

# THE FREETHINKER

• EDITED *by* CHAPMAN COHEN •  
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*Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums,  
Letters to the Editor, etc.*

## Views and Opinions

### An Ancient Christian Practice

AMONG the letters congratulating us on our edition of *The Age of Reason*, we have had several grumbles. They were good-natured, and came from friends, and the complaints of friends are usually worthy of attention. In this instance the complaint is that we have said little or nothing concerning the various slanders that have been circulated about Paine. We plead guilty, but remain unashamed. We never have bothered very much about the slanders that sincere Christians have manufactured concerning famous unbelievers. Sometimes we have been forced to pay them some attention, but even then we did not feel interested in them—at least, our interest was not of the kind that a great many Freethinkers have felt over them. We never expected that Christians would deal honestly with their opponents, and we were never hurt or disappointed when they dealt with them dishonestly. The Christians very early said the Devil was a liar, and Satan might truthfully have retorted that in that respect he had nothing on Christians. Whether they took lessons from the Devil or the Devil learned the art in its full perfection from Christian controversialists, I do not know; it is a question I must leave those learned in Christian antiquities to decide. But if one takes the very long list of forged documents, bogus miracles, sham relics, winking Madonnas, and pretended faith-cures, to say nothing of the personal slanders of Catholics on Protestants, Protestants on Catholics, and both on non-Christians, that man must be very optimistic who expects that Christians will speak truthfully of one to whom they owe so much as they do to Thomas Paine. They even convert their debt into a liability on the part of their benefactor. Paine shook their faith in the Bible, and they hated him for their enlightenment.

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### A False Issue

What use was there, then, in troubling oneself over-much about Christian lies concerning Paine? They were not without their interest, nor were they des-

titute of materials for instruction. It was interesting to trace the causes which led Christians to give so lowly a rank to truth in their scale of virtues, and to trace the conditions which led to falsehood being perpetuated in Christian controversy; but as a measure of whether what a man said concerning Christian beliefs was true or false, the argument from character was quite worthless. I never used it of Christians, and I could do no more than smile when I found it used against Freethinkers. I have known some Christians who were better than some Freethinkers, and I have known some Freethinkers who were better than some Christians. For the life of me I could never take the slandering of Freethinkers very seriously. I felt far more concerned in discovering a possible flaw in the Freethinker's argument against Christianity, than I did when told that the man who had written an indictment of Christian belief got drunk regularly. I could see that the taking of drugs or drink too lavishly, that the torture of the body by starvation, or of the mind by unhealthy brooding, might provide a basis for religious belief, for by this road visions and hallucinations might come, but what relation could there possibly be between any of these practices and the truth of an analysis of the authorship of the Pentateuch? The man who professed to trace such a connexion, and who made it the ground of his rejection of the said analysis, did not lead me to question the truth of the criticism, it only induced me to study the Christian. He became a subject for a case-book, a phenomenon in the realm of mental pathology, a problem in perverted mentality.

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### The Essential Issue

So, when I wrote about Paine, just as when I wrote about Bradlaugh and Ingersoll, I really was not greatly interested in how they treated their wives, or whether they got drunk, or whether they were guilty of some of the things of which so many of their fellow-creatures are guilty. I was not attracted to these men because they treated their wives well, because most men treat their wives well. I was not attracted to them because they did not get drunk regularly, because the majority of men do not get drunk regularly. They did not fascinate me because they could be trusted in a room in which loose money was lying about, because most men could be so trusted. I was interested in their ideas, in the soundness of their opinions, in the logical character of their reasoning, in their claim that they were speaking the truth on the subject with which they were dealing. And when the Christian tried to divert my attention from these aspects of the case in which I was interested, I did not become a co-operator in his stupidity by discussing the question of whether the Freethinker was a model of all the virtues, or whether he was just about as bad as many of



the Christians I saw around me. And it is worth noting that when Christians discovered that their talk about the character of "infidels" left me unmoved, they generally left off bothering me with it. And then I had a chance of getting to close quarters with the subject that really mattered.

It was the Freethinking of Paine, of Voltaire, of Bradlaugh that interested me, not the way they treated their wives or the question of whether they ever got drunk. Bishops have got drunk, but I never thought that this proved the Bible was not inspired. Parsons have "carried on" with the wives of their parishioners, but that was never taken to prove that the resurrection was a myth. Many statesmen have got drunk, but no one ever suggested that therefore any Bill they introduced must be thrown out. Michael Angelo kept more than one mistress, but I am sure that this would not prevent the Archbishop of Canterbury picking up one of his paintings at bargain prices. Nelson lived in "open sin" with Lady Hamilton, but the fact is not recorded on the monument in Trafalgar Square, and it does not affect his quality as a sailor. If these things had no connexion with a man's value as an artist, a Christian, a statesman or a fighter, I really could not see what connexion they had with a man's value as a critic of religious doctrines. More or less politely I generally told the Christian who raved about the "immoralities" of Voltaire or Bradlaugh, that I didn't care a "twopenny damn" about them. Either might have been as lecherous as many a medieval monk for all I cared, and as far as the argument against Christianity was concerned. I wanted to get on with the real business—and the Christian wanted to keep me from doing so. But I never helped the enemy fight his case.

Besides, does anyone really imagine that the Christian who rejects the opinions for which Paine stood would at once accept them if he were shown that Paine was a model of the domestic and social virtues? Would he adopt Bradlaugh's Atheism if he were convinced that Bradlaugh never asked God to prove his existence by striking him dead within three minutes? Would he reject the whole story of the life of Jesus Christ if he were certain that every Freethinker is an incarnation of all the virtues? I do not think so. Instead of this developing sympathy with the Freethinker it would have quite the opposite effect. A Freethinker who is bad, or who can be made to appear bad, the Christian Church has never ceased to welcome and advertise. He is as useful to the Church as a drunken wife-beater is to a Christian mission. But the Christian has no use for the Freethinker who is not as bad as he *ought* to be. He becomes a wife-beater who does not thrash his wife, a drunkard who does not drink, a liar who does not lie. The Church banishes him to oblivion. It has no use for so great an anomaly.

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#### No Monopoly in Vice

There is another reason why I could never develop the burning indignation that Christians obviously thought I ought to develop at the alleged rascality of famous Freethinkers. I believe in what I may call the commonality of human nature. I mean by this a conviction that human nature is fundamentally identical in its basic qualities, differing only in its forms and in the relative values of the way in which it finds expression. And I did resent this presumptive attempt of the Christian to set the Freethinker as a class apart, a class that ought to be better than Christians are, and which ought not to be guilty of the faults that Christians so clearly display. No Christian that I have ever come across gets violently upset when he hears of a brother believer stealing, or getting drunk,

or running away with another man's wife. All he says is that we are "poor human vessels," and he would certainly be angry if a Freethinker said that the behaviour of Christians proved Christian doctrines to be false. I see no justification whatever for the Christian peremptorily demanding that the Freethinker shall exhibit a higher level of conduct than is achieved by others. He says that Freethinkers are not so good as they ought to be. I have noted that myself; but he is actually *complaining* that some Freethinkers are as bad as Christians. I have also noted *that*, although the fact is so obvious that I cannot take credit for quickness of perception in doing so.

Still I think it unfair for the Christians to speak and write as though they ought to have a monopoly of human vices. I dislike monopolies, and I protest against this stealthy attempt to form a corner in misdemeanours. Vice and virtue exist potentially with all; there is merely a difference in their distribution and in the form in which they find expression. The man who would never dream of raising a hand to his wife may lead her a life that makes every hour of her existence a veritable hell; and the man who treats his wife to an occasional thrashing may be the kindest of husbands between whites. The man who would be horrified at getting drunk, will gorge himself with food till he sets up chronic dyspepsia. The Freethinker *if* he drinks, or steals, or elopes with another man's wife, is only doing what convinced Christians have been doing ever since Jesus Christ was crucified, and will keep on doing so until Jesus Christ comes back again. So far as I can see, Freethinkers should have the same right to misbehave as Christians have. The "weaker vessel" theory can be pushed too far. If a Freethinker is pricked he bleeds, if you tread on his toes he growls, and there are enough natural bars between human beings without creating artificial ones. Bad behaviour is at least one clear ground on which the Freethinker and Christian may be able to approach each other on a basis of equality—particularly as a basis of intellectual equality is not so easily found.

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#### To Thine Ownself—!

Above all I would dearly like to see all Freethinkers more concerned about what they think of themselves, and less about what Christians think of them. Respect must be commanded, it can never be won by wooing. A respect that is won by solicitation is no more than patronage, and patronage is an insult disguised as a compliment. When I was very, very young I learned from Emerson that ultimately the only person who could injure one was oneself. Stand well in your own considered opinion, taking care that you delight in the best things and the truest things, and other people's opinion of you will matter very little. It is understandable that Freethinkers who derive from Christians, and who are exposed to the pressure of family and social connexions shall place importance upon what Christians think of them. But there is a region in which a man must be prepared to stand alone if he is to preserve his own self-respect, and *command* the genuine respect of others. Many have stood with pride in the criminal dock, and have with uplifted head marched to execution amid the jeers of their fellows because they have retained their self-respect. It is not the task of the true Freethinker to live striving to gain the respect of Christians, but so to live that he may always stand worthily in his own estimation. And nothing that I can think of will ever stop Christians lying about Freethinkers, nothing, that is, except the disappearance of Christianity. And I can



always imagine the last Christian looking back with the deepest regret to the time when lying for the greater glory of God held so honoured a place in Christian practice.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## Pruning the Prayer Book

"When a thing is originally wrong, amendments do not make it right."—*Paine*.

"The brains are out of Christianity, which is now living on its inherited spiritual capital."—*G. W. Foote*.

BUILDERS sometimes put a new frontage to an old house, and modernize the interior. Priests do the same thing. Realizing that their two-thousand-years' old Christian Religion is no longer in harmony with twentieth-century ideas, they are making alterations and repairs in order to make the ancient superstition look more acceptable to modern men and women. The dogmas of hell-fire and eternal damnation are no longer considered as suitable subjects for sermons. Barbarous and indelicate portions of the Bible are glossed over, or omitted entirely. Antiquated hymns, full of sanguinary details, are ignored. And hypocritical lip-service is paid to science and to democratic ideals in order to hoodwink the thoughtless. In short, the clergy are doing their utmost to hold on to their comfortable salaries, for they know full well that the conscience of the race is rising above their ancient abracadabra.

Out of the hundred different forms of religion in this country the State-aided, so-called, Church of England is the wealthiest, and its priests have more at stake, financially, than any of the others. Its annual revenue is that of a small state, and runs into millions of money. Not only do these priests possess the accumulated wealth of centuries of unlimited power, vast sums of dead men's money, the "rake-off" from tithes, coal royalties, and ground-rents, but they still squeeze their dupes in the pews for about two millions yearly. And all this happens in the days of this Church's decadence. For statistics show that only one person in nineteen of the population now attends a place of worship regularly, and most of them are Nonconformists. Indeed, this Church of England is largely an organized mockery. It has half a hundred churches in the City of London proper with an infinitesimal resident population. One church, whose priest receives £1,000 a year, has a parish-population of thirty-two persons. And many country churches are in a similar position, for this State-aided institution is fast becoming a church of priests, and no longer has any real claim to the title of "national."

Some nine years ago an attempt was made by Anglican priests to bring their Church's official Prayer Book more into line with modern culture. Priests are proverbially greedy, but in this instance they overreached themselves. Hoping to kill two birds with one stone, they tried to include Romanist doctrine with the alterations in the proposed version. The result was that the House of Commons rejected the first version of this camouflaged Prayer Book. Nothing daunted, the priests are now launching a new campaign for a modernized volume. Priests, like the Bourbons, "learn nothing, and forget nothing." Hence the proposed new Prayer Book is simply the discarded volume with a further coat of camouflage to cover the old shortcomings.

Leaders of the new campaign for a reconditioned Prayer Book are trying hard to persuade the church-going public that a modernized version of this old

volume is now necessary for a "National" Church. But this Anglican Church has long ceased to be a national institution in any real sense of the word. Its membership has dwindled to a mere percentage of the population, and its leading ecclesiastics have sunk to the level of mere talking-machines, repeating like parrots, the language of the Ages of Ignorance and Faith. Let there be no mistake on this point. This Church of England is bound hand and foot to ancient ecclesiastical tradition, Canon Law, and the Thirty-Nine Articles, all of which are in direct conflict with modern ideas. For example, this "National" Church teaches that all men are accursed who do not accept its dogmas. Democracy teaches that all men are equal. This Church teaches that woman is "the weaker vessel," and subordinate to man. Democracy insists on the equality of the sexes. This Church bolsters Monarchy. Democracy believes in government of the people by the people. This Church frowns at divorce, but the State permits it. In the House of Lords, where bishops hold the balance of power, these Right-Reverend Fathers-in-God have retarded progress for many generations. They were ever true "die-hards" in their opposition to Democracy, and voted against extensions of the franchise as readily as they did against Early-Closing Bills and seats for tired shop-assistants.

This is only part of the misdeeds of Priestcraft. Recall the religious racket in relation to agriculture, a basic and necessary industry. For nearly twenty centuries these godly gangsters levied a ten-per-cent "rake-off" on farmers, and collected thousands of millions of money. They even "bumped-off" their enemies by burning them alive. Present-day ecclesiastics are the residuary legatees of these very ill-gotten gains. And now, in this twentieth century, these priests are still up to their little game. In a few weeks, Christian clergy will pretend that the paraphernalia of the King's Coronation is, in reality, a rededication of this nation to "God," which, in plain English, means its subjugation to Priestcraft for a further term of exploitation.

In all this parlous state of affairs there is room for far more drastic alteration and action than the discarding of barbaric and unseemly Biblical passages from the official Prayer Book of the State-supported Church. Few worse misfortunes can befall a people than this of possessing a powerful priestly caste in its midst that saps the very mainspring of morality, that permits mental confusion, and that constantly brakes the wheels of progress. In this connexion the word "reverend" is pure unadulterated humbug. To apply it to the common curate, or to the purse-proud prelate, is as absurd as to apply the terms "All Highest" or "Gracious Majesty" to a mummy of one of the Pharaohs exposed to public exhibition in the British Museum.

For that particular form of the Christian Religion, which is known as the Church of England, has a very materialistic origin. It has been manufactured by Parliament, and from time to time has actually been under the hands of its creator for alterations and repairs. This creator is no supernatural being, but a cynical association known as the House of Commons, having no religion in particular, and looking upon the superstition which it patronizes as would a special constable, whose prime duty is to frighten people from attending too much to the affairs of life by promising them rewards and punishments when they are no longer alive.

What Parliament has made it can also unmake. This State Church is but a survival from the bad old days when Priestcraft rode roughshod over the lives and liberties of the people. It is not even necessary to reform such an anachronism. What is precisely



needed is that it should be disestablished and discredited, and left to settle down among the hundred forms of religious opinions to be found in this country.

Centuries ago, at the Pillars of Hercules, early geographers put on their maps: "Hic deficit orbis"—Here ends the world. They had no idea, no suspicion even, that beyond that world there stretched another twice as great. Priests are equally naïve and ignorant. They act and talk as if the world's clock had struck at Jerusalem two thousand years ago, and had never moved since. Their Christian Religion which began as a heresy, developed into a superstition, and has culminated as a vested interest. Is it not time to challenge effectively the frauds and follies which these priests make money out of? This Church's money supports a Black Army of priests, which fights Progress at every turn.

MIMNERMUS.

## Logical Atheism

THERE is no law which forbids the misuse of words. It is not uncommon, therefore, to find the term Atheist misapplied. Observation shows that the name has been given to or acquired by persons who cannot have been anything more than doubting Christians or disgruntled God-believers. It is indeed probable that from this source are derived those heroes of the "converted Atheist" fables so popular with preachers and religious pamphleteers. Not everyone who is dubbed Atheist is in fact a genuine or logical Atheist.

Logical Atheism does not merely consist in proclaiming one's disbelief in God. It should also consist in the ability to propound a logically conclusive proof of the non-existence of God. That such proof is not only possible, but easy, it will be my aim to demonstrate in the following paragraphs.

Let me begin by asking a question. Does anyone believe in the existence of a circular square, or a wealthy pauper, or a living corpse? If words are to have any consistent meanings, and if the purpose of speech is not to babble nonsense, it must be clear that each of the three concepts I have named is a logical absurdity which can have no existence. But by what logical process do we arrive at this conclusion? Some of us will be able to give a ready answer. Others will not be quite so sure. The matter is, however, quite simple to explain.

It makes no difference which of the three logical absurdities we take since the method of proof remains the same for all such concepts. Let us, therefore, take the wealthy pauper as our example. By definition the word *pauper* means a person who is *not rich*. By definition the word *wealthy* has the same meaning as the word *rich*. So a wealthy pauper must be one who is *rich and not rich at the same time*. This, being an absolute contradiction in terms, renders the concept an impossibility and therefore non-existent. By the same process of definition we find that there is an absolute contradiction in terms in both the other concepts. And when we come to define the term God we shall discover similar contradictions which make of it a logical absurdity.

It is the delight of most theologians and not a few philosophers to scoff at precise definition. Ambiguous terminology is the life-blood of their professions. On the subject of God their vagueness reaches its highest pitch. One is led to suspect that there is a sound reason for this phenomenon. For the clearer one's ideas about God become, the easier it is to discern the absurdity of the concept.

But the intelligent man who is in search of truth,

and seeks to arrive at correct conclusions, realizes that discussion is futile if ambiguous or vague words are not clearly defined. He will point out with considerable pertinence that it is useless to discuss the existence or non-existence of a *balascope*, for instance, unless the term is provided with some intelligible definition which will enable him to know what is being discussed. And the same is true of the word *God*.

Unfortunately the muddle-headed thinking of religious persons has done much to make such definition impossible. It has also produced a crop of misleading irrelevancies which render straightforward discussion very difficult. Before proceeding with the main argument, therefore, I shall deal with some of the more important of these irrelevancies.

To begin with there are some who aver that the Atheistic argument nullifies itself for the following reasons. The Atheist (they say) declares that God is non-existent. Now a non-existent thing is nothing; and nothing can be proved or disproved about nothing. So obviously the Atheist can neither prove nor disprove anything about God.

The flaw in this piece of verbal jugglery may be exposed in this way. The Atheist admits that God is nothing, but he is not concerned with proving it to himself. His aim is to prove it to a God-believer. So he asks the God-believer: "Do you also admit that God is nothing?" If the God-believer answers "Yes," then the Atheist points out that there is nothing to prove, since the God-believer has granted his contention. But if the God-believer answers "No" (as he naturally would), then the Atheist replies: "Since you believe that God is something, it is my aim to prove that your belief is wrong."

Having reminded the God-believer that it is possible to formulate verbal descriptions which are logical absurdities, and which therefore represent concepts that can have no existence, he will proceed to show that there are plenty of single words which also represent non-entities or, as we say colloquially, things which do not exist. *Jabberwock*, *phlogiston*, *centaur*, and *phoenix* are all examples of such words. And just because these words represent non-entities, it is not therefore impossible to prove that such is the case. For instance, by definition we discover that the word *Jabberwock* is the name for a purely fictitious creature invented by a certain author to amuse his young readers. Being admittedly a fiction, the *Jabberwock* is thereby proved to be a non-entity. By a similar process we may also prove that the word *God* represents a non-entity.

The second irrelevancy which the Atheist has to dispose of is that he is expected to deal with any and every definition of God which it may please the muddle-headed theologian or philosopher to invent.

It is fashionable with some of the more "advanced" of these gentlemen to equate the God of Christianity with some highly abstract conception of their own. Having found the accepted definitions of this deity to be logically untenable, they invent some theoretical idea (such as Absolute Reality or Primal Cause) in the lively expectation that the new description will be accepted in lieu of the old. By this means they humbug the half-baked intellects of our *intelligentsia* into believing that the obviously impossible God of religion is not quite so impossible as the religious definitions make him.

Now although it may be clever philosophical or religious tactics to change the definition of a word as soon as a previous definition is found to be absurd, it is not straightforward or logical argument. The accepted definition of a *centaur* is a creature which is half horse and half man. If, having proved that no such creature can exist, we were to change the definition to something less absurd, would that be regarded



as legitimate or logical argument? The new definition might refer to something which *could* exist, but would it therefore be correct to apply it to a centaur? It is patent that in changing the definition we are merely side-tracking the original subject of discussion.

The Atheist, therefore, is not concerned to discuss whether the word God can be provided with some new and less absurd definition than those hitherto accepted. He is concerned to show that the accepted religious descriptions prove that God is a logical absurdity and therefore a non-entity. In order to do this he needs only to take such definitions as are fundamental to the concept of God, and which have been accorded general acceptance by persons admitted to be Christians. They are as follows.

God is almighty, all good and all knowing. God is the creator of this world and all that it contains. He is the author of man's freedom of choice between good and evil.

The analysis which proves, from these definitions, that God is a logical absurdity proceeds as follows.

(1) God created this world. Good and evil are both present in it. Therefore God created evil.

But God is all-good. Therefore he cannot have created evil.

So God is something which both can and cannot create evil. In other words God is a logical absurdity.

(2) God is Almighty. Therefore he can create everything. But because he is all-good, he cannot create evil. Therefore he cannot create everything.

So God is something which both can and cannot create everything. In other words God is a logical absurdity.

(3) God is all-knowing. Therefore he knows everything before it happens.

God gave man free-will. In other words, man's choice between good and evil is not predetermined.

So God cannot know which choice man will make. Therefore God does not know everything before it happens.

So God is something which both does and does not know everything. In other words God is a logical absurdity.

\* \* \*

Although the foregoing is a conclusive proof that the word God represents a logical absurdity which, for that reason, can have no existence, it is not by any means the only way of proving God's non-existence. Space, however, forbids me to enumerate the various other methods, all of which (quite naturally) lead to the same inevitable conclusion.

C. S. FRASER.

## Class Distinctions

CARLYLE, in his *Sartor Resartus*, has much to say about clothes and their significance.

"Among wild people," he tells us, "We find tattooing and painting even prior to clothes. The first spiritual want of a barbarous man is Decoration, as indeed we still see among the barbarous classes in civilized countries." And this "first spiritual want" of ours must still be satisfied before we can go to church, or to war.

Clothes play a great part in our lives. To be well-dressed is still the outward symbol of integrity.

"I could see, directly the prisoner entered the dock," said a jurymen, "that he was innocent. A better-dressed man I wouldn't wish to see."

The dog forms similar opinions. He rarely barks at well-dressed people, but always shows his teeth at tramps, or workpeople.

But dogs, like their masters can make mistakes. A dog was eating his dinner, and snarling at another dog who wished to join him, when a strange, big dog came on the scene. Both dogs instantly attacked the strange dog, and after a desperate battle, in which the stranger was put to flight, our dog came back to resume his dinner, only to find that it had been eaten by a pacifist neighbour.

Dogs of the very respectable class can get wrongfully blamed, too. A disreputable dog, having worried a fowl, made off before being detected. And a pretty little spaniel, a few minutes later, found sniffing at the fowl, was charged with having worried it.

Circumstantial evidence, seemingly free from the possibility of doubt, can be very untrustworthy.

Poverty prevents many evilly disposed people from taking an undue advantage of clothes. It also prevents many otherwise well disposed people from making fools of themselves.

India is much made of by many people as being the home of Caste.

The Caste system and our class distinctions have much in common. Both seem to have grown from the same root.

The Caste system was produced from fighting. The conquering nation became the reigning Caste. The conquered became outcasts (outside the pale of native Society). The many Castes, to which we have made an expensive addition, have all arisen quite simply.

The hereditary nobility here are not, strictly speaking a Caste despite their legislative privileges, because a born commoner can be made a nobleman, and no Sudra (a member of the fourth and lowest of the Hindu Caste) can be made a Brahman.

And for this great advantage over the poor Indian, we ought to be profoundly thankful.

But of the actual operation of the two systems—Caste—and Class—one great feature common to both is their criminal-producing tendency.

In England all our institutions, from our Asylums to our House of Lords, are honeycombed with class Distinctions.

These classes are mostly distinguished from each other by all sorts of pretexts.

In a well-organized state of society official distinctions are necessary, but these distinctions should be in use only during working hours.

But many people make class distinctions, which are worthless and unnecessary; distinctions which only persons lacking a sense of humour could recognize. Such distinctions are found everywhere—in churches, chapels, workhouses, prisons, asylums, etc.

Broadly speaking we have but two classes: the reputable and the disreputable.

But all classes get so mixed up in this classification, that another, although more indefinite, is rendered necessary: The Upper Class, The Middle Class, The Lower Class.

To our Middle Class philosopher this classification is superb. "You have," says he, "the scum at the top, the dregs at the bottom, and the best in the middle."

But, regardless of our Philosopher, no one could find any fault with this classification if it were well applied.

The Upper Class, correctly defined, would be composed of the finest citizens, physically, mentally and morally. The Middle Classes would be composed of commercial citizens. The Lower Class would be composed of the *bona fide* workers.

The Lower Class, the workers, thus become according to Christ, the first class.

"If any man desire to be first, the same shall be



the last of all, and servant of all." (Mark ix. 35). The Upper and Middle Classes, here, agree with Christ, because it pays them to do so.

But why should the working class be called the Lower Class? Evidently, because of their poverty. They possess least.

Strange, is it not, what a great part Roman law still plays in this country.

Among the Romans all the citizens were divided into classes according to their property.

In Rank even, we get people of high and low degree.

But all our social distinctions, with a few exceptions, have a purely materialistic basis.

Here it may be urged that this does not apply to Ecclesiastical distinctions.

I'm afraid it does apply.

Many people hold the opinion that if we had no clergy we should have no sects; that, but for them, all churches might be places of worship. The idea is not new by any means. Here follows a quotation, in illustration, from an old, anonymous, Scottish play:—

*Maggie.* The mecnister was ill an could na preach this mornin', so we sang a few psalms and had the collection, an ane o the Elders pronoonced the benediction, an that was a' that happened.

*Thomas.* Mercy me! Maggie. It's a peety ye had gaen sae far and had tae come hame without gettin' some soond doctrin'.

*Maggie.* That's where yer wrang, Tam. Let me tell ye the kirk was mair like a place o' worship this mornin' than its been anytime in the last saxty-year. For many weeks we hae heard aboot naethin' o' any matter but the "Scarlet woman, the great whore o' Babylon," and I was gettin' seek to daith o' her. Soond doctrin', indeed!

But until education begins to enlighten our darkness we shall have to grin and bear much.

Psychology makes it very clear, to every thoughtful student, that the person who considers himself, or herself, superior to others because of possessions—money, property, dress, position, etc., is not too robust mentally.

But little reform is to be expected by reasoning about these things.

Fashion, or sentiment, is much more likely to produce great changes than ideas, howsoever true, just, and desirable they may be.

Humanity, so far, has been stirred more, and accomplished more, by and through, legend than ideas.

So many of us are naturally and nationally conservative—averse from all change. But to one change, even the most conservative of us must submit, the change which death brings to us all. And whether the change be as Lord Byron phrases it, "To slumber on one pillow in the dust," or to become (not an angel, as many people mistakenly believe, for an Earth-born spirit can no more become an angel than a Sudra can become a Brahman) an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven—which ever way it chances to be, it seems to me that either of the two states is much too democratic for many who now revel in class distinctions.

There is, however, a much more suitable place, in which class distinctions are permissible. Milton's Devil, a very distinguished person, preferred it originally and gave his reason for doing so. And many of our distinguished people might prefer it for the same reason:—

"Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heaven."

GEORGE WALLACE.

## Nature Notes of a Freethinker

It was a warm sunny morning in October when I stood at the foot of Boxhill, Surrey, with my guide, philosopher and friend. The juniper tree with its gorgeous olive branches was studded with beautiful red berries. The sunlight was creating each moment an enchanting picture of bough, shrub, grass and fern. The wild marjoram had seeded, the brown head of the wood sage had made a lovely design, and old man's beard was in shining clumps on the hillside. Grasses were turning colour, from green to yellow and brown. The transparent blue sky made an Olympian frame for a beautiful picture, and in the distance near to George Meredith's one-time home the thrush was singing maybe a few staves of his wonderful "Hymn to Colour." Here are a few notes as the writer imagined them to be:—

"Love eyed his rosy memories: he sang:  
O bloom of dawn, breathed up from the gold sheaf  
Held springing beneath Orient! that dost hang  
The space of dewdrops running over leaf;  
Thy fleetingness is bigger in the ghost  
Than Time with all his host!"

"Of thee to say behold, has said adieu:  
But love remembers how the sky was green,  
And how the grasses glimmered lightest blue;  
How saint-like grey took fervour: how the screen  
Of cloud grew violet; how thy moment came  
Between a blush and flame."

The Kingfisher is a bird with halcyon associations. It is like happiness; it cannot be found if you set out to find it. Clearly in my memory over a long and varied period of bird-watching, I can, with the greatest clarity recall all the four places where I saw him. At St. Osyth in Essex, Henley-on-Thames, near the seashore at Etaples, and on the fringe of Ashted Woods; these were the places where enchantment in the form of a jewelled body of a bird held me captive while time stood still. At Etaples he was leisurely preening his feathers perched on the twisted roof of a gorse bush that was thrust out of a sandbank. The sun was shining on him, and no miser ever seemed to go over his treasures with greater care than this bird whom the Greeks imagined to make his nest on the water. From St. Osyth there was a peaceful country lane which led down to the sea; at the foot of a gentle incline a stream crossed the road under a bridge, and on the half-submerged prow of an old boat in the water the king of colour reigned long enough for me to enjoy the sight. His majesty at Henley was more fleeting, and on the edge of Ashted Woods he disappeared like a line of undulating green and mauve. According to Morris, an old country rector, more likely to be remembered by his six volumes on birds than his theology, the kingfisher, when observed, has the power of dimming its brilliancy, but whether this is a fact or not, and my love of birds is greater than my knowledge of them, I do know that the power of enchantment lies in ever-changing and ever-new pictures that these pretty creatures make to those who do not expect too much of life.

"This is the littlest sparrow on Wimbledon Common; I reckon I saved his life. I brought him up since when he was a baby." The speaker was an old man, and he had a sparrow on his knee; it showed no signs of being afraid as it pecked away at a digestive biscuit held by its more than human friend. We talked about birds, and country sights and sounds, and he recalled the time when he used to cycle to Brighton when a boy. One day as he was out riding he heard what he thought was a baby crying in a hedge. He dismounted, and looking about found that a frog was making the noise. It had been attacked by a rat that had gnawed off one of its legs. There are many theories about the feeling of pain by the lower forms of life, and I find great difficulty in accepting the explanation that they do not feel pain. In any case I would always give them the benefit of the doubt. Jefferies and Hudson, in their early days, both used a gun, but as they grew older and their sympathies broadened, they gave it up. A Sussex shepherd tells



me that he can hardly find it in his heart to shoot rabbits; he has watched them playing about at the edge of the field, and his interest in their gambols was stronger than the desire to pull the trigger. It may be that in some remote future a picture of the old man may be painted and hung in the National Gallery. On his knee will be the ever-cheerful sparrow, and it will excite as much interest as the portrait of a famous general who had blown savages to bits. And one of the future generation may be heard to say, as he looks at it, "Ha! we have begun to grow up at last."

A clear stream runs out into Northcott Mouth in North Cornwall. At this place there are many beautiful birds to be seen. Among them are goldfinches, stonechats, greenfinches and pied wagtails. The farmer's wife, at whose house we were spending a holiday, was just as anxious as ourselves to see through field glasses a nut-hatch, whose unique call insisted on location. In conversation with her she told us the local name for the black and white wagtail was "dishwasher," and that chattering children were mildly reproved by saying, "Your tongue wags like a dishwasher's tail." This is rather a nice name for the busy little bird that dips in puddles and runs along the edge of streams after flies. He is also the gypsy's lucky bird, and his flight like long leaps in the air together with the call, "Is it?" "Is it?" indicates that pools or streams are not far away.

NICHOLAS MERE.

## Acid Drops

Mr. Hannen Swaffer, in his notes on Paine, says Paine said, "I believe in one God, and no more; and I hope for forgiveness beyond this life." Paine said, "I hope for happiness beyond this life." This is a distinction with a difference. Dying in the hope of forgiveness represents a fawning and cowardly temperament such as Christianity has encouraged, and may be taken, in the case of Mr. Swaffer, as an accidental slipping back to the language of his immature years. After all, one's murky past cannot be altogether done away with, even though one has, consciously, got beyond it.

Mr. Swaffer says that although he has read thousands of words by Freethinkers eulogizing Thomas Paine, "I have not seen that one mentioned the"—passage cited. Certainly not as Mr. Swaffer cited it, but in its corrected form it has appeared time and time again. Indeed there are very few Freethinkers writing on Paine who have not pointed out that Paine was a Deist, and that usually carries with it a belief in immortality. Of course, if Mr. Swaffer will not read the *Freethinker* regularly, and also the standard Freethinking writers, he cannot expect to be well informed on the subject. It is the Christian writers who have hidden Paine's Deism, the Freethinkers who have pointed out their misrepresentations.

The heart of the Bishop of Durham must have rejoiced after February 3. Writing in the Diocesan magazine, he said that the nation was not Christian, "either in legal theory or in actual fact." The evidence for this is that not one in fifteen of the people receive the sacrament (which is the symbolical eating of the flesh and blood and flesh of Jesus—in the Church of England, the actual eating in the Catholic Church) of Christian membership at the altars of the National Church. But after the third of February the Bishop must have felt better; for if a lot of people had not got quite to the primitive cannibalistic stage of eating the God, at least there were very many in London who showed that they were, mentally, not far removed from it.

For February is the date of the festival of St. Blaise. And one of the miracles performed by St. Blaise was that when a boy was dying, as the result of a fishbone sticking in his throat, he touched the lad's throat and the

fishbone fell out. So St. Blaise became the patron saint of all who suffered from diseases of the throat. And on February 3, at St. Etheldreda's Church, in Ely Place, London, all those who were troubled with sore throats, and all those who expected sore throats, paraded through the Church, and the Rector stood with two lighted candles which he "held under their throats," and solemnly intoned:—

By the intercession of the Blessed St. Blaise, Bishop and martyr, may the Lord free you from the ills in your throats and all other infirmities

So the Bishop of Durham may rejoice. There are still many thousands who have not lifted themselves far above the level of the uncivilized in all parts of the world, and from the mental level of the first Christians.

But we would offer a word of advice to those who need it. If any man thinks he will exploit the ignorance of people suffering from sore throats, and opens an establishment in Holborn, and sells candles at so much each, which, when they are held under a sore throat will cure the sufferer, then it is likely that the police may step in, and before long he may be spending a term in one of his majesty's prisons, where he will be attended by a chaplain who will read him a lesson on the evil of fooling people as he has done. To do this with safety and profit one must have studied theology, taken a theological degree, become a rector, or a vicar, or a bishop, and do business in a building which has been specially built for the game. So to all who think they would like to join in this ancient game of "spoofing the mugs," we solemnly say, "Get thee to a parsonry; learn thou to intone properly, do it in the name of the Lord, and great shall be the profit thereof."

The Marriage Bill of Mr. A. P. Herbert proposes that no clergyman shall be compelled to solemnize the marriage of a divorced person, or permit any other clergyman to solemnize such a marriage in his church. An amendment was moved to leave out the words "be compelled to" on the ground that the Bill should decide one way or another, and not leave it to the discretion of an individual. The amendment was rejected. We are sorry that such a clause was allowed to stand, and the amendment would have made it worse. The clause leaves it to the parson whether such a marriage ceremony shall be performed or not; the amendment made such a marriage impossible in a great number of instances, and would have set the parson above the law. So also, in effect, does the clause. Both represent a scandal.

Under the existing law the parson is for the purpose of a marriage, a registrar of marriages appointed by the State. He stands in this respect as do other Registrars of marriages. And at present a clergyman could be compelled to conduct any marriage which the State declares a legal one. The Bill gives the parson an autocratic power which no other Registrar of marriages has, the amendment would have created a public official who has a legal right to refuse to do a job he is appointed to do, and which he is paid to do. One would think that common sense and decency would lead a House of Commons either to compel the clergy to do what they are appointed to do—so long as there is a State Church, or else disestablish the Church. But the clergy in this country are licenced libertines, as deaf to the calls of justice as they are to those of common sense.

The Bishop of Chelmsford is not easy as to the soundness of the "vast sums of money" that are being spent on making the coronation a successful show. He says that the ease with which vast sums are obtained for this purpose, and the difficulty of getting money to help the huge number of unemployed, will make the contrast between wealth and poverty more noticeable than ever. We quite sympathize with the Bishop, but if the show is to be a success money and lavish advertising must be there. One must remember that it took ten months intensive advertising to make the Jubilee of George V. a success, and



it must have made the mouths of many film magnates water. In the case of George VI., there are other adverse forces to overcome. There is a feeling in favour of the King—who prior to his accession was very little noticed—to be created and, if the coronation display is big enough, and lavish enough, it is possible to develop a vague feeling that once more there is a marvel of a man on the throne. It may even divert attention from the distressed areas, for the dole and “the circus” is one of the oldest maxims of statesmanship in managing the “people.” A blaze of colour, a lot of noise, plenty of “processing” and the performers dressed in all sorts of fantastic costumes, with the magical hocus-pocus in a fine old building, where the primitive miracle of converting the King into a representative of the God is gone through, all these are quite enough to drown interest in the distressed areas—for a time.

Writing in the *Evening Standard* on the centenary of the once famous evangelist, Moody, Mr. Horace Thoroughgood comments on the extraordinarily naïve pictures the evangelist drew of God's method of working, and adds:—

His humour was of the same crude quality, not unlike the childish humour of the negro saints in “Green Pastures.”

Not unlike! The mentality of Moody was that of the negro in “Green Pastures.” As we have pointed out, the theology of “Green Pastures” is the genuine theology of Christendom, and in Moody's day it was the theology of the bulk of Christians. And there are many noted preachers to-day whose theology is just as “crude” as that of the negro preachers in the film. “Crude” in this connexion equals “honesty.” Thanks to Freethought, the better type of individual has been made ashamed of the religion of his fathers. One day we may make him sufficiently straightforward to avow the fact that he is ashamed of it.

People who have been married in a register office will read with astonishment that, though the Church has always vehemently protested against such marriages for years, “Convocation” now “approves a resolution requesting the Archbishop of Canterbury to appoint a Joint Committee to compile a service of bestowal of the Church's blessing on marriages which had been contracted before the civil authority.” In other words, the Church is determined that it must in some way have a finger in the pie. If it loses all touch with marriage, it stands a chance of losing its hold on the child, and if it cannot capture the child, it has no hope of implanting its absurd creed in the minds of the adult.

Nazi Germany has announced “the first instalment of a new translation of the Bible.” Judea, of course, is called “Jewland.” Jesus was a German and not a Jew, and constantly fulminated against “the malevolence of the hated Jew”—and so on. Dr. Weidemann, the titular Bishop of Bremen, is the ruling spirit of the venture, and he says, “Let the sticklers [for a correct translation] rage over us if they please.” For our own part, what matters how the Bible is translated? New or old, archaic or modern, it is packed with incredible nonsense, and no translation, whether in the interest of Nazism or not, can make it better or worse. The saddest irony of it all is that the Jews have generally supported the stupid theory of race, forbidden mixed-marriage and generally advocated the more absurd features of German Fascist theory.

The religious “revival” call raises the particular question, “How far ‘Back to the Lord’ may one go without risking legal restraint?” For instance, a man describing himself as “a wandering preacher,” was ridiculed the other day in a Brighton court, for displaying “extraordinary tendencies with regard to religion.” He claimed—according to the N.S.P.C.C. legal representative—“to receive direct revelations and declared he observed only the laws of God and utterly disregarded the laws of man.” A most perplexing attitude to take before a Christian bench in a Christian country, in spite of the Christian injunction (which is smiled at) of “Judge not

lest you be judged.” And, to make things worse, the preacher-man snatched a whip from his wife, and “lashed out in all directions” (vide the *Star's* report) before being seized by detectives and the warrant officer. It would appear that one cannot emulate “Our Lord” in the Temple without clashing with those blasphemous “laws of man.”

“The Recall to Religion” doesn't seem as though it will lead to a new crusade on the part of the country in general. It may be that many are deciding that it is God's business to look after his worship, and if he can't keep it going there is no reason for others to bother themselves. Canon Peter Green thinks that the best appeal is to the individual by the individual, whereas the whole idea of the campaign is the force of the mass, for if everyone can get it into his or her head that everyone is getting converted, the result may end in the conversion of a multitude. There is, of course, something in this, although at the moment there are other mass influences at work that are making *against* religion. But our challenge holds good. When the campaign is ended, will the churches be able to show that five per cent of those who have been converted, were not professing Christians before the Archbishop started his ballyhoo?

There is, however, a distinct danger in the appeal of the individual. Get a weak-minded person in a crowd (and it is clearly with the weak-minded that the Archbishop's hopes rest) and he will give way to the mania of the moment. Talk to him as an individual and the position is different. If you rave at him he will probably smile. If you preach to him he will get bored, and if you reason with him, you will wake up whatever capacity he has in an effort to criticize what is being said. We think Canon Peter Green had better rely upon the crowd. That is his only chance—not a very good one, but all there is.

We have received from a reader the latest Price List from a well-known “Stores.” On the back cover is an illustrated page of announcements about the varied stock the firm carries of “Birds' Nesting-Boxes.” Amongst them is an ecclesiastical-looking structure called the “Bird Shrine.” It has a sort of Bell attached to its base, a large Cross occupies most of the frontage and a church-like roof completes the design. A footnote assures us that this is specially useful for fly-catchers and quotes 8s. 6d. for the structure itself, 2s. 6d. more for the “Tit Bell,” 6d. extra for the Cross, and finally, if the customer desires a text from the Bible added, the cost will be a shilling. The text suggested by the dealer is: “Unto the least of these. . . .”

A writer in the *British Weekly* says that the late D. I. Moody was “the greatest Christian I have ever known.” We imagine this means that Mr. Moody believed doctrines which even the credulity of most Christians is unable to swallow. The greatest “believer,” in fact.

## Fifty Years Ago

ACCORDING to a Dundee prophet our prayer for the heathen should be “From the accursed influence of this so-called Christian nation, good Lord deliver them!” But why *so-called*? Is not England a Christian nation? Is not Christianity taught by State priests, and supported by the law of the land? Is it not a crime to oppose Christianity, and were not three Freethinkers imprisoned a short time ago for “bringing it into disbelief and contempt”? If after all this time, and all this money, and all this preaching, and all this Bible printing, and all this Sunday-schooling, England is still only a *so-called* Christian nation, what is the use of Christianity at all? It must be an impossible religion if people cannot be got to practise it. No doubt the clergy will say, “Ah, it is too good for this world.” Very well then, let it be exported to some other planet, and let us get something less showy and more useful in its place.

*The Freethinker* February 13 1887.



# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H.W.B.—Thanks for cutting. But you are wrong concerning Burke and Paine's body. Burke died before Paine.

TED SMITH.—If you read the *Age of Reason* remembering when it was written, the treatment Paine received for writing it, and what "advanced" Christians are now teaching, there ought to be plenty there to make you "sit up and take notice."

MR. H. HOLMES, of Port Talbot, writes that he has adopted the policy of stamping the backs of his letters with "Read the *Freethinker*, of all newsagents 3d. weekly," and hopes that other readers will follow his lead. Needless to say, we hope they will.

E. CHINNERY.—Thanks for inducing two newsagents to exhibit copies of *The Age of Reason*. We hope interested readers will do as you suggest and answer the Archbishop's "call" by making renewed efforts for the advancement of Freethought. We shall be pleased to give all the help we can.

FOR Advertising and Distributing the *Freethinker*.—D. Fisher, 4s.

W. MARCHANT (Leicester).—Sorry we have no means of knowing who sent you a copy of the *Freethinker*. We have a number of readers and well-wishers in Leicester.

J. CLAYTON.—Sorry you were not able to be at the Annual Dinner. One must not expect too much from the newspapers.

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

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.

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.

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. Roselli, 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.

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

Mr. Cohen had a good, interested, and in the end, quite enthusiastic audience in Edinburgh on Sunday last. A Scotch audience is seldom afraid of a "close" argument, and Mr. Cohen paid them the compliment of making his subject as "meaty" as possible. Mr. Grant took the chair, and made a strong appeal for members. We hope that it brought some result. We understand there was a good sale of literature, and there were many requests for another visit from the lecturer. On Sunday next, February 21, Mr. Cohen will speak in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester.

We are glad to be able to report that some of our provincial friends are acting as agents in seeing that the *Age of Reason* is displayed by booksellers and newsagents, and in all cases with good results. The cheapest edition ever offered, it provides an opportunity

for doing some excellent Freethought work. Those who are really interested in the progress of the movement will make the most they can of the occasion.

Another example of the fairness with which the B.B.C. news is broadcast. It will be remembered that recently Professor J. B. S. Haldane, just from Madrid, and Mr. Keeling, fresh from General Franco's quarters, broadcast on the same evening. Professor Haldane now writes to the *Daily Telegraph* of February 4, that while Mr. Keeling was permitted to defend the policy of the British Government with regard to Spain, he was not permitted to oppose it. Had he been permitted to do so he would "have pointed out that the casualties among Madrid civilians were largely due to the fact that, owing to the British and other Governments, the Spanish Government was unable to obtain anti-aircraft guns." We are not surprised at the statement. But how long are we to wait for our public men to show sufficient self-respect to decline to submit what they are about to say to a censorship committee? If they did so, we should be able at once to know the sheep from the goats, the rabbits of the propagandist world from the rest. As it is, the B.B.C. is permitted to camouflage its censorship by *pretending* to give both sides of a subject. It thus adds hypocrisy to falsehood.

Late in the day, and, we suspect, having been forced to say something in consequence of the wide-spread notices of Paine in the press, the *Christian World* says in its issue for February 4:—

He was one of the most forcible, lucid, and (in his day) effective pleaders for the cause of democracy, liberty, and Radicalism. Older people of this generation were brought up to believe that Paine, like Voltaire, was a sort of incarnation of the evil principle. We now regard both these men as extreme and mistaken indeed in some of their emphases, but as ranking definitely and honourably among "the brave soldiers in the war of the liberation of humanity."

Most magnanimous! But we would now like the *Christian World* to shake off a little more of its characteristic Christian dishonesty and point out that the false impression of Paine, which the "older people of this generation were brought up to believe," was an impression which was almost entirely of Christian manufacture. The *Christian World*, has, so far as we know, never done anything to remove the false impressions concerning Paine; it has never rebuked Christians and Christian societies for circulating lies about Paine, and it must not be permitted to get away with it and pose as liberal-minded, because, thanks to the persistency of Freethinkers, Paine is receiving recognition from those who find they can no longer manage to perpetuate the monster created by Christian teaching.

Which reminds us of a letter from a reader who hopes that we shall not be too hard on those religious people who are now beginning to recognize the greatness of Paine. We "ought to recognize the more liberal tone of Christians." Well, we do, but we see no reason for falling down in uncritical admiration of what has been said. We cannot let the Christian world escape the consequences of its actions. It is not to Christians or Christian organizations that the rehabilitation of Paine is due. They have expressed no reproof of the lies that are even now told concerning Paine by its evangelical preachers. They have said in praise of Paine only what the persistency of Freethinkers has forced them to say, and we do not belong to those who fawn on a blackguard when he is forced to be more moderate in his blackguardism.

The moral that we draw from the situation is that Freethinkers will be abused and looked-down upon so long as they do not show the courage to hit back. When all Freethinkers stand erect, speak openly, and without apology for holding opinions of which they should be proud, they will then get the respectful treatment they ought to get. One gains nothing by fawning to a bully,



or by shrinking from telling a liar that he is not speaking the truth. It is an unfortunate truth that to-day a deal of the strength of Christians is derived from the lack of robustness in Freethinkers. We have *forced* the recognition of Paine; now we should force the recognition of the value of Freethought.

An essay on "Thomas Paine," has been written by R. A. N. Dixon, Editor of the *East Anglican Magazine*, and is issued by the Thetford Town Council, in connexion with the bi-centenary. It is a very fine tribute to Paine, and contains four good illustrations and a portrait. Mr. Dixon's essay is a very fine piece of work, although brief; but if concise, it is, so far as it goes, thorough. Mr. Dixon says of Paine, that from his inventions

as from his other activities, he derived no financial gain. His sole reward was moral satisfaction, short-lived contemporary praise—and posthumous abuse. The world has seen few men as eminent as Paine who have not, either during their life-time or after their passing, been judged fairly and according to the credit they deserved. One hundred and twenty-eight years after Paine's death, the fire of condemnation is just beginning to be quenched by the sluggish tide of human justice.

The general chorus of praise that the bi-centenary has produced serves only to show more clearly the malignity of religious hatred, and the time-serving quality and cowardice of the vast majority of our professional educationalists and writers. Unless we realize this we miss one of the most important features of the Paine revival.

This is not exactly a new story about Paine, but it is a new form of an old one. We take it from the *Sussex County Herald*, of January 29, quoting from an old newspaper (presumably a Lewes publication) :—

(February 10, 1806).—Lewes. Thomas Paine, whose long residence in this town (Lewes) renders his fate more interesting here than in most other places it appears, from *Relf's American Gazette*, dated December 1, 1805, in consequence of having been visited by a second stroke of the palsy, is deeply impressed with the heinousness of his life spent in reviling all religion, and in contemning Divine revelation, and that he is in daily practice of prayer for heavenly reconciliation! Alas poor Tom!

Paine, during the time he resided here, was particularly partial to the ice, when it presented itself for his amusement, but being a miserable skater, his excursions on the slippery surface were as graceless and untoward as his progress has been on the rugged roads, over which his destiny has almost ever since with so much peril conducted him. From his fondness of exploring fresh tracks of ice, he acquired the title of Commodore.

The *Yorkshire Evening Post* of January 29, also publishes the following from an old *Leeds Mercury* of 1793 :—

The effigy of Thomas Paine, holding a copy of *The Rights of Man* in one hand and a pair of stays in the other (he was originally a staymaker) was carried through the streets of Leeds with a halter round his neck. Being well whipped and hanged at the Market Cross, in Briggate, the effigy was thrown into a large bonfire amidst the shouts of the multitude.

Similar scenes took place in many parts of the country, and was the reply that the "gentry" of the country, gave to Paine. Generally beer was plentifully supplied by the "gentlefolk" to the leaders of the crowd. But it was the man who set the country in such a storm, and who was the leading influence of the radicalism of the next generation that so many of our historians do not appear to have heard about—at least they heard nothing to his credit, or if they did they were too timid or too dishonest to make it known.

Mr. Laurence Housman says, in his *The Unexpected Years*, that the book from which he derived most money—very much more than anything he earned by any other book—*An Englishwoman's Love Letters*, was his worst. We should have guessed so without being told. In the first place a book, if it is a really good one, and "goes for" established institutions or ideas, stands a

small chance of being fairly reviewed. It is either ignored, damned with faint praise, or completely misrepresented. And as the average reader of the newspapers depends for his judgment of a book upon what reviewers, the majority of whom write either under instructions, or in fear of offending the paper for which they write, the result may be anticipated. But, more seriously, there are really not enough readers of a first-class book to sell a big edition, and so pay well the author for his work. Meredith or Hardy never received a tenth of the money that a novel by Priestley brought in. Herbert Spencer found himself, at the end of twelve years over a thousand pounds out of pocket. And so the tale goes on. It is with books as with newspapers, the emptier they are the more profitable they are. Time redresses the injustice in many instances, but the fact remains. And the author is then dead.

The New York *Truthseeker*, has now, under its new editor, Mr. C. Smith, become a weekly. We wish the journal every success. There is need for a widely-circulated Freethought paper in the U.S.A. The annual subscription for the *Truthseeker* for this country is three dollars and seventy-five cents. Publishing Offices, 49 Vesey Street, New York.

Mr. G. Whitehead will speak for the Birmingham Branch N.S.S. this evening (February 14) in the Shakespeare Rooms, Edmund Street, at 7 o'clock, on "Why Man Made God." The accommodation in the hall is comfortable but limited, and local saints and friends wishing to secure seats should be early upon the scene.

#### TO LONDON FREETHINKERS

Will the members of N.S.S. and its Branches, who are in favour of the proposal to form a Club, as a Social and Educational Centre in London, please communicate with the Secretary of the West London Branch, N.S.S..

If sufficient support is forthcoming a meeting will be arranged to discuss the details of the proposal, and will be announced in the *Freethinker*.

C. TUSON, *Hon. Secretary*,

West London Branch N.S.S.

13 Portland Road,  
Holland Park, W.11.

#### Education, 1937

They are teaching the Quins  
Deplorable things,  
All about Sins,  
And angels with wings,  
And demons, and devils,  
And suchlike evils,  
With a very hot Hell,  
For a "bad little girl."

And little Annette  
Is beginning to fret.

And little Marie  
Is wanting to flee.

And little Yvonne  
Also wants to be gone.

The small Emilie  
Is as scared as can be.

While as for Cecile,  
They are making her ill.

And all the while  
The statesmen smile  
At this horrible game,  
And none cries "Shame!"

BAYARD SIMMONS.



## A Few Reminiscences

THE death of Frederick Schaller, the other day, has brought a sheaf of memories crowding to me of my first days as a Freethinker in Hyde Park and elsewhere. It is over thirty years now since an inexperienced, but very enthusiastic, young man, I came to London from the provinces determined to devote all my spare time to Freethought, which was then to me, as it is now, the greatest of all causes. Looking back over this long period—it does not seem so long though, more like a dream only—I have no cause for regret. It has brought me in touch with men and movements, the most vital of our day; and I am convinced that never, since I was associated with it, has Freethought, in every sense of the word, been so supremely necessary as at this day. The magnificent heritage fought for by so many brilliant and brave souls in the past will be wiped out if we do not take care. Freethought is being sneered at by some of the very people who are able, through our efforts to establish freedom of speech, to plead their own cause in the face of hostile criticism, opposition, and obloquy.

But I knew really very little of the trend towards these things thirty years ago. Brought up in a narrow circle in the Provinces, the work of Foote, Ingersoll, and Bradlaugh came as a breath of life and light to me; and to find myself in London at last, the Mecca of advanced opinion, the goal of my ambition, was a tremendous source of joy.

Naturally I gravitated to Hyde Park and listened in wonder to the thousand and one opinions vociferously delivered from a dozen platforms every evening. The volubility of the speakers amazed me as much as their variety. It seemed incredible that people could be found ready to advance and defend so many things, many of which were obvious rubbish. The crowds were almost always good-humoured, though religious fanaticism often took an ugly turn.

It was, of course, the Freethought platform which attracted me most. Many of the speakers were, except to their immediate followers, almost unknown in the world of Freethought. The writers whose names the *Freethinker* and the *Literary Guide* had made familiar to the public rarely addressed a meeting in Hyde Park. They were our leaders, if you like, but the rank and file, the private soldier in the army, with little or no pay, with almost nothing but enthusiasm for the cause—it was he who, night after night, week by week, spoke from the platforms, haranguing, persuading, holding grimly to the flag, propagating the work of the great fighting Freethinkers of the past. It was he and his like who, perhaps unknowingly, were following in the tradition of Paine, Carlile, Robert Cooper, Bradlaugh, rather than the half-hearted methods of Leslie Stephen, Huxley and the later Holyoake.

I remember many of them well, and the impression they gave me. Black-bearded E. C. Saphin with his inimitable smile and voice; Frederick Schaller's earnest, passionate sincerity and his profound knowledge of the Bible; Hyatt's humorous lectures, poking fun at "sacred" things; Harry Boulter always on the verge of "blaspheming"; young Le Maine doing his best to organize a determined opposition to Christianity; Ernest Pack causing roars of laughter as he satirized Bible absurdities. Each in his way a fighter for Freethought—and, even when we disagreed with their methods, each forming part of that army of fighting Freethinkers without which no advance could have been made.

There were others, of course; unsung, unhonoured, and even unknown. They would speak from the op-

position platform or take part in a vigorous debate in the crowd. Their work was just as necessary as that of the leaders, for without the continuous circulation of ideas, how could Freethought advance? It was by meeting the enemy face to face, and overcoming him that victory was to be won. A book could go out to the world and make a convert defend the ideas he has imbibed, but could he meet and hold his own with a clear-thinking opponent?

I found to my cost it was one thing carefully to read say, a pamphlet by Foote or Ingersoll, and another to defend it against a well-read Christian, versed also in controversy. I might know the argument against Christianity very well indeed, but how would I shape against even a Christian Evidence lecturer with many years of continuous debate behind him? It was really a great experience passing through the fire of meeting so many opponents with so many varied points of view. There were habitués of Hyde Park who delighted in nothing so much as discussion, and who found heaven in knocking any opponent off his high horse, particularly those who were often—like myself—cocksure of being absolutely right. The number of times I was a victim of what the French call "*l'esprit de l'escalier*," I don't like to think about. (This is, what wonderful arguments come to one's mind *after* the discussion (on the stairs, outside, so to speak), when there is no chance of delivering them).

One thing I soon discovered, and that was, there were no illusions among most of the Freethinkers I met, as to who were the *leaders* of Freethought. G. W. Foote was the prince of lecturers, the leader of the "shock" troops, scholarly, literary, with a sardonic wit all his own, and a fighting spirit which was the terror of his religious opponents. John M. Robertson was the encyclopedia of the movement, the keenest analytical critic of his day, a magnificent asset to the cause, a writer and a many-sided scholar of the first rank, the man who had given a formidable status to the movement. And—I hope the Editor will not object—there was a young man called Chapman Cohen, with a will and personality all his own, with a tremendous following in London and the country, whose lectures and debates were packed with astonishing knowledge of philosophy and life, and who was able to garnish them with a spice of humour extraordinarily effective and almost impossible to imitate. These were the three *great* names, though, of course, there were others, whose books and writings and lectures were of inestimable value to Freethought.

Many a long summer evening I spent hotly discussing all sorts of questions with all the reading and knowledge at my command; and many a time I went sadly back home feeling wild that I had not said this or that—which would, of course, have given me the victory.

I do not know how many of the young men who listened to Schaller and Saphin (who is as vigorous a fighter as ever, I am glad to say) and the others, know what they owe to these speakers. I am particularly grateful myself. If I did not always agree with them, they indicated the way. They exposed the fallacies and stupidities of our opponents; and they provided a platform upon which we could try our 'prentice hand. The man who can face a crowd in Hyde Park and get away with it, has gone some way, at least, to become an effective speaker.

The war broke up some of our work; and since then, my own appearances in Hyde Park have been rare. But my enthusiasm has not abated in the least. That enthusiasm derived a good deal of its impulse from speakers like Schaller, and I often regret that I had not made more of his friendship. Alas, this little tribute to his work will never reach him. He, like so many others of thirty years ago, has gone to



his eternal rest. But I hope the veterans who are still happily with us, and who have had perforce to give up active work will not think that what they did in the past, is all forgotten. It can never be so long as Freethought itself remains.

H. CUTNER.

## The Coming of the Bishops

If we consult an ordinary dictionary to find out the status of a bishop and the functions pertaining to his ecclesiastical office, we learn, among other things, that the word *bishop* denotes a particular drink, a kind of cocktail, composed of wine, oranges, and sugar; that it is the name of a song-bird of America; that it is a piece in the game of chess, and some part of a lady's dress. As a verb (active) it means those secret arts that are used to make an old horse look like a young one, or give a good appearance to a bad one. So that, when the old grey mare issues forth from the inner recesses of the racing stable, painted brown, and looking like a two-year-old filly, she is said to have been "bishopsed." The word is not inaptly chosen, because the unscrupulous methods by which the bishops rejuvenated dying Paganism, and put it before the world as a new religion, would make a self-respecting horse-faker blush to the roots of his hair. A closer scrutiny of the dictionary, however, reveals the fact that a bishop is also a high dignitary of the Church, who rules over the common clergy of a given district, called his diocese, or See. In fact, he is My Lord Bishop; and the offence of mixing up his Lordship, in the same small type, with cocktails and games of chess, with singing-birds and pieces of a lady's dress, and "dud" horses, is one that in a former age might have cost that lexicographer dear, with a punishment to fit the crime.

For six hundred years the benighted inhabitants of these islands had no bishop; no one to guide them into that straight and narrow path that leadeth to the collection-box in the church porch. These ancient Britons had never listened to the martial strains of that inspiring hymn, "See the Conquering hero comes," until they were wafted to them on the crest of the waves that brought the boats containing Augustin and his band to the shores of Kent. . . . No, dear reader, Augustin and his band had not come at the invitation of the B.B.C. They were a motley group of monks from the monasteries of Rome, who had become fed-up with the never-ending diet of Macaroni-Italiana, and who wished to sample the good roast beef of old England.

As soon as Augustin set foot on shore, he was approached by a sturdy old Briton; and if he was surprised at being addressed in the Latin tongue, he was still more surprised at the nature of the greeting. "Where the h—'ve you been," he said "all these long centuries since Jesus Christ died upon the Cross?" Augustin thought, "Surely this man must be a Major in the British Army." The "Major" informed him that the King would not be ready to receive him for some little time; and he suggested that in the meanwhile they go and see about some refreshment; to which Augustin saw no objection. There were no high-class "Crown and Mitres" in those days—the "Crown" was there, but the Mitre had not yet arrived. So they repaired to the humble quarters of a snug hostelry, known as the "Pig and Whistle." As George Borrow said, when he took the Bible to Spain: "Oh, genial and gladdening is the power of Good Ale, the true and proper drink of Englishmen." And so it was that Augustin, who was later to become the first Archbishop of Canterbury, spent his

first half-hour on English soil in the precincts of the "Pig and Whistle."

Augustin was given a very cordial reception by the King, whose wife, it appears, was already a Christian. And in a short while, Augustin had the good fortune to baptize into the Christian faith, not only the King and his court, but also ten thousand of his subjects as well—all in one day. Those were, indeed, the palmy days of foreign missions. The baptismal registers of these ten thousand converts were all duly made out and signed, and deposited in the State Archives on the self-same day. It would take too long to tell of the subsequent history of these ten thousand baptismal registers, but with the changes of dynasty that took place in after centuries, they found many resting-places; until, by the mistake of a careless housekeeper, they were carted away to augment the fire at a witch-burning.

Canterbury was a flourishing city in the days when Julius Cæsar visited our shores six hundred years before—in 55 B.C. It was chiefly noted for the superior quality of its lamb, "Canterbury Lamb" being a household word in every part of the King's domains. Augustin, too, specialized in lamb, and was the first trader of note to import foreign lamb into this country. He called his "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." In its early infancy this Lamb had been led beside the still waters and made to lie down in green pastures, to fit it for the stupendous task it was afterwards to undertake. What particular dump this Lamb of God taketh all the sins of the world to, is one of those sacred mysteries of "our" religion, that are the stock-in-trade of the Christian clergy. But with such a large removal contract on hand, it had no time either to follow Mary to school, or indulge in any of those frolicsome gambols in the meadow that constitute the pastime of other lambs.

The Pope was so overjoyed at Augustin's success, (it was the greatest catch of the season; indeed, to this day it still holds the record) that he knighted him Archbishop of Canterbury, and Primate of All England.

It has been said that an ordinary man is known by the company he keeps, but a bishop is known by the dress that he wears. These clothes have a strange history attached to them; because the fanciful rig-out of the bishop of to-day is like the paper in the key-hole, as the old song says, that gives the game away. They so unmistakably identify the so-called Christian ministry with the old Pagan priesthoods. It should be noted that for the space of six hundred years the humble officials of the Church were not distinguished by any kind of special dress, or uniform, from the other members of the Christian communities. Indeed, as late as the year 428, the Bishop of Rome rebuked the Bishops of Gaul for wearing a garb different from that of ordinary men. The differentiation of the clerical dress was as a consequence of the gradual conquest of the Roman Empire, and of Christianity becoming the professed religion of the State. The rude, uncouth dress of the barbarian conquerors was not considered fitting for the Christian clergy, in that position of power and affluence which they were gradually arrogating to themselves. So, instead of the barbarian dress, they retained the long robe of the Roman Empire, and cut their hair short, as the Romans had done. And it was not until the sixth century that the traditional Roman dress, which marked them out from other men, was made obligatory for the clergy by ecclesiastical authority.

After the Empire had become Christian the Christian priests began to be given a position of special privileges in the State. Pagan priests in old days had been immune from a number of burdens borne by or-



dinary citizens in regard to taxes, and other things; and similar privileges were now conferred on Christian priests. Their regular salaries were assigned them from a fund which grew by the confiscation of the property of the Pagan temples and from or by fresh donations. The bishops were given by the State disciplinary powers in certain respects over laymen, and power to intervene in the punishment ordered by the State tribunal. The Church inherited sanctuary rights from the temples; and the clergy became not only an order in the Church, but an influential class in the State. The word Reverend, so beloved of the clergy, was the sacred title of the Roman Augurs; while the Mitre and Tiara appear to have been the head-gear of many ancient priesthoods.

There is no more sordid reading in history than the infamous struggle of the bishops for power and supremacy, and the means they used to consolidate their ecclesiastical position by the accumulation of their vast wealth; and all sanctimoniously justified under the cloak of religion, and concern for the spiritual well-being of the Church. Until the dissolution of the monasteries their position was somewhat overshadowed by the wealthy abbots, who also wore the Mitre, and sat in the House of Lords. But if the immorality of the monasteries was scandalous, that of the ordinary clergy was no better. According to Draper the demoralized condition of the English Church extended from the Archbishop of Canterbury down to the lowest priest. When Parliament met in A.D. 1529 they declared to the King that "the troubles into which the realm had fallen were attributable to the clergy, that the chief foundation, occasion and cause thereof was the parallel jurisdiction of the Church and State; that the incompatible legislative authority of convocation lay at the bottom of the mischief." These charges were met with the usual tactics of the bishops, shouting from the pulpits, "Atheism," "lack of faith," "heresy," and other irrelevant declamations. But the House stood firm, and passed among other Bills, the Clergy Discipline Act. And it is to be regretted that the later Governments of this country have never had the moral courage to tackle the absurd pretensions and mischievous influence of the bishops, in the same resolute way in which they were curbed by Henry VIII. and his Parliament.

JOSEPH BRYCE.

### "Out of the Mouth of Babes——"

PUFFED up with the air of his theological learning, the average cleric makes a very ostensible show of tolerance towards the young and "ignorant" members of his flock. Even where children, having the "benefit" of church and Sunday-school teaching, fail, like their elders, to translate the religious jargon they gabble into any other terms than human, the cleric condescends to be amused. He is never disgusted at the defilement of the virgin mind by the pollution of vulgar superstition.

Fortunately, the child's "God" is usually real enough to confound all the unreal conceptions of theology. He might be just an unseen person at the other end of the telephone, as in the case of little Susie. Susie was preparing for bed, while mother completed a task downstairs. The child began her nightly prayer, when mother called her by name. Susie continued to pray, when mother called again. Trying to concentrate on her pious duty. Susie was called once again, and, unable to ignore mother's persistence any longer, cried, on her knees, "O God, mummy's calling; please hold the line."

"God" was equally human to little Mabel, who was so given to exaggeration that her mother instructed her to pray his forgiveness for repeating the lie that she (Mabel) had "seen a big lion running down our street."

Mabel went to her room, and, on reappearing, mother asked if she had done as she had been told. "O, yes, mummy. I as't God to f'give me telling such a big story, that there was a big lion running down our street, when I knew it was only the neighbour's dog. But God said 'That's all right, Miss Mabel; I used to think it was a lion myself.'"

One of the most interesting cases of a child's "divine understanding" is given by Mr. Hugh Massingham, in his book, *I Took off my Tie*, recently published by Heinemann.

The author met little Annie Morgan, eight years old, who lived amidst the vice and squalor of an East-End slum. Annie swore like a trooper, and knew most of the sordid facts of life, but loved to talk for hours of fairies and giants.

Coming into Mr. Massingham's room one evening while it was snowing, she likened the snow to confetti.

"I reckon there's a weddin' in 'eaven," she said, "among the angels, I should fink. Lummy, won't Gawd 'ave a proper booze-up ter-night?"

Annie had been to Sunday-school, and Mr. Massingham challenged her to recite the "Lord's prayer." She began:—

"Our farver chart in 'eaven. Harold be the name."

"What?" said Mr. Massingham, "How do you mean 'Harold?'"

"That's 'is name, ain't it?"

"No, the word is 'hallowed.'"

"Our farver," repeated Annie, "chart in 'eaven. Hello be thy name."

"Hallowed."

"What's that?"

"Holy. You know what holy means."

"Cors," said Annie. "Hallowed be thy name. Thy king don't come."

"Kingdom."

"Thy king don't come. Thy will be done on earf as it is in 'eaven. Givvus this day our daily bread. And forgive us our treads, passes, as we fergive them that treads parst against us. Lead. . ."

"Whoa!" said Mr. Massingham, "what's all this about treads? Trespasses. Sins."

"But that's wot 'e learned us," said Annie.

"He must have had one or two. The word is 'trespass.'"

"We-e-ell, that's wot 'e said."

"All right. Go ahead."

"Lead us not into station. But deliver us from evil. For thine is the king-dom-and the poor—and the glawry. Ferver an' ferver—H'amen."

D.

## Correspondence

### MAN AND HIS ENVIRONMENT

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

SIR,—In your issue of February 7 you say: "It is the functions of 'mind' that are identical, the form of their expression that varies." I cannot accept that view, for the following reasons:—

1. Herbert Spencer maintained in *First Principles* that it was impossible for any two objects to be identical, because no two things are produced by exactly the same chain of causes. He said that all evolution is from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous. That seems to me unanswerable. Darwin, following the same line of reasoning, held that if the members of any species are placed in different environments, they begin to diverge not only in their environmental qualities but in their heredity, because different qualities are naturally selected to fit different environments. Most biologists would endorse that, and would consider it just as applicable to mental as to physical qualities.

2. Your theory seems to create a gulf between mind and body, by its claim that mental uniformity accompanies bodily diversity. Nobody would assert that the different peoples of the world are alike in body. Anyone can see at a glance the difference between a Swede, a Jap,



and a Negro. Is it possible to believe that such physical differences are accompanied by mental identity? That seems to take us back to the idea of a soul even more independent of the body than theologians supposed it to be.

R. B. KERR.

[If Mr. Kerr has gathered from my letter that we affirm "mental uniformity accompanies bodily diversity," I can only advise him to re-read the passage. "It is the functions of 'mind' that are identical, the form of their expression that varies." Any text book of physiology or psychology will illustrate this meaning.—E.D.]

#### THOMAS PAINE

SIR,—I regret that there should have been so much of "Tom" Paine during this bi-centenary. Had he been a humorous or comical writer like Hood, it could be understood. All of us speak of "Tom" Hood, for his writings fit the appellation. All Paine's works are of a serious nature, and his activities of a like character. Moreover in all his works and letters he always signed himself Thomas Paine. Even to his most intimate friends such as Clio Rickman, his letters were always signed in that manner. It was left to the Christians to use the "Tom" as a contemptuous way of referring to him. We surely do not wish to imitate their evil intentions and bad manners.

AMBROSE G. BARKER.

SIR,—Having greatly appreciated your recent articles and speeches on Thomas Paine, I was surprised that you should classify Professor Laski's article in the *Daily Herald* as "excellent."

It was better than some others mentioned, but I fail to see the need, in a short article of that description, to repeat an ancient slander, re Paine's supposed drunkenness.

Laski states this as a fact, but Ingersoll, whose oration is to be published, in his *Vindication of Thomas Paine* denies it, and brings strong evidence to support his rebuttal.

Was it to please the proprietors of the *Daily Herald* and its Christian readers, that mingled with the praise, there was so much of "faults" and "failures" and that in a brief reference to the *Age of Reason* there should be talk of, "faults of tone and temper."

Surely, Freethinkers know by now that it is the mud that sticks.

There was so little space, and so much that it would have been better and more worthy for a man of Professor Laski's reputation to have said.

L. EBURY.

SIR,—I fear I shall be late in joining in the chorus of congratulation which will reach you on the fine article on Paine in your last issue. It is curious that in the *Daily Telegraph* appeared the usual conventional half-contemptuous article by Mr. J. B. Frith; and in the *Sunday Times* (same proprietor, I believe?), an excellent appreciation (marred only by the usual story about "taking to drink") by Mr. Desmond McCarthy; who (if my memory serves me) writing some time ago on Voltaire and his biographer—pointedly ignored J. M. Robertson's admittedly valuable work in that field! Is this a case of "conversion"?

G. TODHUNTER.

#### ALDOUS HUXLEY

SIR,—I don't know any facts about Mr. Huxley's religion; but I lately read his *Brave New World*, and I will be surprised if he does not sooner or later join either the Church of Rome or one of the other bodies whose first principle is that all pleasure is wrong and degrading. It is true that point of view does not in *Brave New World* appear as the author's, but it is that of his "Savage," the book's martyr hero. The Savage grows fiercely indignant when a woman makes love to him. "Strumpet," he exclaims. The author does not explain the indignation, to him it seems quite natural. Later, the Savage scourges himself. Again we are not told why; no

need to. Self-scourging is so obviously beautiful and noble—to Mr. Huxley's temperament. To mine, it is far more revolting than anything which *Brave New World* was meant to satirize. But Mr. Huxley was not writing for people like me. He was writing against us.

CALDWELL HARPUR.

### 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

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES BRANCH (17 Grange Road, Kingston-on-Thames) : 8.0, each Thursday evening, lectures, discussions, etc.

MODERN CULTURE INSTITUTE (Caxton Hall) : 8.0, Friday, February 19, Dr. Har Dayal—"Physical and Mental Health."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Primrose Restaurant, 66, Heath Street, Hampstead, N.W.3, one minute from Hampstead Underground Station) : 7.30, Mr. H. Preece—"Dialectic Spiritism."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Alexandra Hotel, South Side, Clapham Common, S.W.4, opposite Clapham Common Station, Underground) : 7.30, Miss Stella Browne (Vice Chairman, Abortion Law Reform Association)—"The Legalization of Abortion."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1) : 11.0, Joseph McCabe—"The Red Pope, Pius XI."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.) : 7.30, R. B. Kerr (Editor *The New Generation*)—"Delusions of Democracy."

#### COUNTRY

##### INDOOR.

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane) : 7.0, H. Lancaster—"Shakespeare."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Shakespeare Rooms, Edmund Street) : 7.0, Mr. G. Whitehead—"Why Man Made God."

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Laycock's Cafe, Kirkgate, entrance via passage facing Burtons) : 7.15, Parliament Night.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley) 2.30, Mr. Jack Clayton—"Gun Firing and Loyalty."

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Freegardeners' Hall, Picardy Place, Edinburgh) : 7.0, Mrs. M. I. Whitefield—"The Sunset of Man."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow) : 7.0, Councillor R. T. White, G.S.S.—"Are Secularists Freethinkers?"

LANCASHIRE COUNTY FORUM (Victoria Hotel, Manchester) : 7.0, Mr. J. Clayton—"Secularism."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate) : 6.30, Mr. E. H. Hassell—"Omar Khayyam."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, entrance in Christian Street, Islington, Liverpool) : 7.0, Mr. W. Atkinson (Manchester)—A Lecture.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Green Street) : 7.30, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Sir John Priestman Hall, Roker) : 8.0, Monday, February 15, Debate—"That Atheism is More Reasonable than Christianity." *Affir.*: Mr. J. T. Brighton N.S.S.. *Neg.*: Rev. J. L. Wilson, Rural Dean.

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The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of enquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularization of the State, etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

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The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up.

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