ignored, but openly challenged and defeated. Over a large part of Europe Freethought is now a thing of the past, and in our own case inroads have been made on individual liberty that to the men and women of fifty years ago would have seemed impossible. The "It never can happen here" attitude is wholly false. Anything that has happened elsewhere may happen here unless we make its happening impossible. Many of these things have happened here, and they have been accepted, in spite of the manner in which the average Briton pats himself on the back with the assurance that he is not as other people. It is, as Beaconsfield said, the impossible that happens.

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**The Call to God**

One attempt to divert the attention of the people into comparatively harmless channels is made by the Archbishop of Canterbury in his call to the Churches. The avowed aim is to call people back to God, and its method is characteristic of the mentality of the Archbishop in both its omissions and admissions. He admits that the drift away from religion is "natural,

almost inevitable," and as the Archbishop believes that though God made him for his own glory, man insists on going cheerfully to the devil, God is left in a very helpless state indeed. There is something quite in line with the Archbishop's slimy mentality in his reference to the world being "poisoned" by an "aggressive Atheism." It is not Atheism that he objects to so much as an "aggressive" Atheism. The Archbishop has shown in his dealing with Edward VIII., that he can stand a deal so long as it is done quietly; it is when what is done has the redeeming quality of honesty that his Christian conscience is shocked. And this is again illustrated in his reference to the aggressive Atheism of Russia, in the very act of pleading for an aggressive Christianity in England. Particularly when we remember that Dr. Lang remained quite unmoved by Christian Russia encouraging university students to prostitution and drunkenness, in order to keep them off serious studies. A much wiser and much better man than the Archbishop can ever hope to be, said that not one man in a thousand had the strength of mind or goodness of heart to be an Atheist. But he happened to be only a Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and did not introduce himself as "God's spokesman."

It would not be a bad exercise for any teacher to give the Archbishop's address to a class of boys and see what they could make of it. Anything more pitifully vacuous it is almost impossible to conceive. The Bishop of London is about the only one of the clergy who could match it for emptiness, but he would have been more amusing in his variegated stupidity. There is hardly a sucking curate in Briton who could not have done better. The address does not say why we are to get back to God, or what we are to get back to. The British Empire has a few hundred Gods within its borders, and the Archbishop appears to be content with anything so long as it is not Atheism. In advance, the Dean of St. Paul's criticized the emptiness of such a speech by saying that there must be a return to something definite, something of the "revolutionary note of first Christianity." But really this only substituted one ambiguity for another. What revolutionary element was there in early Christianity? Was it in forbidding women to teach? Or in the advice to turn one cheek when the other was smitten? Or in the command to obey the powers that be, because they were ordained by God, and whosoever resisted would incur damnation. Or was it that the world was coming to an end, and the only thing for man to do was to save his soul? Between the Archbishop and the Dean our choice lies between vacuity and a mis-statement.

I do not doubt that there will be results from this appeal to get back to God. There always are in such cases, and the responses will be of the usual kind.

There are people who delight in getting saved at every mission that comes their way, as others delight in getting drunk on free drinks. Having a rapturous "hour with Jesus," particularly in the case of some women, is as attractive as is the prospect of a night out to an adventurous adolescent. But real converts? Well, we venture on a challenge. When the number of converts is published we challenge any Church to give one per cent of the number of converts who were not already professing Christians before they went through the familiar performance. We know these converts. They are all part of the stereotyped humbuggery of Christian propaganda.

But the appeal will certainly have some results. Very artfully the appeal to get back to God (it is a pity he loses people so easily and so plentifully) has been bracketed with the primitive religious ceremony of the coronation, and loyalty to the King, and the Constitution has been purposely jumbled up with the Church and Christ and God. In the general mix-up during the next four months of intensive advertising, of primitive emotionalism, pre-scientific sociology and general exaltation we may well find all this fitting in with the Lang-Baldwin conspiracy in the matter of Edward and Mrs. Simpson. It is quite likely that many who might otherwise be inclined to take note of the real nature of religion may be kept within the Archbishop's net. This is all that the Archbishop can hope for; probably it is all he does hope for. There is, he admits, a "drift away from religion" which is "natural, almost inevitable"; science "seems to leave no place for a personal God," and he hopes that "in the midst of all the writing and talking about the coronation," superstitions may be so jumbled together that God may retain some of his followers who might otherwise be lost. I should not be surprised. There is a kinship in folly as in wisdom.

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#### The "Daily Telegraph" as a Guide

The *Daily Telegraph* flatters itself that "the cult of militant Atheism (has) made few converts here, and is not likely to make more." The *Daily Telegraph* is singularly ill-informed. We agree that the number of Atheists is not so great as it ought to be. In England the practice of complete intellectual honesty has never been a popular one, and the habit of keeping one's heresy to one's self or disguising it under some fancy name such as Ethicist, Agnostic, Rationalist or some such term, is very common. But as to the number of Atheists that are made every year, well (I am in a challenging humour) when the Archbishops' processioning and campaigning are over, with the titillation of the coronation thrown in, for every genuine Atheist converted to Christianity I will produce a score of Atheists converted from Christianity during the same period. There never were so many Atheists in the country as to-day; there were never so many Atheists in the House of Commons as to-day. The same is true of our educational establishments. The Archbishop is not lamenting without cause. But to imagine that the pantomime of a coronation is going to disturb an intellectual movement that has been on foot for centuries, is something that could occur only to an Archbishop.

The *Daily Telegraph* ought also to be more careful about its history. Teachers, elementary and other, are not notorious for making public their heretical opinions. This is regrettable, because when character is lowered by this continuous concealment, it is bound to have an effect on those from whom it is concealed that is almost as bad on those who practise the concealment. But the fact is patent. At the annual meeting of the Association of Assistant Masters in Secondary Schools (the separation of teachers into a

Headmaster's and an Assistant's Association is bound to have a dangerously infective influence on school life) a resolution was brought forward in favour of secular education. The resolution was defeated, although there was some fairly plain speaking on the subject. But the *Daily Telegraph* remarks that the battle for secular education was fought and lost (in 1870). This is one of those truths that is worse than a whole-souled lie. The battle was lost, but it was because the Nonconformists sold the pass for the sake of a sectarian advantage, and so parted with their last shred of principle.

It is well to recall the facts. The religious control of education had resulted in keeping education in this country on a lower level than that of many European countries, and the Government was forced to take action. It was anticipated that if religion was retained in State schools, it would be the religion of the State Church. The Church thus joined issue with the rest of the country. It was a question of the religion of the Church of England versus secular instruction only, leaving parents and the churches to make whatever provision they pleased for religious teaching. The Nonconformist position was dictated by the profession of belief in the absolute non-interference of the State in religious matters. Had the Nonconformists remained true to their professed principles Secular education would have been established, and years of fighting religious obstruction in the schools would have been avoided, to say nothing of having a body of teachers with greater intellectual independence than we have at present.

But the danger of leaving religion out of the school alarmed the Church. A compromise was effected. It was arranged that each of the two parties should set down a statement of a common belief, that might be taught, and everyone outside the Churches might go to the devil. The Nonconformists, who never really minded State patronage so long as they were the objects of it, jumped at the bait. The people who did not believe in the State teaching religion to the adult, did believe in it being taught to the child. The party that did not believe in an open and honest religious test, strongly supported a partly hidden and wholly dishonest religious test. Nonconformists did not mind religion raiding the public purse, so long as they received part of the plunder. It meant a poorer type of education, a poorer class of teachers, and for large numbers of children, a much poorer building in which to lead their school life. But they were brought up religious, and if they did not have religion drummed into them before they were old enough to understand it they would grow up unbelievers. Instead of being a place in which to train open-minded citizens, the schools became a State provided farm for the breeding of clients for Church and Chapel. But the fight is not by any means lost, it still goes on, and it will continue until a sense of elementary justice recognizes that children represent more valuable material than of being mere pawns in a parsonic scramble.

Just as I am writing these lines a letter reaches me from our contributor and colleague, Mr. George Bedborough, in which he says, "It looks like being a very strenuous year for our Cause, which means you." I hope not for me only. I do not mind how strenuous it is, but if my efforts, and those of my fellow writers and lecturers, are to have their proper effect, they must be backed and inspired by the work done by others who do not appear in the limelight, but whose efforts are beyond praise, and are given without price. I am never blind to the fact of how little the most gifted writer or speaker can do without the silent, unobtrusive, and steady work that is done up and down the country by so many men and

women. I wish them all the heartiest and happiest of New Years—and a fighting one. A man shows what he is, not merely by the opinions he holds, but still more by what he does to educate others.

As I said last week, I hope we shall all accept the challenge of the Archbishop, and of the Churches. We can then make 1937 a year of struggle, and also a year of advance. The Church showed its hand in the case of Edward VIII. The Archbishop hopes we shall be silent concerning what is past. We should be fools if we refrained from plain and continuous speech, and did not make the past our teacher for action in the present.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## Ma Eddy's Mummery

"The crime of inquiry is one which religion never has forgiven."—*Shelley*.

"The success of all forms of Priestcraft has too largely depended on the ignorance and incompetence of the laity."—*J. M. Robertson*.

SCIENCE and religion have ever been deadly enemies. Scientific teaching and investigation, or, indeed, any form of intellectual liberty, has always been incompatible with the dogmas of religion. The power of Priestcraft has invariably been brought to bear against science on the ground that it is a powerful solvent of religious faith. This priestly resistance to the prevalent opinions of scientists has no indisputable claim to respect. When we recall that the system of Copernicus, the discoveries of Galileo, Newton's formulation of the law of gravitation and the Darwinian theory were all in turn received in the same priestly quarter with similar resistance, it looks as if the opposition was not due so much to the weak arguments of the scientists, as to the priestly dislike of knowledge itself.

Chemistry was opposed as an impious prying into the secrets of "God," and the early chemists were regarded as agents of the "devil." Physiology and medicine are opposed on similar grounds. Biology and geology were also opposed tooth and nail by the Christian Church. She bitterly resented all forms of inquiry, and always preferred explaining natural phenomena by her own lying legends.

After many centuries of conflict, however, a lady attempted to build a bridge between religion and science. As the lady hailed from the Great Republic of the West, the new evangel was not hid under a bushel. It was spread abroad in the approved methods of trade advertising, and the gospel of Mrs. Mary Eddy is to-day, in the United States, a serious rival to the far older Christian evangel. The latest of new Bibles, *Science and Health; with Key to the Scriptures*, of which Mrs. Eddy was the author, appeared in 1875, and has been re-issued scores of times.

This new evangel has been received by tens of thousands of half-educated people, reverent of learning, but quite unable to discriminate it from its adulterated imitation. And Mrs. Eddy herself, quite as indiscriminating as her innocent readers, was equipped admirably by a nodding acquaintance with theology, metaphysics, a sham scientific vocabulary, and a most tenacious memory, to give them the very thing they longed for. Mere words were Mrs. Eddy's entire stock-in-trade. Her pomp of court and her priesthood were sheer verbosity.

There are five hundred pages of polysyllabic words in her book. To a reader familiar with the sober use of scientific terms, her explanations and definitions are just delirious jargon. They are the bastard off-

spring of a riotous imagination playing, in the light of half-grasped ideas from the scientists, upon resonant polysyllables. For example, here is one of her precious definitions:—

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

The author of this farrago of nonsense has been hailed, appropriately, as a teacher "second only to" Jesus Christ. It was only proper, therefore, that she should regard matter, mythology, and mortality as synonymous. Even the ignorant writers of the Christian Gospels, who thought a "whale" was a "fish," and, in narrating the story of the feeding of the five thousand, considered that a part was greater than the whole, could not have made more mistakes than Ma Eddy. Nor could they have been much less scientific.

The extraordinary nature of the new evangel is shown by another quotation from the latest divine revelation:—

The metaphysics of Christian Science prove the rule by inversion.

For example:—

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

Yet Ma Eddy, with pain, regrets that ontology receives less attention than physiology, and relates the following improving anecdote, worthy of the saucy and mendacious Christian Fathers:—

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

What is to be said for the mentality of people who actually pretend to believe such an evangel from Earlswood? What, in the name of common sense, did Ma Eddy suppose ontology to mean? It is fitting that such a teacher should give her disciples a form of prayer and a confession of faith which bear the same resemblance to the alleged "Lord's Prayer," that margarine does to butter. The high-priestess of this latest faith strutted in borrowed plumes, and charged three hundred dollars for a dozen lessons. No Roman cardinal, no English bishop, no Greek patriarch, no money-lender, ever kept a keener eye or a tighter fist on money—the only material thing in existence which Christian Science allows to be real. She never allowed a dollar to get by her, if she could help it. In short, Ma Eddy was simply another religious boss, bent on exploitation, beside which a shark is a philanthropist.

The high-priestess of Christian Science did not escape criticism. Even Mark Twain tried to convince the lady-saviour's devotees that they might be mistaken. This is the way Mark burlesqued the latest Yankee abracadabra:—

There is an account of the restoration to perfect health, in a single night, of a fatally injured horse, by the application of Christian Science. I can stand a good deal, but I recognize that the ice is getting thin here. If that horse had as many as fifty claims; how could he demonstrate over them? Could he do the All Good, Good, Good, Good

Gracious, Liver, Bones, Truth, all down but nine, set them up on the other alley? Could he intone the Scientific Statement of Being? Now, could he? Wouldn't it give him a relapse? Let us draw the line at horses. Horses and furniture!

This is genuine fun, and more effective than reams of prosaic argument. It never affected the long-faced followers of Ma Eddy, or the enormous popularity of the Christian Science evangel. For, when a person joins that movement, he must take his purse, and leave his brains at home. He must leave them locked up in an iron safe, or have them removed by a surgeon. If he should forget himself, and think but once, the bye-laws provide that he shall be expelled, instantly, with no return ticket.

We once set out in a spirit of inquiry to make an examination of the sacred claims made by Ma Eddy. But this nonsensical system makes us tired, for of all the strange, frantic, and incomprehensible books which have emanated from the half-crazy and morbid brains of religious enthusiasts, this book is one of the silliest. It is more incoherent than the mendacious Lives of the Saints. It is more topsy-turvy than the ravings of Joanna Southcott. Beside it Joe Smith's *Book of Mormon* is a plain, unvarnished tale. Prophet Baxter's *Forty Coming Wonders* is shrinking modesty compared with the colossal impudence of Ma Eddy. This latest American Bible fairly takes the breath away, and makes the head swim. No less colloquial phrase can so aptly describe the effect of claims so far transcending sanity. And what is to be said for the mentality of religious people, who are so exploited by a charlatan, who combines the impudent assurance of a race-course tout, with the ethics of a thimble-rigger? This Christian Science Bible is nothing but a dictionary with the diarrhoea.

MIMNERMUS.

## The Historian of the Inquisition

THE eminent American historian, Dr. H. C. Lea, was the greatest ecclesiastical writer of the nineteenth century. His several standard volumes are all works of primary importance, while his innumerable contributions to periodical publications on scientific, political and civic subjects are well worthy of preservation.

In his excellent biography of Dr. Lea, published by the Philadelphia University Press, Prof. E. S. Bradley has composed a work which has left few gleanings for subsequent writers. His opening chapter on the Ancestry and Family of his subject is intensely interesting and instructive. The son of a publisher and scientist, the historian's mother was the daughter of Matthew Carey, an emigrant Irish patriot, while his uncle was the noted economist, H. C. Carey, the Transatlantic protagonist of Protection.

The founder of the Lea family in America voyaged with William Penn from England in 1699. The Leas were of the Quaker persuasion, and of sterling West of England stock. Hereditary influences were thus highly favourable in moulding the intellect and character of the Inquisition's chronicler. Prof. Bradley justly contends that: "The individual capacities of the various members of the family in a very interesting way foreshadow the powers which lay dormant in Lea's mind, and which, when brought to fruition in the life of a single individual, rendered him a most versatile and interesting personality."

As a boy, Lea was extremely studious and, like Herbert Spencer, was an acute sufferer from nervous exhaustion. After Lea's first breakdown, in 1847, his

recovery was long delayed and his first book, *Superstition and Force*, did not appear until 1866, when its author had arrived at the age of 41. But this work would probably have been published earlier, but for the turmoil accompanying the American Civil War. In this conflict Lea keenly supported the North, and eagerly participated in the various activities incidental to the struggle.

In concluding his first historical volume, Lea points to the part played by zealotry in persecution. Thus, in *Christendom*: "For ages the assumptions of an infallible church had led men to believe that the interpreter was superior to Scripture. Every expounder of the holy text felt in his heart that he was alone, and every ritual but his own was an insult to the Divine nature. Outside his own communion there was no escape from eternal perdition, and the fervour of religious conviction thus made persecution a duty to God and man. This led the Inquisition to perfect a system of which the iniquity was complete. Thus recommended, that system became part and parcel of secular law, and when the Reformation arose, the habits of thought which ages had consolidated were universal. The boldest Reformers . . . as soon as they attained power had as little scruple as Rome itself in rendering obligatory their interpretation of divine truth, and in applying to secular as well as religious affairs the cruel maxims in which they had been educated."

*Superstition and Force*, however, was only a promise of greater achievements to come. Lea's second history, that of *Sacerdotal Celibacy*, appeared in 1867 and a third and revised edition was issued in 1907. This great standard work is a monument of patient research and is so impartial in statement that no candid critic could detect a trace of anti-Catholic bias. In his *European Morals*, Lecky expressed the views of most enlightened scholars, when he declared that the subject of clerical celibacy had "recently been treated with very great learning and admirable impartiality by Mr. Henry C. Lea, in his *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy*, which is certainly one of the most valuable works that America has produced."

A man of means, Lea amassed a splendid library containing many original manuscripts relating to ecclesiastical history. He also obtained the assistance of several European experts who forwarded or transcribed rare books and documents bearing on his studies. Materials for his researches were garnered from all Western Europe and sent to America.

Lea's invaluable *Studies in Church History* appeared in 1869, a work which contains four important essays on Church history. One of these, *Benefit of Clergy*, reveals the results of priestly immunity from the penalties of the civil law. Much of the despotism of the Papacy in pre-Reformation times is attributable to this scandalous privilege. Not merely did the clergy "thus acquire a peculiar sanctity," writes Lea, "which separated them from the people and secured for them veneration, but the personal inviolability thence surrounding them gave them an enormous advantage in all contests with the civil power. Secure in this panoply of privilege, they could dare all things . . . the statutes of emperors and kings were to them the idle breath of men."

The three volumes on *The Inquisition in the Middle Ages* were delayed until 1888. Nearly twenty years had passed since the publication of the *Studies*. But the vast range of research undertaken to make his *Inquisition* impregnable, accompanied as it was by a second nervous breakdown with risks of blindness, fortunately overcome by the care of his kind physician, enabled the afflicted historian after six years' illness to return to literature.

Lea's elucidation of the various evolutionary

phenomena which brought the Inquisition into being is masterly. The first volume deals with the genesis and describes the organization of this nefarious body. In Bradley's words: "The corrupt political conditions within the Church, the martial character of the prelates, the abuses of the Papal and Episcopal jurisdiction, the burdening of the people by tithes, by levies to build cathedrals, by the sale of sacraments, and by various forms of extortion, together with the flagrant personal immorality of some of the clergy, and impregnable claims to immunity, are rapidly sketched as the fertile soil for the growth of revolt and heresy." These heresies are adequately described with the Church's ruthless treatment of them, until the triumph of Rome over all adversaries was signalized in 1229, and every species of independent thought was sentenced to pitiless persecution and shameful death.

The rise, and later progress of the mendicant orders into crafty and treacherous spies are vividly portrayed. In the second volume, the sinister story of the Inquisition's activities in the various lands where it was established is narrated, while Volume Three describes the merciless warfare waged by the Inquisition against heretical sects and individual dissenters from orthodoxy with the Church's crusade against wizardry and magic. In his concluding chapter Dr. Lea remarks that: "The review which we have made of the follies and crimes of our ancestors has revealed to us a scene of almost unrelieved blackness. . . . Yet such a review, rightly estimated, is full of hope and encouragement. Imperfect as are human institutions to-day, a comparison with the past shows how marvellous has been the improvement. Principles have been established which, if allowed to develop themselves naturally and healthfully, will render the future of mankind very different from aught that the world has yet seen."

Lea's work was acclaimed in the republic of letters. The Catholic historian, Lord Acton, praised it, and Prof. Maitland, in his review, declared that: "It is Dr. Lea's glory that he is one of the very few English-speaking men who have found the courage to grapple with the law and legal documents of Continental Europe." The few unfavourable critics were Catholics who bitterly resented Lea's revelations as a blot on their creed. An intensely hostile notice appeared in the *Catholic Quarterly*, and Lea smilingly informed Dr. Creighton that: "A newspaper here printed some of Lord Acton's commendatory remarks on my book mentioning that Lord Acton is a Catholic. The Jesuit Father who had acted as my executioner in the *Catholic Quarterly*, promptly wrote the editor that if Lord Acton is a Catholic, he at least is not a Roman Catholic."

The last twenty years of Lea's long life—he was born in 1825 and died in 1909—yielded a splendid harvest of eleven further volumes, all characterized by that painstaking care which distinguished his earlier writings. His *Inquisition in Spain* remains unrivalled, while his *Auricular Confession*, the *Moriscos in Spain*, and other volumes are all regarded as standard works.

Lea was a nominal Unitarian; in reality a philosophical Rationalist with a passion for calmly reasoned historical impartiality. This was fully recognized by Lord Acton, when he urged Lea to write the since celebrated essay, *The Eve of the Reformation* for the *Cambridge Modern History*. He told Lea that he was the man best qualified for the task. Quaintly enough, when the Jesuit, Father Thurston, rebuked the late Lord Acton in the columns of the *Tablet*, for his selection of Dr. Lea, a certain Mr. Sutcliffe, a little later, asserted in the same periodical, that Acton really chose another

writer, but, that after Acton had died, the succeeding editors selected Dr. Lea. This controversy called forth a letter to the *Times* from the present Lord Acton, who wished to vindicate his father's orthodoxy.

In these circumstances Lea allowed Sutcliffe's misstatement to pass unchallenged, but in Lea's biography the matter is finally set at rest. After giving detailed proof of Lord Acton's earnest request to contribute the essay in question, Prof. E. P. Cheyney in the appendix to Lea's biography concludes: "It appears, therefore, that Lord Acton at the very inception of the project invited and even urged the American scholar to write this important section of the History, that he expressed his pleasure and gratitude when Mr. Lea accepted, and gave his approval to the chapter when it had been written."

It is also worthy of remembrance that some of the major and many of the minor writings of Dr. Lea were rendered into French by the famous archaeologist, Salomon Reinach, and these were extensively used by the French Freethinkers in their campaign against the clericals when the forces of reaction seemed to be recovering lost ground in France.

T. F. PALMER.

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## The Fortieth Estate

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(The English Press, by Jane Soames. Published by Stanley Nott, 3s. 6d.)

THE tendency to believe a thing because it has been seen in print is not a regrettable phenomenon of a generation or two ago. It is still a very live tendency, so live that it forms one of the firm bases of modern newspaper policy. Just as our song publishers can determine beforehand what are to become the most popular songs of the year by intensive advertising and what is called "plugging," our daily press know they can get an idea generally accepted by constant reiteration. Why and how the press say, "Now, altogether boys," repeating the same things and suppressing the same things with remarkable unanimity, is one of the minor problems that beset independent minds. Are they directly or indirectly affected by the Government of the day, or by a circulation *motif*? Or as is probable in the great majority of cases does the policy that increases the circulation happen to be the same policy as the Government considers valuable, and so requires no direct or indirect prompting? There is no difficulty in believing this in many cases. No doubt John Smith is more inclined to pay his penny for the paper which insists that he is a fine fellow, and belongs to a fine country and a finely-governed country; it happens that these are the beliefs which the state thinks are to be the useful beliefs for its citizens to hold. Even in international affairs the newspaper knows that if it insists upon the lofty ethical idealism that lies behind every political action and avoids getting down to the roots of any question, the Government will not be displeased and few customers offended to the point of transferring their adherence to another paper. It is here, at this precise moment, that the newspaper gets nervous. The phenomenon of "sales resistance," that is, the point at which a customer will feel inclined to go elsewhere for his pabulum, is the one thing of which a newspaper is profoundly aware. It leads to happenings which, on the surface, are quite non-understandable; such, for instance, as the publication of Low's spirited and healthy cartoons in the *Evening Standard*. A friend of mine recently informed me that just as he got to the point of changing

his newspaper, a particularly refreshing and pleasing article would be announced to appear. Precisely! Perhaps this will help him to understand why such things occur.

The author gives instances to show how completely we are spoon-fed by the press, and contrasts them with the columns of such a paper as the *Times* a hundred years ago. In that hallowed organ it was possible to read a letter such as the following:—

Sir,—Allow me a small space in your valuable journal to let the world know that the College of Eton is using unfair means to obtain votes for that enemy of the people's rights—the Marquis of Chandos.

You must know that the tradespeople of Eton are nearly all dependent upon the College; that those who have votes for the County of Bucks have been visited by a tool of the College (who, by the bye, is ever ready to do any of their dirty work) and upon refusal, are not directly threatened with the resentment of this noble body, but enough is said to let them know they will be no gainers by it.

I am happy to say, in most instances, they have been unsuccessful, but in some few they have succeeded.

Is not this too bad, after our noble and patriotic King has dissolved Parliament for the purpose of knowing the true sentiments of his people, that these scholastic vermin should come in to prevent it?

Yours,

A REFORMER.

Windsor, 1831.

The re-printing of this letter should be sufficient to impress upon anyone the present-day degradation of the English Press. It is, as the author says, "the kind of communication immensely worth having." It is the kind of letter which if printed in any newspaper to-day would give our spoon-fed population an immense shock, so used has it got to reading letters which join in the kindly chorus, so used is it to reading letters which say nothing in particular and say it very well.

Our press avoids, except in rare cases, the lie circumstantial, preferring the lie by implication. A column can be printed in which there is no statement contrary to fact, but the omission of important details, and the false emphases given, result in the "putting over" to the public of a thumping lie. If there are degrees of enormity in falsehood, this surely is of all lies the most contemptible.

What the press agrees not to tell the public is really surprising. Any trifling thing that is considered harmful to our pride may come within their ban. When South African cricketers toured the country last year, for instance, they came as a team which had won the rubber on the previous occasion in their country, and had indeed done so on several occasions before, but this fact was never mentioned in any paper. And when they emerged successful from the contests in England, the boys of the press got together and congratulated them on having for the first time won a rubber, not in England, mark you, but for the very first occasion. Easy, of course, is *descensus Averno*, but to touch bottom over such trivial affairs points to the regrettable fact that the press are quite happy in their role of encouraging people's vanities, and playing up to their prejudices and delusions.

No doubt the press think, by their policy, they are the guardian of the public morality and interests. Comforting beliefs of this nature are easily come by. They would eliminate Beelzebub by the aid of Beelzebub! Well then, says our author, let them be straightforward about it.

If it were clearly and definitely stated, well understood, and a matter of common public knowledge, that for reasons of State, and in order that the

Government be not impeded in its conduct of public business, only such facts as were considered by authority to be innocuous were to be published, and no strong or active opposition permitted—then the public would know where it stood, and if it did not like the position could protest.

This presupposes honesty, and, in our opinion, presupposes too much. There is only one thing for the friends of free speech and free discussion to do, and that is to expose on every possible occasion the corrupt tactics of newspaper journalists who have not the "guts" openly to attack freedom of speech. It should be a highly congenial task for Free-thinkers who have fought and suffered for the freedom of the press as no other section of the community has done. The press have one device against books such as this and that is boycott. It is up to the friends of freedom to defeat this end by assisting in the circulation of every work that is issued that calls attention to the pernicious and demoralizing task to which our daily press, as now constituted in England, have set their hands. Works such as *The English Press*, should be bought, circulated and talked about.

T. H. ELSTON.

## Anarchy and Order

MONARCHY is Government by one, King, Emperor, Czar, Sultan. Oligarchy, Government by a few. Hierarchy, Government by priests. Polyarchy, Government by many. Anarchy, without Government, the ideal of all.

Yes; no one wishes either to be governed or to govern others. It is only that other people's cussedness compels us to govern them, and by consequence to submit ourselves to Government. If only people would do what we wish them to do, or what we think they ought to do, without compulsion, we should be only too glad. But there you are! They will not, so we must make them. Some would murder, we must hang them. Some would rob and cheat, we must put them in prison. Some would let their neighbours starve, go hungry, naked, ignorant, filthy. Then we must seize the goods they refuse to give, and apply them to their proper purpose.

C. H. Hopwood, once Recorder of Liverpool, said that during his Recordership he made it his practice to give sentences for crimes committed of about one half the length given by other judges and he reckoned he had saved the taxpayers the cost of three thousand years of imprisonment *without increasing crime*. This certainly leads us to believe that harsh sentences are themselves a crime, since they are only useless torture, a conclusion reached by many other humanitarians in many different ways. I will not argue that if all punishment were abolished all crime would disappear. Criminals in prison are a diminishing number, we are told. Is that because prisons are less cruel or because lunatic asylums are receiving those formerly disposed of by transportation or the hulks? I think less cruelty by Government means less crime by released prisoners and other persons. So far as I have yet come, I think many of my readers will agree with me. Can I carry them a little farther?

In a somewhat extended experience of prison life I have noted how many of my comrades have been soldiers. Not much to be wondered at since the *great war*, but before, it seemed to me they formed an altogether disproportionate part of the prison population. And it has been found that all wars before the world war have fostered private crime. "Why, where is the fellow taking us? Presently he will be saying that war is the greatest of all crimes, and Governments are the greatest criminals. How then can Government foster justice between man and man?"

Perhaps I shall; and I may even point to the fact that predatory animals are the usual emblems of empire. The Roman Eagle, the British Lion, the Russian Bear, to cite no more. Where is the origin of our monarchy? It

dates back to William the Conqueror. But never mind that. The question is: "Can we live without a Government" and how? By voluntary contributions and mutual assurance. Now, if a man robs me I can send him to prison, but do not recover my loss.

My contribution should be my safeguard, and if I pay it my loss should be recouped. Most houses I know of are insured against fire. It pays both parties and costs little. Why not against robbery and violence? People who now pay thousands, nay millions of pounds in taxes would then pay millions of pence for insurance, since they would be repaid for the damages they suffered.

One more objection to answer. Would your paid police stop to inquire whether you were insured before they came to your rescue when attacked? No, certainly not. Rescue first, enquire afterwards. Safety for one is safety for all. Calamity cannot be limited, but a claim for damages can.

Now for one advantage. Folk will not pay to exercise or increase our empire abroad. They will be ready to pay for their own defence, and to maintain an international force to secure us against foreign domination.

W. W. KENSSETT.

## Acid Drops

In last week's "Views and Opinions," we referred to the way in which the mythology of the British monarchy is built, and also to the clever way in which those responsible carry out the character, once its nature has been decided. From the New Year's message which has been prepared for the King, it is evident that he is to continue the role of his father as an ideal family man. We hasten to say that we have no reason for believing that he is not, but the myth-makers are responsible if ordinary folk are never certain whether they are reading a genuine report or merely studying a myth. At any rate if we were in the King's place we should resent having such words as these being put into our mouth:—

I realize to the full the responsibilities of my noble heritage. I shoulder them with all the more confidence in the knowledge that the Queen and my Mother, Queen Mary are at my side.

That almost reads like a deliberate attempt to humiliate the King, and reminds one of W. S. Gilbert's "and so say his sisters and his cousins and his aunts."

Acknowledgments to one's parents are always in order, and acknowledgments of the help a man gets from a good wife are fitting at the proper time. But seeing that Queen Mary was put out of the picture after the death of her husband, and during the reign of Edward VIII., one is surprised to find her back with the accession of her other son. Constitutionally the King acts by and with his properly appointed ministers. There is nothing in the Constitution and nothing in public practice that authorizes the King to act with the official help of wife or mother. The British Constitution is very elastic, but there is no room in it for the guiding of the King by his female relatives on public affairs. We fancy there would be a row if Mr. Baldwin informed the House of Commons that he had sought the advice of the King's mother on any public issue, or that the Queen agreed with something proposed which affected the King's position, as such. If a King is unable to act by himself, there are ways of getting over the difficulty, but for a King to be made to say what has been publicly said reflects small credit on anyone concerned.

A very business-like religious gentleman, as reported in the *Evening News* of December 23, has been arrested in Bessarabia. He was accused of selling seats in heaven. Ordinary seats near God were fixed at a high figure. Those near the Archangel Gabriel fetched about £2 each. The man had a map of heaven with allotments portioned out and numbered. This does not seem to us

materially different from the methods of the Roman Church in its sale of masses and the like. The chief difference is that the Roman Church does not guarantee places. And at any rate, in a few months we shall see here people paying extravagant prices to see George VI. turned by the magic of consecrated oil into a representative of God Almighty. It is all a question of degree.

In a new book on "Oxford in search of God," entitled, *Be Still and Know*, the "son of a well-known theologian" has this striking declaration: "Agnosticism . . . does not seem to contradict anything that is fundamental in the teaching of Jesus." Whether this is intended as a compliment to Agnosticism is not quite clear; but we are sure there must be a number of "reverent" Rationalists, who will cordially cry, "Hear! Hear!" at this precious pronouncement. At all events, the devout son of a devout father was wise enough to say nothing in the same vein about *Atheism*. No one outside a lunatic asylum would say that there is nothing in *Atheism* which contradicts the hopelessly credulous superstition of Jesus.

The *Times Literary Supplement*, the literary criticisms of which have sadly deteriorated of late, has done justice in a leading article to Barham, the "witty and sceptical minor canon, breezily contemptuous of Tractarianism and Ritualism," known all over the world as the brilliant author of the *Ingoldsby Legends*. The Rev. R. H. Barham, in spite of being a member of the Church of England, does not seem—as any reader of the *Legends* will testify—to have been very devout; in fact, a distinct vein of strong scepticism runs through his work, and he often lets himself strongly go against "Popish superstitions" in a way which no thorough believing Christian would have tolerated. "Barham," we are told, "found his real life in letters, antiquarianism, conversation, the theatre, *gourmandise*, all the enjoyments, in short, of a gentleman and scholar. . . ." In other words, Larham's real life had nothing to do with his professional interest in Christianity.

It will be news to most people that the *Radio Times* does not accept any advertisements for "alcoholic beverages." A piquant account of what happened when the journal was approached with an advertisement, is detailed in Mr. F. Downman's pamphlet *Not Claret*. A reviewer comments: "In his opening pages, he marshals the correspondence, so that it displays all the insolence of office—the error in date, the illegible signature, the delay in acknowledging letters, the ignoring of argument." We like the phrase "the insolence of office"—so typical of the mentality of the various naval and military gentlemen in charge at the B.B.C. to say nothing of Sir John Reith himself. Needless to say, the *Radio Times* accepts advertisements of "aids to beauty"—with captions like "Warm Luscious Lips"; but to advertise claret, that is Hell indeed!

In an anthology of phases of Christianity entitled, *Freedom, Love and Truth*, compiled by Dr. Inge, he notes that "the Christian life is certainly an imitation of Christ, but this cannot mean a precise copying of the life lived by Jesus in Palestine. In any case, the materials for a biography of the modern kind do not exist in the case of Jesus." When Freethinkers said that in the past (and in the present) there was generally a holy hullabaloo. It is good to find even Dr. Inge admitting that the "materials" for a life of Jesus are simply not there. What is there, is a conglomeration of absurd myths, legends, miracles, and symbolism, most of which is being "found out"; and if Dr. Inge lives long enough, it is quite likely he will come into line with John M. Robertson's non-historicity theory. The case for a "real" Jesus has never been weaker than at the moment.

It would, of course, be impossible for Christmas to come round without those champions of Fundamentalism, the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Express*, doing their

best to buck up the flagging spirits of Christians. The *Express* reprints almost the whole of the Sermon on the Mount, which it calls "Our Lord's own statement of the philosophy that conquered the world"—and it asks, "Do you remember it?" We venture to say most people do not—and this must be the opinion of the *Express*, otherwise it would not have reprinted it. But why does a "philosophy" which has "conquered" the world, need to have tremendous armies of priests shouting their wares at the people, mostly in competition with each other, and moving heaven and earth to get "converts"? Even the most foolish of the *Express* readers must have his doubts about the "conquering."

The *Mail* pins its faith on "A Christ-Message," from the Rev. W. H. Elliott. His "Radio Talks" are an "inspiration to millions," we are told. One would dearly like to know how many radio-listeners turn their wireless on to another programme directly he is announced? However, Mr. Elliott asks his readers not to forget "prayer." "Without it," he says, "Christmas is a very Pagan festival." Yes, and even prayer can make it nothing else. Christmas is demonstrably Pagan, as every informed person must know. And almost anyone can write, as Mr. Elliott writes, that at this Pagan festival everybody should try and be happy and make other people happy. What else is a "festival" really for? Mr. Elliott's Christmas "Message" is packed with pious platitudes which are neither an inspiration, nor a help. They are just words.

It seems that there are 106,500 Christians in Palestine, 376,876 Jews, and 784,771 Moslems. Most of the recent row with the Arabs was because of the increase in the Jewish immigration, but Christians seem to have fairly hefty numbers and they were never mentioned. Aren't Christians allowed to land? Do they not own a large number of churches and shrines and grottos?

For example, there is the "Grotto of the Nativity." A "stable" has been discovered under the Church of Nativity—that is, it is a stable only if looked upon with holy eyes. Canon Bridgeman, who believes anything—myths, miracles and legends as being quite true, says that this is the genuine stable in which "Our Lord" was born and will come "as a surprise to many Westerners whose conception of a stable is something quite different." Obviously, a "grotto" under this particular church must be a "stable"; and though totally unlike a stable, is bound to be one of the "most sacred" places on earth. As both Justin and Origen said "Our Lord" was born in a stable, this *must* be it. In fact, such an identification though "unfamiliar in the West" comes "quite naturally to the Palestinian mind." All this means is that the uninstructed credulity-bound mind, handicapped still more with a superstitious faith, will, in Palestine, believe anything. And this is a good thing for Canon Bridgeman, otherwise he would lose his job.

Anyway, the celebration of the birth of "Our Lord" seems to be in a holy mix-up in Jerusalem. The Jews don't believe in it, so celebrate a jolly sort of paganism if they celebrate anything at all, as they do in England and elsewhere. The Copts, the Syrians and the Orthodox celebrate December 25, only they say it really is on our January 7. The Armenians say the birth took place on January 6 and not on December 25, so they celebrate the day on our January 19. The Latins and Anglicans, of course, keep the day as we do here. Altogether a delightful state of pious confusion must reign in the Lord's own city at Christmas time.

Mr. St. John Ervine, in his *Journey to Jerusalem*, has greatly displeased the "unco' guid" of the churches by his candid criticism of the Christian associations brought to mind by his visit to the so-called "Holy Land." Mr. Ervine said he "found nothing he wished to remember" of Nazareth; Jerusalem was "a terrible anti-climax—Christianity's worst advertisement." His

opinion of St. Augustine is that he was "an unctuous and unsavoury Arab, the greatest calamity that has ever befallen the church, and who should long ago have been decanonized." Abraham: "a cowardly and superstitious old ruffian," and St. Paul: "a tormented fanatic." Mr. Ervine's book is an admirable contrast to the unctuous hypocrisy of Mr. Morton's much-advertised visit to the same localities as Mr. Ervine saw.

Some of the oldest superstitions on earth persist, mainly for the reason that so long as some obvious superstitions are cherished as religion, all other superstitions find readier appeal. Dr. James Black is delighted because an American Professor revives one of the world's worst blows to childhood's happiness and education—the doctrine on which rests Cardinal Newman's hope that in a few generations a Church-taught child would inevitably remain for ever bound in the Church's fetters. Dr. Henry Link, of New York, says:—

The discipline principle emerges as the underlying factor in developing a good personality: and the strategic time to teach children to subordinate their impulses to higher values is when they are too young to understand but not too old to accept.

"Impulses to higher values" means, of course, unreasoning acceptance of stupid superstitions. In our opinion this is the way to produce a race of morons instead of thinkers.

Tradesmen who possess an inconvenient stock of demoded goods probably feel enormous contempt for people who refuse to patronize "Ye Olde Shoppe" ("Shoppe," explained an assistant once to the writer, "shoppe is a French word meaning SHOP"). The Bishop of Chelmsford persists in running the "olde" business—as in 1066 and all that! Listen to his plaintive wail:—

More and more every day I am puzzled to know how people can pass through life without God and without religion. I cannot see that they have anything for which to live.

As if it matters a cent to mankind whether the man is "puzzled" and "cannot see."

## Fifty Years Ago

CHARLES DARWIN

DURING his lifetime Darwin was the *bête noir* of the clergy. They hated him with a perfect and very natural hatred, for his scientific doctrines were revolutionary, and if he was right they and their Bible were certainly wrong. The Black Army denounced his impious teachings from thousands of pulpits. With some of them he was the Great Beast, with others Antichrist himself. And they were all the madder because he never took the slightest notice of them, but treated them with the silent contempt which a master of the hounds bestows on the village curs who bark at his horse's heels. Yet, strange to say, when Darwin died, instead of being buried in some quiet Kentish cemetery or churchyard, he was actually sepulchred in Westminster Abbey. The living, thinking and working man was a damnable heretic, hated of God and his priests, but his corpse was a very good Christian, and it was buried in a temple of the very faith he had undermined.

By-and-bye the great naturalist may figure as an ardent devotee of the creed he rejected. The clergy are hypocritical and base enough—as a body we mean—to claim Darwin himself now they have secured his corpse. Who knows but, in another twenty years, the verger or even the Dean of Westminster Abbey, in showing visitors through the place, may not say before a certain tomb, "Here is the last resting place of that eminent Christian, Charles Darwin. There was a little misunderstanding between him and the clergy while he lived, but it has all passed away like a mist, and he is now accounted one of the chief pillars of the Church?"

The "Freethinker," January 9 1887.

# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4  
Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

S. OATRIDGE.—Sorry to learn that illness kept you from our meeting at Manchester. But the weather was vile enough to keep anyone at home. Shall hope to see you on our next visit.

G. M. (Catford).—Copies of the paper are being sent.

MR. J. PABLO, renewing his membership to the N.S.S., writes, "that he cannot think of any form of expression that would properly estimate all he has learned from the *Freethinker* during his forty years experience of the paper. We are very pleased to hear it.

C.H.S.—Good wishes passed on to appropriate quarter. The only way we can get rid of such an incubus as the Archbishop of Canterbury and his like is by lifting the people above them. That will be done one day.

(MISS) C. H. MORGAN.—Cheque handed to N.S.S. Secretary. Thanks for good wishes. We are getting on very well, and taking as much care as is possible.

W. J. VAUGHAN.—Your explanation does not explain. Perhaps it is due to our dullness.

S. NEWTON.—Thanks for letter. We will bear the point in mind if we have occasion to refer to it.

E. A. MACDONALD (S.A.).—Thanks for New Year's greetings which we heartily reciprocate.

R. HARDING.—We have no figures at hand, but the estimate is certainly not a very extravagant one, and such figures are not intended to be mathematically exact.

D. FISHER.—The point you raise is one of the most difficult, and the most important in social evolution. It is that of combining the necessary adjustment of collective action with individual freedom of thought and action. Excess in the one direction means tyranny, in the other chaos and injustice.

To Distributing and Circulating the *Freethinker*.—C. F. Grundy, 4s.

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

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.

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.

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

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

Those intending to be present at the Thomas Paine Bicentenary Commemoration Dinner, on Saturday, January 23, are again reminded to secure tickets without delay. It is the late applicants who will be disappointed. For Provincial friends there is a lengthy list of day excursions to London, at cheap fares, by the L.M.S., G.W.R. and L.N.E.R. lines, which in nearly every case would enable ticket holders to remain until the end of the proceedings, and catch the return train. Tickets are 8s. each. A separate menu for vegetarians is provided, but those choosing that menu must notify when making application for tickets.

The Sunday movement and the Freethought movement have always been connected, more or less, in their personnel, and Mr. Chapman Cohen has promised to deliver the Donville Memorial lecture on Sunday evening next, January 17. The lecture will be delivered in the Victoria Hall, South, Bloomsbury Square. The subject of the lecture, will also be of a memorial character, "Thomas Paine and the Fight for Freedom." Admission is free and the chair will be taken at 8 p.m.

The death of Sir G. Elliot Smith removes from the world of science one of the few with a genuinely scientific brain. Workshop scientists are common, and they have their uses, but among these there appears a select few who possess a brain that belongs to the company of a Newton and a Darwin. The working scientists have their value, but they can be made. The true scientist is above price, and is born. More men of the rank of Elliot Smith, would diminish a deal of the nonsense that is current in the name of science, of which nonsense a man of the class of Sir James Jeans is so interesting and so attractive an exponent.

In the notices of his death, we give first place to one published by the *News-Chronicle*. After noting his work in connexion with the Pekin skull, a job that might have been done by a merely able man, it prints in bold type, "He did not believe in the generally accepted story of the Flood." We have good grounds for asserting that Sir Elliot Smith did not accept the historical accuracy of the Old Woman who lived in a shoe with a very large family. Needless to say that the *News-Chronicle* does not follow the scientist in this terribly revolutionary heresy.

The Leicester Secular Society will have Mr. H. R. Rosetti as speaker to-day (January 10), in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate. The subject will be "Christianity and the Growth of Militarism," and the lecture begins at 6.30 p.m. Mr. Rosetti always receives a warm welcome from audiences in the Secular Hall, and the subject should ensure a full house on this occasion.

Miss D. A. Griffin, past President of the National Union of Teachers, speaking at the Annual Conference of that body, asked that women should protest against the indignity of a woman at a Church wedding having to listen to the question, "Who giveth this woman?" That is not the only thing which intelligent women should resent at a church marriage service. And there is an easy remedy—the Registrar's office, where the marriage contract is made in a simple, dignified and honourable manner, and with a complete recognition that the two are entering into the most serious contract of their lives. We do not know of any real religion that recognises the equality of the sexes, but the Christian religion is as offensive as the worst.

The North London Branch N.S.S. regrets that through a misunderstanding the hall was not available for the opening lecture of the new session last Sunday evening at the Primrose Restaurant. The mishap was discovered late in the week, fortunately in time to save the speaker, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, making a long and useless journey, but too late to correct the paragraph in the *Freethinker*. The Branch offers a sincere apology to all who were disappointed, and inconvenienced.

The Leeds Branch of the N.S.S. is having some difficulty in obtaining suitable premises for its regular meetings. Perhaps some friends in Leeds may be able to assist in this matter. If so will they please communicate with the Branch Secretary, Mr. M. Feldman, 58 Meanwood Road, Leeds.

No religion can be better than human nature at its best.—G. C. Dorsey.

## Freak Religions

### MORMONISM

#### I.

ALTHOUGH nearly one hundred years have passed since the "prophet" of Mormonism was killed by a religious mob in the United States of America, the interest in this offshoot of Christianity is by no means dead. That is, it is still interesting to certain types of religious minds, both here and in America. Missionaries of Mormonism seem to have no difficulty in obtaining converts, and its great citadel, Salt Lake City, can boast of being one of the most successful cities, both from a religious and a social point of view, ever founded.

Joseph Smith, the first and greatest "saint" of Mormonism, was certainly a remarkable man. Nearly all men who have influenced masses of people must have had something in their composition which one can fairly call great; and there is no doubt that the obscure young man, meditating on religion in the year 1825, with little or no education to influence him, thinking out new ideas in a well-worn field, and commencing with only five followers, had certain qualities which raised him above the mass of his friends and contemporaries; as similar qualities have nearly always attended great religious leaders.

The hatred of the orthodox Christian sects has made it extremely difficult to approach Mormonism with a sense of real fair play. Even I, who feel that I am quite outside all religious sects, can never think of Mormonism without the bias inculcated in my younger days, when Mormon missionaries were reviled and insulted in every way, when we were told that the Mormons were the vilest of the human race, exulting in polygamy, and guilty of other and far worse crimes against true religion and humanity. A book like Conan Doyle's *Study in Scarlet* (the first of the Sherlock Holmes series) also did its share to make Mormonism one awful horror. Yet no one can read of the death of Joseph Smith, of the long march of his devoted followers to Salt Lake, of the founding of their great city, and of the continued success in the moral and social welfare of the "saints," without realizing that here is a phenomenon worth looking into from the point of view of a Freethinker.

Joseph Smith, born in 1805, in Sharon, Windsor County, Vermont, was undoubtedly, like so many other mystics, of an intensely religious nature. His experiences in praying, and the answers he received to his prayers, together with the heavenly visions vouchsafed to him, can be paralleled in other religious mystics. God, or an angel, or a vision from Heaven, informed him one day that his sins were forgiven, that all religious denominations were believing in incorrect doctrines, and that the true one, would one day be offered to him. This was duly fulfilled as Smith received the Visitor from heaven once again surrounded by a brilliant light which looked like a "consuming fire" (it always does). The angel naturally came up to expectations, and told Smith that the second coming of the Messiah was imminent, and "that the people should be prepared with faith and righteousness for the Millennial reign of universal peace and joy." Smith was chosen as God's great instrument to bring about this glorious dispensation, and—what will bring joy (or not) to the hearts of the Anglo-Israel believers—he was also told that the American Indians were "a remnant of Israel." In addition, Smith was given precise information as to where he could find the new "sacred records" enclosed in a box with three pillars. These records were engraved on gold plates, and bore marks of

great antiquity. In the box were also the Urim and Thummim—which were two transparent stones.

Smith translated the records, and his translation was published, after some difficulty, and can be bought by the curious reader. It purports to be the history of the ancient inhabitants of America, who were a branch of the house of Israel, of the tribe of Joseph, of whom the Indians are a remnant. One of their prophets—Mormon—engraved the plates in the fourth century, and was subsequently slain. They were deposited on a hill and found by Joseph Smith through a divine revelation. It is a very romantic story, and the only fly in the ointment is the statement of Smith's opponents. They state that a man called the Rev. Solomon Spaulding, in the year 1809, decided to write a sort of tale, basing it on the fantastic notion that the Red Indians were in reality a remnant of the lost tribes of Israel. Mormon and his son Moroni were two of the principal characters in it. In 1812 the book was finished and sent to a publisher. Unfortunately the author died, the book was never published, and, later, the publisher himself gave the MS. to one of his compositors, Sidney Rigdon. This Rigdon, it may as well be mentioned, became later one of the principal leaders of the Mormons. How Joseph Smith and Rigdon came together, and how they worked up Spaulding's romance into a Holy Book is not known. The fact remains that a number of witnesses gave evidence as to identity of the two books, and Spaulding's brother swore on oath that the *Book of Mormon* was his brother's story, with some religious matter added. So did Spaulding's wife, who issued a long statement to that effect. Rigdon, however, denied everything and called everybody a liar who claimed that Spaulding wrote the *Book of Mormon*.

All this, of course, made not the slightest difference to the followers of Joseph Smith, any more than proving beyond all possible doubt that Mrs. Eddy's *Science and Health* was concocted from "Professor" Quimby's writings, who, in turn, had stolen some of his ideas and expressions from other writings, makes any difference to Christian Scientists. The writing up of ancient works, and their attribution to famous or well known people seem to form part and parcel of religious literature.

Nobody ever saw the "golden plates"—except the "witnesses" to the new revelation who wrote quite a lot about it; and the witnesses quarrelled among themselves. Still, from time to time came the Voice of the Lord to the faithful, even commanding Mrs. Smith to publish a selection of "sacred hymns." And whenever Joseph Smith wanted something done, he managed to secure, in advance, another revelation.

Let it be admitted to his credit that he was courageous to a high degree and nothing daunted his preaching to all and sundry. Converts he made with rapidly, but he encountered the ferocious hatred of other religious sects. On one occasion he and Sidney Rigdon were tarred and feathered by a mob of Methodists and Baptists, but the bare statement gives little idea of its horror to the unfortunate men. Mormon converts were also constantly beaten and insulted, and fights were of regular occurrence, the authorities, whose business it was to preserve order, siding with the mob. The converts were also almost always expelled from the territories to which they belonged. And for three years the history of the sect "was one of strife and contention." On one occasion, some Mormons were massacred almost to a man by the army. In consequence, the Mormons armed themselves for their own defence, and appointed Joseph Smith as their General. Hence, he is often referred to as General Smith—a title quite as valid as General Booth. And it was in his capacity as

a General that he became a candidate for the Presidency of the United States, issuing a long address, and then another on his "views of the government and policy of the United States."

It is, of course, impossible to say what might have happened to Smith, even had he not been eventually killed. Whether he was or was not a firm believer in polygamy is not altogether clear. But it was this polygamy business, more than anything else, which led to his downfall. The Mormons had by this time built a fine town and church in Nauvoo, Ill. In 1838, Smith "persuaded several women to cohabit with him, calling them his spiritual wives"—though it is only fair to say that Mormons have always denied this. It is also said that to make the matter final, in 1843 Smith received a revelation authorizing polygamy. The result was eventually a sharp conflict between various mobs, and the death of Smith and his brother, murdered in prison, where they had surrendered themselves. This "martyrdom" practically made Mormonism.

H. CUTNER.

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## Metaphysics and Theology

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THESE two subjects may well be associated in the sense that, though long regarded as important, and producing innumerable volumes of exposition, they are yet completely vacuous. According to my biggest dictionary (which is a very good one) the latter was once included in the former: "Metaphysics was formerly distinguished into general and special. The former was called *Ontology*, or the science of being in general, whether infinite or finite, spiritual or material, and explained therefore the most universal notions and attributes common to all beings—such as entity, nonentity, essence, existence, unity, identity, diversity, etc." The paragraph goes on to say that special metaphysics was sometimes called *pneumatology*, which is defined as "the science of the nature and operation of the spirit or spiritual existence"; this in turn included *Natural Theology* and *Rational Cosmogony*, the latter treating of the origin and order of the world, *Theology* (presumably of the revealed kind in this case), with *Angelology* and *Demonology*, the last subdivision being *Rational Psychology*, which dealt with the "nature, faculties and destiny of the human mind."

The present meaning of the word is given in the same book as "the general principles, laws or causes which furnish the rational explanation of anything," and instances "the philosophy of the steam engine" and "the philosophy of banking." But it is difficult to see why the general principles involved in these things are not principles of science. Further on a definition given is "reasoned science."

Here we get nearly to the view of Comte and Spencer, viz., that philosophy consists of the widest generalizations of science. But I gather that the "official" philosophy of our universities is still largely of the older kind, the kind which some of us read extensively in our youth, in the hope of acquiring a sort of wisdom or culture over and above that attainable by the study of literature and other popular subjects. To me, however, there seemed to be little or nothing to "lay hold of"; and, personally, I turned to science.

Professor Taylor of St. Andrews, who lectured to us nearly twenty years ago at a summer school, seemed to be one of the more "positively-minded" of the academic group, and regarded philosophy as "the whole story of everything." He thought

there would never be any finally true philosophy in that sense, but that we might continue the attempt to construct our connected account of things as far as is at any time possible. This seems sensible enough, provided that the inquiry is kept severely based on ascertained fact and principle, in place of the old a priori method of drawing ideas from "inner consciousness," procedure which has resulted in so much futile weed-spinning. This result follows from the fact that such ideas are in the main if not wholly non-communicable, that is to say, they are such that they cannot be demonstrated to the satisfaction of all other thinkers, and upon them no general agreement is possible.

This line of thought is occasioned by an article on "Philosophy and History," in the *Hibbert Journal*, by, I think, a professor of the former subject. Early in the article was a quotation from a well-known philosophical exponent, which gave one pause: "History is Philosophy." And on this there were some appropriately illuminating comments. Following soon after was another equally vacuous notion, viz., "While the scientist lives and moves in an atmosphere of generality, the attention of the historian is fixed on the individual." To those who have done any actual scientific work it is obvious that science is concerned just as much—clearly more so, so far as most workers in the subject are concerned—with the individual or particular as with the general.

As regards history, perhaps a philosopher who may not follow the subject much may think—as is rather often suggested in literary writings—that history, especially that which is taught in schools, is still mainly concerned chiefly with the names and doings of kings and a few other people. But considerable improvement in this respect has been made during the last decade or two; and a move towards rendering the presentation "the whole history of civilization" is being made. There is, of course, still room for that sort of partly historical, partly literary account of the individual which we call biography.

J. REEVES.

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## History as it Should be Written

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"If God had not loved the common people," said Abraham Lincoln, "He would not have made so many of them."

The work of the people is manifest everywhere: in castles, ancient and modern; in abbeys, cathedrals, and churches; in towns and villages; in munitions, battle-ships, submarines, aeroplanes; in dungeons, prisons; and, in short, if the peoples' contribution to civilization was suddenly withdrawn, civilization would wither up as quickly as did the Gourd of Jonah.

If, on the other hand, the record of this remarkable contribution was deleted from history no one would notice its omission.

One history of four-hundred pages, I find contains 333 pages of Ecclesiastical History, 64 pages relating to monarchs and to battles; another,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of its pages to Ecclesiastical History, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  to Kings and their doings; another,  $\frac{3}{8}$  to Ecclesiastical History and  $\frac{1}{8}$  to secular matter relating thereto; another with 274 pages relating to the life of the nation, 28 pages to the churches, and 22 pages relating to the army, navy, and Royal residences. The latter, *Elizabethan England*, by William Harrison, is what a history ought to be. "William Harrison is the only

man who has ever given a detailed description of England and the English."

The houses wealthy people lived in are described as follows:—

"The better-class lived in good sort of dwellings. The rooms were wainscotted not with English but with Danish Oak; the staircases were massive and carved; the furniture substantial and costly, glass windows were so common in the houses of the rich, that Lord Bacon (1561-1626) complained that they were now 'so full of glass that we cannot tell where to come to be out of the sun or the cold!' Stoves began to make their appearance in family mansions."

Poor people: "Fire-places and chimneys were absent from the houses of the poor, and the roofs were made of reeds, not of straw-thatch as in latter times. In the country the peasants' houses were always of one storey, consisting of two rooms, often of one."

"Coal in the times of Elizabeth (1558-1603) was considered a nuisance, wood was the principal fuel."

Poor people plastered their houses with cow-dung in the summer, to peel it off and use it for fuel in the winter.

At the time of the Armada (1588), when a Census was taken, our population was slightly over five million. Before the Black Death (in 1348-9) there was quite as many people in England as during Elizabeth's reign. The Black Death and the Sweating Sickness of 1551 had taken off half the population.

The population in our towns may be judged by the following:—

	1600	1931
London ... ..	100,000	8,202,818
Liverpool ... ..	4,000	855,539
Leeds ... ..	7,000	482,789
Manchester ... ..	6,000	766,333
Norwich ... ..	29,000	126,207
Bristol ... ..	30,300	396,918
Birmingham ... ..	4,000	1,002,413
Sheffield ... ..	2,000	511,742

Manchester, an ill-built place, was commencing to work up cottons from Cyprus and Smyrna in imitation of woollen goods. Its *coatings*, or cottons, were just beginning to win a name. Sheffield was of little account in those days. Our steel goods were then imported. Liverpool (its postal address was then, Liverpool near Prescott), became the chief seat of the slave interest in Britain, and it owes its present prosperity to the impulse of the cotton trade at the end of the eighteenth century. Birmingham, probably, owes its success to its multiplicity of trades. In the time of Elizabeth it was a poor sort of village. Its success may be said to be quite modern.

"Land was rented at 6d., newly enclosed land at 8d. and 9d. per acre." The old common-lands were being enclosed to the detriment of the poor.

"Usury, a trade brought in by the Jews, now perfectly practised almost by every Christian."

In trade as practised then "We may see how each of us endeavoureth to fleece and eat up one another." "Foreign trade was growing in British hands, but agriculture was declining" (1615)!

"By God's mercy England scarce once in ten years needs a supply of foreign corn, which want commonly proceeds of the covetousness of private men, exporting or hiding it. Yet, I must confess, that daily this plenty of corn decreaseth, by reason that private men, finding greater commodity in feeding of sheep and cattle than in the plough requiring the hands of many servants, can by no law be restrained from turning corn-fields into enclosed pastures,

especially as great men are the first to break these laws." (Fynes Moryson, *Itinerary*, 1617).

Many people are of opinion that we owe our first poor-law to Elizabeth. Briefly, this is how the matter stands. The Act 23 Edward 3, passed in 1349, enacted that no person should give alms to a beggar able to work. The support of the poor was undertaken by the Church. By 29 Henry 8, passed in 1535, and necessitated by the dissolution of the monasteries, a compulsory poor law was established. The 43 Elizabeth C.2, passed in 1601, contained the germ of the present poor law.

Medicines: Gerrard's Herbal was the great book of the time. Gerrard's physic garden was in Holborn, and included upwards of one thousand different kinds of plants.

Roads were made on the concave system, and not convex, as now, that is they were lower in the middle than at the sides, the idea being that the rain would repair the roads by washing dirt into the middle.

Goods were carried about in heavy stage waggons at 15d. per ton per mile.

Foot passengers paid 1d. per night for beds.

Coaches were just coming into use in Elizabeth's time. None were on hire before 1630. In 1601 a Puritanic Lord endeavoured to obtain the sanction of Parliament for an act—"To restrain the excessive and superfluous use of coaches in the realm." Most travellers preferred to go on horseback.

There was no regular postal service in Elizabeth's time. The first regular postal system (1619) was introduced in the time of James I.

For amusement, the practice of archery, balls, civic feasts, cock-fights, bear-baiting, and merry-makings of all descriptions.

Miracle plays and dramas were performed in Coventry, Chester, York, and London. Here are the titles of five of the popular ones:—

- (1) "Of the Creation of the Heavens, of Angels, and of Infernal Spirits."
- (2) "On Noah's Deluge."
- (3) "Of the Slaying of the Innocents."
- (4) "On the Supper of our Lord."
- (5) "Of the Descent of Christ into Hell."

The Bible was translated during the reign of James I. (1603-1625) and dedicated to him. In this dedication he is credited with the possession of "Many singular and extraordinary graces." Here, evidently, is one of them—

"James I. paid a bigger salary to the man who had charge of his fighting cocks, than he did to his principal Secretaries of State."

Knives and forks were introduced from Italy, in 1611, but the uses of them were denounced by the clergy. "Pingers were provided by God; they were made before knives and forks." But the superstitions relating to forms of food such as "goose, hare, or hen" were supported by them.

The clergy of that age were a motley crew! They went about, says Harrison, "either in diverse colours like players, or in garments of light hue, as yellow, red, green, etc., with their shoes piked. . . . So that to meet a priest in those days was to behold a peacock that spreadeth his tail when he danceth before the hen."

GEORGE WALLACE.

Men talk glibly of the soul as apart from the body. What do they mean? Nothing but words, for the soul without a body is an incomprehensible thing, certainly to us.—*H. Fielding*.

## On Suicide

FEAR plays an all-important part in our lives. It makes us brave, and it makes us cowardly. Fear of death keeps us here on earth, except in special circumstances, when the fear of life exceeds the fear of death, and suicide results. It would therefore appear that to live by one's own hand is just as despicable as to die by one's own hand, the only difference being that we live involuntarily, whereas to die by one's own hand requires thought and resolution. This realization should lead us to a more lenient view of suicide than that conventionally taken. It is so easy to abuse the suicide; he cannot retaliate, and is unable to put his case. Even if he leaves some written explanation, it is usually passed over lightly. It will be remembered that Roman civilization regarded *felo de se* as an honourable end, and Shakespeare makes Julius Cæsar say, "Cowards die many times before their deaths." The hara-kiri of Japan is a modern parallel of the *felo de se* of Roman life.

Schopenhauer gave us a sentence upon which we can build a theory about suicide: "Nature, in order to save life, causes insanity, which then enshrouds with its veil the consciousness of that hopeless condition." Here is exploded a fallacy believed in by almost every coroner in the land. There is no such thing as suicide whilst of unsound mind. It is that very sanity, which coroners believe to be lacking, that causes suicide. The suicide's sanity causes him to "end the heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to." The suicide, with conspicuous rationality of thought, realizes that in the life of trials and sorrow which is his lot, death is not the greatest calamity which can befall him.

This last observation is especially true if the *felo de se* is conducted in a scientific and painless way. For instance, the taking of a poison which enables one to fall asleep and never wake up, the placing of a revolver in the mouth or to one ear so that the brains are instantly blown out, and that old favourite, the gas-oven; these are scientific ways of committing suicide. On the other hand, cutting the throat with a penknife (as Viscount Castlereagh did) or razor, hanging by a rope, and jumping from a window or cliff or in front of a railway train, are definitely crude methods, liable to failure, and in any case not bringing instantaneous death, and hence adding more pain to the victim's existing suffering before giving final release.

My contention may be challenged, that suicide results from a person's being placed in unbearable circumstances and not going mad, but statistics show that both suicides and the inmates of our many mental hospitals reach their highest numbers in times of hardship. Hereditary imbeciles aside, lunatics are persons who have saved their existence by losing their minds. Stronger wills, when overtaken by unendurable hardship, do not go mad—they make an end of things. On this point the law is as illogical as ever. A man who fails in committing suicide is treated as a criminal and imprisoned. If he succeeds he is dubbed "of unsound mind." Surely a clearheaded, sane man is more likely to succeed in this exacting task, whilst when a man fails, it may be because he is not in full possession of his faculties. Therefore, is it not an injustice to treat as a criminal the man who fails? Mental treatment would seem more in equity. If a man has suicidal tendencies the stigma of prison is hardly likely to make life sweeter for him.

Marcus Aurelius declared it to be one of "the noblest functions of reason to know whether it is time to walk out of the world or not." Here is an extract from the first message received from Captain

Scott's expedition concerning Captain Oates, a man who exercised that function of reason which Marcus Aurelius praises: "We knew that Oates was walking to his death, but though we tried to dissuade him, we knew it was the act of a brave man and an English gentleman." Here suicide is recognized as courageous and gentlemanly.

Let us examine the suicide of Viscount Castlereagh, Britain's representative at the Congress of Vienna. He had lived to see Napoleon defeated and in the grave, but, as the possessor of an astute mind, he was probably quick to realize that Britain's victory was not so shining as it had appeared. He saw chaos, impoverishment and unemployment, just as we today see the same things resulting from the Great War. Moreover, Castlereagh was a reactionary, and, in his sanity, probably he knew it. Time had passed him by. The years of the war had stirred up many new ideas; Castlereagh saw his cherished doctrines being swept away. His contempt for the people was incompatible with the growing liberal and democratic tendencies. In short, he was a bar to progress, and as he thought himself too old—he was fifty-three—to begin life afresh, he committed suicide. His *felo de se* may be regarded as a supreme example of sanity and self-sacrifice.

Another interesting suicide is that of Lord Clive. As a boy he had an insatiable taste for mischief and wild pranks. He it was who climbed the church steeple at Market Drayton, and at eighteen he was shipped to India as an incorrigible young rascal. But soon he found that as a clerk in the East India Company—away from friends and the scenes of his boyhood—his life was monotonous and dull. Hence he twice attempted suicide; and he might have made a third and successful attempt had he not suddenly broken the monotony of life by running away and joining the Indian army. Very soon we find him taking Arcot with a handful of men and thereafter he plunged into a bout of military adventure. Clive the soldier became Clive the administrator, fame being all the time heaped upon him. His enemies were at work, however, and on returning to England he had to face impeachment for malpractices. The trial broke his health and his heart. Life for him became again much as it had been in the East India Company's service, but this time he was on the wrong side of forty—he was a back-number. Being a man of action, he lingered no longer but boldly destroyed himself.

Other well-known cases can be cited to show that it is sanity (as opposed to unsoundness of mind) which makes people commit suicide. We may mention Lucretia, who like Madam Butterfly fulfilled the motto, "To die with honour when one can no longer live with honour"; Hannibal, who preferred death to the vengeance of the Romans, to which his defeat at the battle of Zama exposed him; Craggs, Postmaster-General when the South Sea Bubble burst, who did not care to face an inquiry; Lord Nelson, who had been degraded beyond redemption by Lady Hamilton, and so strode recklessly about the bullet-swept deck, not caring if he was hit; Villeneuve, who endured the disgrace of his defeat at Trafalgar barely six months; King Theodore of Abyssinia, the savage despot who blew out his brains when he saw Magdala, his capital and stronghold, fall before the British forces; Barney Barnato, who had grown so fond of money that a diminution in his income was intolerable to him; Ivar Kreugar, who when he knew the game was up absconded; and Justice McCordie, who gave up the law, which he tried to reform, as hopeless.

If, however, I recommend every man for his own benefit to adopt some effective form of suicide with-

out tarrying longer, my contemporaries will probably not take me seriously because I have never shown any inclination to practise what I preach. In that respect I resemble many other writers and speakers who are disregarded just as I am, and for the same reason.

NORMAN ROBERTS.

## Correspondence

### A REMINDER

#### TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—We read that the Archbishop of Canterbury will shortly broadcast an appeal for a "Return to Religion." From this it is obvious that the Church is aware of a secession; we are becoming a nation of backsliders.

The Primate will doubtless, deplore the decay of religious worship, and when I recall the far-off days of my boyhood I realize what a vast change has taken place in the observance of Sunday as a day of prayer and praise.

Attendance at church, often twice, was the rule in most families and the only permissible amusement, so-called, was a decorous walk which we took, prayer book in hand, after service.

On Sunday secular music, even in the home, was interdicted, there were no games, no amusements of any kind and picture galleries and museums were closed.

The Church can never restore the drab and depressing Victorian Sunday, it can never induce the people to forego the freedom which they now enjoy; middle-class papa will play golf, or take mamma and the children for a drive to the country or the seaside, and those who do not possess a car will amuse themselves as their tastes suggest and their means allow.

In other times the Church would have adopted drastic measures; we should have been compelled, like the unwilling wedding guests, to come in; as for you, Sir (a notorious offender) a sackcloth suit would have been your only wear.

When we contemplate the changes which have taken place during the past fifty years, the spread of organized rationalism, the decay of superstition and the comparative freedom from clerical interference which exist to-day, we may rejoice and say, as Galileo did, "Mover!" and congratulate ourselves that there is now no authority which can compel us to come in.

EDGAR SYERS.

## Obituary

### JAMES WILLIAM MARSHALL

We regret to announce the death of James William Marshall, which took place on December 27, in his 81st year. For many years he had been an active worker in the Freethought movement, and was well known in the West Ham area, where he was at one time President of the local N.S.S. Branch, and a much appreciated speaker from its platform. He also regularly spoke for other London Branches, and served for some time as a member of the Executive of the N.S.S. In later years he preferred to act as a free lance, and in that capacity he carried on active work for the movement on and off the platform right up to the time when nature called "halt!" He was an excellent elocutionist, and often contributed to the programme at the West Ham Branch Socials. The funeral took place at the City of London Cemetery, Manor Park, London, E., on December 31, where before a gathering of relatives and friends a Secular Service was conducted at the graveside. Mrs. E. M. Warner represented the West Ham Branch N.S.S.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

### LONDON

#### OUTDOOR

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

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

#### INDOOR

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Primrose Restaurant, 66, Heath Street, Hampstead, N.W.3, one minute from Hampstead Underground Station): 7.30, Debate—"Communism is no Remedy." *Affir.*: Mr. H. Cutner. *Neg.*: Mr. Pat Dooley.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Alexandra Hotel, South Side, Clapham Common, S.W.4, opposite Clapham Common Station, Underground): 7.30, Debate—"The Futility of Non-Political Freethought." *Affir.*: Mr. Jack Cohen, late Secretary of Socialist Freethinkers. *Neg.*: Mr. H. Preece.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, W. B. Curry, M.A., B.Sc.—"1936 and After."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edware Road, W.): 7.30, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A.—"The Good and Bad in Christian Ethics."

### COUNTRY

#### INDOOR.

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane): 7.0, J. V. Shortt (President Liverpool Branch N.S.S.)—"Aims and Objects of Life."

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Laycock's Cafe, Kirkgate, entrance via passage facing Burtons): 7.15, Mr. M. Levin—"The Zionists."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, (The John Turner Lecture), Mr. J. Clayton—"The Archbishop and His Religion."

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Freegardeners' Hall, Picardy Place, Edinburgh): 7.0, Mr. G. Whitehead—"Freethought and Dictatorship."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow): 7.0, Mr. T. L. Smith, G.S.S.—"Thomas Paine."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, entrance in Christian Street, Islington, Liverpool): 7.0, Geo. T. Holliday (Liverpool)—"The Piracy of Civilization."

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Green Street): 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

TEES-SIDE BRANCH N.S.S. (The Labour Hall, 124 Newport Road, Middlesbrough): Mr. H. Dalkin—A Lecture.

## The "Freethinker" Circulation Drive

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

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

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

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

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