

# A THREAT TO CIVILIZATION

## THE FREETHINKER

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### PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

	Page
<i>A Threat to Civilization—The Editor</i> - - -	335
<i>The Lot of the Leaders—Mimnermus</i> - - -	336
<i>George Müller and his Prayers—George Bedborough</i> -	337
<i>Schools and Churches—J. Reeves</i> - - -	339
<i>Nature Notes of a Freethinker—Nicholas Mere</i> - -	339
<i>Masterpieces of Freethought—H. Culner</i> - - -	395
<i>Henry Hetherington—1792-1849—Ambrose G. Barker</i> -	396
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.</i>	

### Views and Opinions

#### *A Threat To Civilization*

In the course of a lecture on "The Scope of Social Anthropology," delivered in 1908, Sir James Frazer said:—

Systematic enquiries . . . have revealed the astonishing, nay, the alarming truth, that a mass, if not the majority of every civilized society is still living in a state of intellectual savagery, that, in fact, the smooth surface of cultured society is sapped and mined with superstition. Only those whose studies have led them to investigate the subject are aware of the depth to which the ground beneath our feet is thus honeycombed by unseen forces. We appear to be standing on a volcano which may at any moment break out in smoke and fire to spread ruin and devastation.

I think this may well be taken as a text for the conclusion of my notes on the uprising of savagery that we have been witnessing in this country in connexion with the mumbo-jumboism of the Coronation. The Coronation is, of course, only one instance of many that is indicative of the threat to civilization to which Sir James Frazer refers. We have the same thing on a large scale in the throwback to the primitive in the development of a pre-scientific racialism and a narrow form of tribalism in Germany and Italy. We are not without this form of reversion in this country, and we have also the prevalence of stupid superstitions, from reading the future in tea-leaves, to the carrying of mascots in the shape of a lucky stone or doll on a motor-car, the wearing of a talismanic cross, and a hundred other stupidities that are called religious when established, and superstitious when they are not. Hobbes' famous definition of superstition and religion still holds the field. And once more I must guard myself by saying that the undeveloped mentality indicated by these practices has no class boundary or significance. The practices flourish with the Court as they do with the most ignorant villager in a remote part of the country. They are as

rife in the university as in the gutter. It is the knowledge that goes with understanding that matters. Knowledge without understanding is very common, and there is no fool quite so hopeless of improvement as the fool with knowledge, but who lacks any great degree of understanding.

If I remain alive, and active, for another two years I shall then have completed fifty years of continuous Freethought platform work. I believe this will constitute a record in the history of our movement. And during all these years I have been vividly conscious of the savage in our midst, and of the threat he offers to whatever genuine civilization we have acquired. That is why I have dwelt so strongly upon the intrinsic nature of our very much advertised Coronation Service. We simply cannot have a secure civilization with a population, a very large part of which so easily gives way to the play of primitive impulses and the sway of primitive beliefs. The king-worship that has been so sedulously cultivated for the past half-century, the impudent advertising of the nature of the Westminster miracle-play, these, with numerous other happenings, are not merely illustrative proof of the soundness of Frazer's warning, they are also evidence of the readiness of large numbers of men and women to exploit this latent barbarism for purely selfish ends. This barbarism does stand, if I may use a term which in the mouths of most implies either folly or knavery, as a symbol. It is a symbol of the primitive in man, and a warning that beneath a thin veneer of culture there is the savage naked and unashamed.

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#### *A Substitute For Monarchy*

In the preceding articles I have tried to keep distinct the question of an hereditary monarchy from that of monarchy in general. The latter is a question mainly of terminology, and if it is to be rejected it is only because it carries that reference to the savage which it is advisable to eliminate as far as possible. But an hereditary monarchy is an insult to human intelligence. To have at the head of the State one whose sole valid claim is that he has achieved the feat of being the son of his father, and who, whether he be genius or next door to an idiot, is still King, is of all institutions the most ridiculous. As Paine pointed out, there is as great a warranty for the present generation selling future generations into slavery, as there is for a past generation to determine who shall be the head of the State when they are dead and probably forgotten.

In that storehouse of wise sociological teachings, *A Yankee at the Court of King Arthur* (The story turns upon a Yankee who is transported back into the court of King Arthur, and describes the way in which he sets to work to civilize the people of Arthur's day), one of the characters argues in favour of a Republic with an hereditary monarch.



He believed that no nation that had ever known the joy of worshipping a Royal Family could ever be robbed of it and not die of melancholy. I urged that Kings were very dangerous. He then said: Then have cats. He was sure that a royal family of cats would serve every purpose. They would be as useful as any other royal family, they would know as much, they would have the same virtues and the same treacheries, the same disposition to get up shindies with other royal cats, they would be laughingly vain and absurd and never know it, they would be wholly inexpensive; and, finally, they would have as sound a claim to a divine right as any other royal house, and Tom XI. or Tom XIV. by the grace of God would sound as well as when applied to the ordinary tom-cat with tights on. . . . The worship of royalty being founded in unreason, these graceful and harmless cats would become as sacred as any royalties, and indeed more so because it would presently be noticed that they hanged nobody, beheaded nobody, imprisoned nobody, inflicted no cruelties and injustices of any sort, and so must be worthy of a deeper love and reverence than the customary human king, and would certainly get it.

After all, cats were worshipped in ancient Egypt, and for the same reason that the King was offered "worship" in Westminster in 1937. One need only remember that royal virtues go with the office to realize that this suggestion of the page-boy in Twain's novel deserves some consideration.

For the main suggestion here offered, I think I might quote Mr. Winston Churchill in support. In the course of the discussion on the Civil List Bill he defended the Coronation display on the grounds that the people loved to see the throne surrounded with pomp and ceremony, and they enjoyed a pageant. I think this is quite true of large masses of the population, and it holds out a very easy way of governing, and gulling, them. "Bread and the Circus" as a maxim of government is at least as old as the Roman Empire. And every film-star manager knows that "We must have publicity." And if we must have a monarchy because the people love pomp and ceremony and pageantry, then it seems that the suggestion of the "Yankee" really does deserve consideration. In that case, as a mere "symbol" there seems no reason why a race of royal cats might not do. Dean Swift, had he been alive, might have suggested an animal of a larger size and with longer ears, but that is a matter of detail. I take it that Mr. Churchill did not realize how near he was getting to Mark Twain.

\* \* \*

#### Save Us From Our Friends

The extent to which the development of king-worship has gone has been illustrated in previous articles. I need only recall the stupid outburst in the *Times* to the effect that the King embodied the life of the people, and that he was moved by forces beyond ordinary human beings. This extravagant adulation of the Royal Family has gone so far that even the staid and conservative *Spectator* was forced to raise a protest. The passage I am citing was used by one of the speakers in the Civil List debate, and it is worth noting that none of the papers reported it. It does not do to give the game away too openly:—

The blurb writers represent our royalties to be partly creatures out of fairy-land, partly super-human, and partly divine. I read in a great newspaper, "the Princess Elizabeth has to a peculiar degree the art of carrying herself with an easy charm and grace and dignity. She is steeped in economics, and accomplished in Latin, French and German, while the principles and precedents of the Constitution will soon be studied."

And this of a child of eleven, belonging to a family concerning which it is not claimed by even its most

fervent admirers, that any of its members possess outstanding mental ability. I do not know anything about the easy charm, grace and dignity of the Princess—these qualities go with the post—but I am sure that if a child can stand the public exhibition to which this one is exposed, with men and women bowing before her in the full gaze of the public, and kept constantly on show to receive public applause, if a child can stand all this unspoiled, it must indeed be more, or less, than human. I do not think that any parent will deny the truth of this.

One almost ceases to marvel at the writer cited last week, who made the discovery that the English home was restored to us by George V. and Mr. Baldwin. Consider. There are round about ten millions of homes in these islands. In all but a very small number, the family life in them is clean and decent, and the members of the family behave loyally to each other. So loyally that I question whether in many of them an order, presumably from a Prime Minister and an Archbishop, that they must not attend a brother's marriage, would have received any attention. If a man walked into a newspaper office with the information that he had visited a hundred homes and found ninety per cent decent, he would be treated as a fool. No one expects otherwise. It is the blackguardly home that constitutes "news." The opposite sort is very common. It is the character of the domestic life of our monarchs, of Charles II and William III., of the four Georges and of William IV. that has led to praise of the domestic life of their successors. If taken at its face value the praise of the family life of our recent monarchs is an announcement of a reform, not news of an example. The Archbishop of Canterbury holds that human morality depends upon a belief in God. The believers in the divinity of Kings hold that it is the example of the Royal Family, our Royal Family, that has induced the normal home to be decent. The Recall to Religion and the Deification of the King go well together.

(Concluded on page 394)

### The Lot of the Leaders

"Who set their hearts upon the goal,  
Not on the prize."—Watson.

"GREAT ideas do not win through academics, but through living men and women," said G. W. Foote. All the chief religions of the world were founded by open-air preachers, and great movements, such as those associated with Anti-Slavery, Co-operation, Temperance, and Socialism, owed everything to the platform-speakers.

Some time since, Mr. Lloyd George, turning aside from the pettiness of party politics, related to an astonished audience the drawbacks of a political career. He spoke, feelingly, of the lies and calumnies to which a politician was exposed, and, in characteristic fashion, explained the seamy side of politics. After describing the burdens of a politician's lot, he went on:—

Tradesmen have their worries and anxieties; but suppose that in addition to their ordinary troubles they found a constant mob of detractors standing outside their doors, some doing it for hate and others for hire, yelling into every customer's ears as he entered their shop: "Don't go there, whatever you do. You will be robbed and cheated at every turn if you do business with those fellows. They are all thieves, rogues, and liars." The whole time you are attending to your customers you have to dodge bricks, clods, and worse, hurled at your head. Most



men would rather give up business than endure this, if they had to break stones for a living.

There is much sad truth in this very frank avowal, but if there is sacrifice in the case of a deservedly popular politician, what is to be said in the case of the leaders of a really unpopular movement, to whom sacrifice is a science and self-denial an art? Freethought is a far wider and far nobler evangel than a merely political movement. It has its roots in intellectual necessity, and, deeper still, in ethical right. It is based on the psychological law of human development, only apprehended by a few choice spirits for ages, but latterly taking on a new significance and a fresh urgency. Perpetually reaffirmed from generation to generation by unnumbered examples of unselfish martyrdom, from the days of Hypatia to those of Francisco Ferrer, it is to-day changing the direction and even the character of the ideas of the civilized world.

The Freethought leaders are the most potent forces of progress. No other men are discussed so widely as these apostles of freedom, but magnificent as is their life-work, the men themselves are greater. Damned by the superior people, stoned and cursed by the vulgar, they have many trials to submit to. Perhaps the bitterest which can be mentioned is that of seeing charlatans ride by in their motors; or, in other words, marking the success of humbug and hypocrisy, whilst they find that intellectual honesty is not a paying career but a martyrdom.

Yet good and true men and women have had to submit to this treatment. Richard Carlile, the bravest of the brave, endured nearly ten years' imprisonment for championing the rights of free speech. Charles Southwell, an early Freethought editor, was aged prematurely by his long fight for liberty. Charles Bradlaugh suffered defeat after defeat for sixteen years in a battle which was Homeric in its intensity, and his dying ears never caught the echo of his triumphs, a tragic boon which was not denied to Wolfe at Quebec, or to Nelson on the Victory. Francisco Ferrer, fronting the rifles of his murderers, had to find his triumph in his own mind. G. W. Foote had to listen to the mocking voice of the Roman Catholic judge telling him he had devoted his great talents to the service of the Devil. Yet, in their hours of apparent failure, these men had triumphed. They were martyrs who missed the palm, but not the pains of martyrdom, heroes without the laurels, and conquerors without the jubilation of victory. Labouring not for themselves, but for the world and for coming generations, for them was influence as far-reaching as the utmost reach of the great wave whose crest they sometimes were.

When a politician carries on a campaign against the landed privileges of the nobility, or against huge vested interests, he encounters, necessarily, the resistance of only a portion of the community, whereas a Freethought leader, directing his force against Priestcraft with its forty thousand clergy, and its tens of thousands of satellites, has to bear the brunt of an enormously greater opposition. No enmity is more relentless, or more venomous, than religious hatred. The abuse directed against the leading politicians is the quintessence of politeness compared with the brutal assault and battery made upon the reputation of a Freethought leader. The politician has, at least, the support of some of the newspapers and periodicals of the country, but leading Freethinkers are certain to be grossly insulted and misrepresented by Liberal, Conservative, and Socialist papers alike. Accused of almost every crime in the calendar, their actions derided, this well-nigh intolerable enmity, is, in reality, a tribute to their effectiveness.

For the men, against whom a hundred thousand pulpits and platforms fulminate abuse, and the newspaper press spits venom, will have their reward in the coming time. Thanks to their courage and devotion, heterodoxy is no longer the real danger it once was to the citizen. They have compelled attention to Freethought advocacy, placed its exponents on a strong platform, organized its forces, and justified its rights to equal citizenship. Through the religious prejudices and bigotries of our time they have forced an opening large enough for heretics to pass through in future, and, in many directions, our lives are easier because of their life-work.

There are now signs of a priestly "recall to religion," and a corresponding recrudescence of bigotry and persecution. There was never a time when it was more clearly the duty and interest of the Freethought Movement to resist the "mailed fist" of the Churches. To-day the situation looks ominous. Let to-morrow and all to-morrows find it becoming less so, and those who have done their duty be judged worthy successors of the past leaders. The brave pioneers lit a beacon fire on the summit of a lonely hill, and now we see the firmament on every side red with the light of a responsive flame.

MIMNERMUS.

## George Mueller and his Prayers

THE recently published biography of *George Müller: The Man of Faith*, by F. G. Warne, recalls one of the queerest fish in the ocean of human credulity. The word "credulity" is a most charitable word to use in this connexion. Müller was pretentious and ambitious. He was probably self-deceived, but only in the same sense that Napoleon and Mr. Bottomley believed in their own lucky star.

Many apologies have been made for monks who faked miracles. Something can be said for doctors who give bread pills to well and well-to-do patients, when the doctor himself wants bread. Müller—let us hope—was quite consciously lying when he pretended to have made no provision at all for the health, safety, and food of his orphans, himself, his wife and child and his many servants. We can at least say that his credulity that "God would provide" was strongly reinforced by a tremendous ambition: Müller wanted all mankind to regard him as the greatest of all Believers!

Mr. Warne's biography is a dull book, but it is his misfortune that a single joke would ruin the gloomy solemnity essential to a history of that depressing man: his hero. Only the sceptic will find scores of unintentional jests. Even an unbelieving cat would have to laugh over the story (told on pages 54-55) about the Forgotten Orphans. It appears that Holy George decided that "God might be magnified by the fact that orphans were provided with all they need, only by prayer and faith":—

I prayed for everything connected with this work, for money, for helpers, for furniture, etc.

says Mr. Müller, describing the earliest days of the Orphanage. God, in prompt time supplied everything on earth His Believer Müller had prayed for. There was only one thing Müller had forgotten. God had sent (in obedience to Müller's instructions) all that was needed for housing and feeding Forty Orphans . . . but Müller had forgotten all about the Forty Orphans! He had no orphans in tow. With all his (and God's) provisions, Müller had to adjourn the whole business a month while he advertised, or prayed, or somehow discovered enough orphans to open shop with.



The story is characteristic. Mr. Müller really was not interested in orphans, but he was interested in God, and in himself as the supreme example of Faith. Over and over again in these pages is recorded Mr. Müller's "Motive"; it is emphasized not hidden that his motive was NOT to see orphans well-housed and fed, nor to benefit them with education: "that was NOT my motive. My heart longed for the salvation of their souls, but even that was not my motive. The glory of God . . . to illustrate THAT I have devoted my whole life" is Mr. Müller's own declaration (pp. 10, etc.).

George Müller, born in Germany in 1805, was trained for the Lutheran ministry, and became a pastor while still a bad boy. He says he committed "all kinds of wanton wickedness and excesses," cheating, deceiving, stealing money habitually, a drunken sot, "guilty of gross immorality," according to his biographer (pp. 12-13). As Sabbath-breaking and novel-reading are included in the list of sins he committed, we can imagine the nature of his "moral standards." From any point of view it indicates the worthlessness of religious education. Müller's pious upbringing was incapable of saving him from social and criminal acts. On the occasion of his Confirmation, he robbed the clergyman—"and then partook of the Lord's Supper."

In 1825 he entered the University of Halle, where he was "taken ill in consequence of his profligate and vicious life" (p. 17). He was there imprisoned for theft, and "was so wicked that I invented stories to show what a famous fellow I was." In 1826 he was "converted"—about which time he met a rich young man who led him to consider undertaking a Christian Mission to the Jews. Two rich Americans helped him financially. At this stage Müller tells us he "was graciously given a measure of simplicity and of child-like disposition" (p. 23). As a proof of this simplicity, he wrote to a wealthy lady begging for £15. The exact sum arrived "at a moment when his steps were again faltering" (p. 25). This seems to be Müller's first experiment in "non-advertising" and prayer!

Müller's prayers at this early stage were not answered any too rapidly. In 1827 he prayed . . . and wrote letters to London . . . for a job in the service of the London Society for the Propagation of Christianity Amongst the Jews. It was 1829 before Müller reached his anti-Semitic ministry here. This was not God's fault. Müller had a regular back-sliding booze and breakdown on his way to take up his new duties.

God had done His share, but the London air, and the small salary, did not suit Mr. Müller. He quickly got into touch with Devonshire patrons, who offered him a church at Teignmouth, where he settled down before his first year in England ended.

He married in 1830, and initiated his system of "never advertising, and of asking no man, not even my beloved brethren and sisters, to help me." With a touching naïveté he lets slip the inspiration of his plan:—

My expenses on account of travelling much in the Lord's service were too great to be met by my usual income. (p. 37.)

Accordingly, a collecting-box was put up conspicuously in the church "over which was written that whosoever had a desire to do something towards my support might put his offering in the box" (p. 37). From the very first these tactics succeeded: "The Lord RICHLY supplied all his temporal wants" (p. 38).

Seen in detail Müller's "plan" proves that Müller advertised—but not by the ordinary channels

of advertising. First of all people "talked" about his novel methods. "Various reports have been circulated on account of this our way of living" (p. 38). Probably if the modern word "Publicity" had been in use, Mr. Müller could never have deceived people into thinking he did not advertise. Obviously his salary increment was the direct result of outside publicity. The offertory at his church during the first period of his experiment amounted to only ONE THIRD of the sums sent him by outsiders. "Had I had my regular salary I should not have had nearly as much" was his own comment.

Mr. Müller got a better job at Bristol in 1832, where promptly a Cholera epidemic devastated the town. Our hero does not shine in this grand chance for The Man of Faith and Prayer. Doctors, nurses, and (we freely acknowledge) priests as well as people of all parties worked and "willed" to save as many victims as possible—this is not "divinity," but "humanity." But where were God and Mr. Müller? Let us see Mr. Müller at his prayers during the epidemic.

"Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend MYSELF" prayed he. Thousands died—but Mr. Müller was saved. With his commonplace calculation of "Me and my mates," Mr. Müller chronicles with joy that "only one member" of his own trumpery sect "succumbed to the disease." (This ONE failure—did the Müllerites but know it—is as great a problem as his own lucky escape). Müller seems to get a genuine "kick" out of the gratifying fact that a rival neighbour "curate of a city parish interred 31 persons in a single day," while the precious saints prayed for by himself continued to live—all but one of them!

To revert to Müller's method of "not advertising." This man was in constant communication with people in vastly extended areas. He visited personally 43 countries and travelled 400,000 miles (p. 204), in days of difficult transport. He preached to large congregations, and although he never advertised, bills were issued announcing meetings at which he was going to ask God for stipulated large sums of money. "No collections were made," but "contributions were accepted." Mr. Müller's publicity was of so extensive a character that he kept busy a large staff of clerks, including seven assistants for correspondence alone (p. 206), so that "not asking anybody for anything" kept the mails pretty busy. God, at His best, had to be supplemented by Müller charging parents for School fees—to the tune of £25,377, while the sale of Bibles, tracts, etc., brought in over £96,000—all included in the £2,800,000 attributed to what "the Living God has sent in answer to prayer."

A century has gone since George Müller founded his "Day of Prayer." During that period prayer has been constant and not confined to one Orphanage in a single city. A hundred catastrophes have called forth universal prayer. The bloodiest wars in all history have occasioned billions of prayers. Who will dare to say that these prayers all came from less sincere believers or in less worthy causes than Müller's? Many of these prayers expressed humanist desires for disinterested social salvation—for international peace. Who can believe that Müller's prayers for his salary, and to provide him with a reputation as The Man of Faith, were instantly answered, while Omnipotence turned a deaf ear to nobler men's nobler prayers?

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

The recent medieval Church was a machinery of ritual magic, sanctified sorcery, fee-earning, sacraments, diligent exploitation of ignorant fear, brutal menace to serious remonstrants, and unwavering, unsleeping, unscrupulous gain getting on all sides.

J. M. Robertson.



## Schools and Churches

THE decision of the Blackpool teachers not to take the school children to churches, which was fully supported in the Easter Conference of the National Union of Teachers was a useful step, though a small one. We should have liked to have heard of some criticism of the "Service Book," which the local education authority has issued with its "agreed syllabus." Among the instructions or suggestions are that not only teaching is needed, but a careful introduction to "the attitude and atmosphere of prayer and also of worship." Here we have something like an attempt to make the religious lessons into church or chapel services, and the teachers into supplementary parsons.

I think it was Dr. Inge who said he regarded Anglican schools as little citadels of the English Church. Since then the ecclesiastical objective has widened, and the council as well as other schools are expected to play a part in buttressing the churches in general.

Among the later claims of ecclesiasts are a demand for agreed syllabuses, corresponding to those of elementary schools, for use in all secondary schools; and a correspondent in the *Times* goes one better in suggesting that the leaders of the churches and the Board of Education should make a syllabus of the "Christian Faith" for use in all schools.

The teachers in general have so far given their support to religious teaching in the schools, while strongly opposing the imposition of religious tests on themselves. But these two attitudes are now plainly seen to be incompatible. Not only religious enthusiasts but others may reasonably hold that if such instruction is to be given, the teachers should be qualified by their belief and theological knowledge to perform the task satisfactorily; and religious tests logically follow.

Such tests have, of course, long been put to candidates for appointments in church schools. Probably the present writer is not the only Secularist who, being appointed by an education committee to the managing body of sectarian schools, has had to listen with what patience he could command to such questions as, "Are you a communicant?" "Where were you confirmed?" and has also had difficulty, as I had, in one notable case, in preventing the appointment of an inferior woman, a "church worker," who was proposed by the vicar. The tests, though unsectarian, seem to be rapidly extending to other schools. The Heston and Isleworth case, in which a candidate for a council school post withdrew his application on being asked whether he was a Christian, and was prepared to teach the Christian religion, was reported some time ago; *A.M.A.*, the organ of the Association of Assistant Masters of Secondary Schools, has lately complained that two candidates in East Anglia were asked directly what was their religion; and to this we may add, that the governing body of a school in Carnarvonshire, when considering the allegation of the County Religious Advisory Committee, that teachers were deserting religion, expressed "uneasiness about the influence of such teachers," one of the governors saying that he would take strong measures in the matter, as some teachers in the county did not attend a place of worship; and that at a clerical conference regret was expressed that education authorities did not enquire more strictly into the religious beliefs of teachers under their control.

Until lately silence was sufficient to protect unbelieving (non-Christian) teachers from professional detriment so far as council schools were concerned. But the development of inquisition into applicants for posts in these schools will doubtless in many cases

necessitate a choice between loss of status and prospects, and the payment of what has been called the "tribute of hypocrisy."

As regards education in itself we have to point not only to the present obstruction to organization by the church schools (e.g., in London, according to recent reports, 84.9 per cent of the council schools were re-organized or grouped for the purpose as against only 21.5 per cent of the others), but also to the probability as indicated by a decision of a very large education authority to appoint teachers in proportion to the number of children of particular denominations—that not a few appointments will be made on the "flock" basis instead of the ground of ability and attainment.

The time seems to have fully come for teachers to recognize that in order to preserve their religious liberty, and at the same time to render possible peaceful educational progress, it will be necessary to develop a movement—one already foreshadowed by the presentation and discussion of resolutions for the secularization of education at the conferences of both the teachers' associations mentioned, a movement having for its double objective the abolition from the school curriculum of religious instruction and the extirpation of the clerical control and interference from all State-supported schools.

J. REEVES.

[Since the above was written it has been reported in an account of the proceedings of the Denbighshire Education Committee, that the Bishop of St. Asaph suggested that with a view to securing Christian teachers, the following questions should be put to all candidates interviewed for teaching posts:—

Are you a Christian?

Do you attend a place of worship?

Are you prepared to teach the principles of the Christian faith to the children under your charge?—J.R.]

## Nature Notes of a Freethinker

Next came fresh April, full of lustrous buds,  
And wanton as a Kid whose horns new buds;  
Upon a Bull he rode, the same which led  
Europa floating through th' Argolick fluds:  
His horns were gilden all with golden studs,  
And garnished with garlands goodly dight  
Of all the fairest flowres and freshest buds  
Which th' earth brings forth; and wet he seem'd in sight  
With waves, through which he waded for his love's delight.

Spenser.

THE lilac is in bloom and the sweeter side of human endeavour has associated this lovely and fragrant flower with the name of Schubert. With its entry in season, the willow warbler appeared on the 27th. He is a happy bird—at least to one who has watched him and listened to his melodious notes among the budding silver birch. "Chip chap chivie, choice and sweet," he sings, interspersed by a plaintive interrogation when family cares arrive. From Algiers maybe he has come and the wood resounds with his song in his world containing no clock but the sun. There is a Chinese proverb, "Here is as good as there," and if you sit quietly the willow warbler's interest in food—hunting will bring this little brown ball of musical fluff within close observation. It is a year since he was first heard before; the new note striking the ear registers the ephemeral nature of life; three hundred and sixty-five days have come and gone, and that new note, vibrant, unique, belonging to that bird alone, evokes past happy days. The note is the same, but in human life inevitable change has had its way. If one could solve this trick in time. . . . With the willow warbler the whinchat has arrived; he is not so beautiful as the stonechat, but he hurls himself into the air singing, and fidgets among the shrubs and trees with his staccato note *utic! utic!* At four o'clock in the morning, with a full moon, the nightingale has been heard in the valley among the tall elms and oaks. Nocturnal music,



sad if you like, romantic if you please, interesting if you regard the world of birds as a vast subject of study—that one may look backward or forward to without one tinge of regret for time spent. In simplicity of living, the man who is owned by time and the thousand and one distractions which are merely the simple things made complex, may see a way of cutting the cackle and owning his own life. "This day belongs to me," says Schopenhauer somewhere. I think, in my own way, that bird study may help him to come home to himself.

In making a voyage of discovery in woods the traveller may find an enchanting scene, untouched by the human hand. Here is a corner, beautified with the celandine, the red dead nettle, shepherd's purse, the cuckoo-pint. Bitter-sweet is coming into leaf; the dog-rose is pushing up vigorously. The early lady-smock is lifting a mauve blossom among the grasses. A stray dandelion, with incredible gold in its disc heaps more colour to the scene. Stitchwort is gracefully adorning the foot of the hedge. Prate not of heaven to me; you will have to accept the other place as well, in a man-made scheme of rewards and punishments probably sprung from behind the beetle-browed forehead of a man seeking power over others. These scenes can be found still over the length and breadth of England; they come as a revelation of beauty. In the same way, among the poetry of W. B. Yeats one may find a memorable line as memorable as a woodland picture to justify all the best that has been written of poets who have a kinship with gypsies. Remembering the debased currency in use by Christian apologetics, and remembering their clumsy and ruffian hands in touching human life, one may enjoy the enchantment of the following lines from "When you are old," by thinking with one's own brains. Here, then, is my parallel. And as I am not out to justify the ways of God to man, I can at least justify the ways of the poet in pointing out a gem of thought to put beside a lovely picture that falls from the lap of Spring.

"How many loved the moments of glad grace,  
And loved your beauty will love false or true;  
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,  
And loved the sorrows of your changing face."

A cheap edition is now available, price five shillings of *Four Hedges*, a Gardener's Chronicle, by Clare Leighton. Gollancz. The text is an example of excellent writing, and the wood-cuts will delight the eye again and again. Fresh air and good health blow through its pages. The reader will enjoy it, for the making of the book was a work of love. The old English custom of greeting May Day has almost disappeared. Singers would deck themselves with garlands of flowers and call at houses singing:—

"Good morning, ladies and gentlemen,  
We wish you a happy day.  
We've come to show you our garlands  
Because it's the first of May."

The verse is not from the peak of Parnassus, but no one is so rich that he could refuse to be wished a happy day. A particularly interesting thought is expressed on page 36; in one form or another it has appeared in my own life. Ownership of anything is fugitive; we only touch things as we go by. "I wonder how long it takes one to feel entirely possessed by a particular part of the earth. For there is no doubt that one is possessed by the earth rather than oneself possessing it." The problem of the earth, as the editor of this paper has frequently pointed out, is how to live on it. Present tendencies indicate that the problems will not be solved by blowing human beings off it. There is a charm and simplicity in *Four Hedges* which will captivate those who do not want very many of what are called the world's prizes, and it maybe that in time, the forces in civilization will cease to abuse and maltreat the earth either through the terrific reaction to it, or because, high hope! it will be realized that we are only knocking and smashing up the house we live in and on. Clare Leighton deserves all success in this attempt to bring harmony between man and earth.

May has arrived giving us capriciously one day from summer, a sample of November weather, rain, and cold winds of March. Plentiful apple and pear blossom gives promise of fruit to come. Spenser will help me to overtake the seasons, and frown or smile from the merry month, he shall have his say:—

Then came faire May, the fayrest mayd on ground,  
Deckt all with dainties of her seasons pryde,  
And throwing flowres out of her lap around:  
Upon two brethrens shoulders she did ride,  
The twinnes of Leda; which on eyther side  
Supported her like to their soveraigne Queene:  
Lord! how all creatures laught when her they spide  
And leapt and daun't as they had ravisht beene!  
And Cupid selfe about her fluttr'd all in greene!

NICHOLAS MERE.

## Acid Drops

The question of Christian marriage still looms large in the mind of the Church of England clergy. At Canterbury, the other day, Convocation discussed the matter, and it was made quite clear that there is a very sharp division of opinion, not on details, but on principles. For over fifteen centuries the Church has put forward the claim magisterially to declare that they alone possessed the final and authoritative word on one of the most important relations that can exist between men and women. And yet to-day, when a large number of even liberal-minded Christians are agreed that some alteration must be made in the legal aspect of marriage, and made in the name of common human decency, a powerful section of the Church is arguing against the legal dissolution of a marriage, that from the human, if not from the religious point of view, is already at an end. When will the Church leaders recognize that when the courts of this country say that a divorce is granted, it does not dissolve a marriage? That marriage was ended before the parties appealed to the law.

There is another point that is worth noting in this connexion. It has been held by the high courts that that part of a will in which a man leaves an income to his widow on condition that she does not marry again is void in such cases where the widow is a young woman, as being contrary to public policy. The grounds of this are that such a condition, if observed, encourages to "Immoral relations," and is against the interests of the State in preventing the woman becoming a mother. If these conditions hold good in such cases, must not they also hold good in the case of people living apart, whether under legal sanction or otherwise? But our parsonry, with the Archbishop at its head, cares little about this human aspect of an unfortunate marriage. What it does care about, the only thing it cares about, is the maintenance of ecclesiastical supremacy.

A curious comment on our boasted progress may be seen in the fact that Roman Catholic processions—once forbidden—are becoming more and more numerous. The *Universe* says:—

In country lanes and city streets, in convent gardens and church grounds—in every possible setting, processions of the Blessed Sacrament, in which tens of thousands of people took part, and which many thousands more watched reverently, were held to mark the Feast of Corpus Christi. In beautiful weather, Benediction was given hundreds of times. For the first time in the 84 years' life of Holy Trinity parish the sacred Host was carried in procession on Sunday round both sides of Brook Green.

And it may be added, the Papal flag is flown on these occasions from most Catholic homes.

Once before, civilization went down before the advance of the Christian religion, and it may do so again if the Church becomes strong enough to deal the crippling blow.



If convocation could not agree on the question of marriage, there was a great deal of agreement on the question of money. The University Mission asks for £63,000. The Bishop of Newcastle asks for £60,000 for Church Schools and Churches, the Bishop of Coventry desires £65,000. All these sums are required to advance the religious policy of the Churches. One may note the tears shed over the distressed areas, and the money asked for in the interests of the Church. Perhaps if the country had not had a number of churches living upon it, by this time it would have done away with distressed areas.

In the *Daily Sketch* for June 9 the Bishop of London holds forth on the need for a "United Christian Front." In most cases where people shout for a United Front, they really mean to let all others who agree with a little of what we preach, unite in helping to promote all we preach. It is a kind of political flat-catching. But the Bishop of London with his almost miraculous faculty for making a stupidity crystal clear to everyone but himself, puts it in this way:—

It is high time that Christian people got together to form a Christian Front. To-day when I meet a person for the first time . . . I am glad that he is a Christian of any sort. We need to be united in a common effort to save our faith.

That is quite clear. So long as a man is a Christian of some sort the Bishop doesn't care a damn what sort of a Christian he is. The Bishop can unite with him to "defend our Faith." And even though the two of them have a different sort of Christianity, even a contradictory sort, and even though "our faith" when applied to the Bishop is a different faith from that which the other man holds, the Bishop can still join with him in saving two things, each of which negates the other. The Bishop of London is as good as ever. The papers have lately been praising the Bishop, mainly because he is an old man, but not one of them has credited him with brains. Some have carefully guarded themselves against being taken to hint at such an endowment. But they might have given him credit for supremacy for making the character of a stupidity quite plain—to everyone but himself.

Dr. Townley Lord says: "Men can hardly apply the adjective 'powerful' to the Church to-day." He says you must not judge the church's power by "the religious side of the Coronation." :—

It is not to these things that we look for evidence of the real power of the Christian Church. The facts are that the Christian Church is singularly impotent; impotent, for example, to preserve the peace of the world.

Dr. Lord may be right. But there is a power of resistance—very noticeable in that "dead weight" known as a corpse. A dead body lying in a stream may divert the current or poison the water-supply. Until people bury their dead creeds mankind will suffer from their evil influence.

A member of Portsmouth Ruridecanal Conference, Mr. G. J. Rogers, said the Bishop's appeal for funds left him cold. He (Mr. Rogers) had spent a holiday in a village nearby where the rector had a "stipend" of £1,200 a year. Its whole church organization had broken down, there were few members of the congregation, the church was neglected, and he had seen rats about the altar. The rector never gave religious instruction at the local church school. And at another school where the parson did give such instruction, the boys never listened but filled up the time doing their homework. Still, as the rector has over a thousand a year, and is, in the opinion of the Bishop of Chelmsford, in danger, it looks as if "he will have his reward," in due season.

"We are amazed that no voice has been raised at what seems to come perilously near the desecration of Westminster Abbey," writes the Rev. C. G. Holland in the Ewell (Surrey) parish magazine. "After being closed

for several months," he continues, "turnstiles and money tills have been erected inside the Abbey. The chink of money and the excited chatter of sightseers have created an atmosphere of a showplace rather than a house of God." And does the vicar wish people to believe him so innocent as not to know that Westminster Abbey is and always has been one of the acknowledged leading "show-places" of his employers: and that "chink of money" and "excited chatter" are welcome daily sounds to the showmen there? Salesmen and guides welcome customers to the premises. To emphasize the church's "peril," our "Rip Van Winkle" vicar could have read, on the very next page of the evening paper quoting him, the financial particulars of the Abbey bargain sales of seats, cushions, carpets, decorations, etc. Jesus turned the money-changers out of the temple, but that must have been in one of his unfortunate "Red" moments.

This new version of an old story cropped up at the Naval Review. One of our navy was asked by a "foreign" bluejacket, "How is it that you always win your battles and we don't?" "Oh, that's because we always pray before we start," answered the tar. "But we pray, too," said the visitor. "Yes, but we speak English," replied Jack. That settles God's nationality in true British tradition. When will these foreigners learn to drop their own foolish speech and customs?

One of Franco's German mercenaries dropped bombs on Bilbao with sanguinary effects—on women and children. Accompanying the bombs were piously-worded appeals for surrender, embellished with a large illustration of the Blessed Virgin surrounded by cherubs. "Hypocrisy"—the *Daily Herald* calls it. We call it—RELIGION.

Australia has got only a small white population, but in it are 1,252,000 Roman Catholics. To keep them on the right path are 1,826 priests, 552 seminarists, 934 lay brothers, and 9,510 nuns. Our sympathies are with Australia having to carry such a load on its back.

Jackson Whitlow, a Tennessee mountaineer, has received "an order from God" to abstain from food until such time as he receives word from heaven to start eating. There must be plenty of trouble in running this old world, but mixed with all his worries the Old Gentleman aloft gets much entertainment.

The membership figures of the Methodist Church, published in the current *Methodist Times*, will be read with interest. If the other Churches were equally truthful, we should understand better the urgency of the pathetic plea of the Archbishop for a Return to God! The figures mentioned show nothing but a steady decline in all directions. Here are the net results:—

Sunday School Teachers	3,727	fewer than previous year
" " Scholars	65,831	" " " "
Young Methodism	14,428	" " " "
Local Preachers	537	" " " "
Temperance Members	44,204	" " " "

The *Literary Digest* gives five columns to a terrible story of the Morocco Drought caused by the unprecedented failure of the usual Rainy Season. There has been no rain since last November, and the *Digest's* article is headed: "Nomad's Land Begs Allah for Water." The Christian God is not the only Deity to whom a Prayer for Rain comes from an agonized people—in vain. Hundreds of thousands of Moors have migrated with their families to the hills, leaving behind them homes and corn-fields, trusting to the melting snows of the mountains instead of any longer wasting prayers on deaf deities. The water famine continues, and although French philanthropy is doing something, it is calculated that another 200,000 people will perish before the rain comes. All gods are alike, as humanity always discovers in the hour of direst need.

Quite a little storm has been raised by the indictment in one of our religious papers that University women are



mostly without religion. This has upset some of the teachers, but the correspondence which has followed the indictment leaves no doubt that it is true. Sister Superior Benedicta, C.S.M.V., for example, is quite distressed, though she admits that among the undergraduates "there are many genuine sceptics, and, of course, a large mass of utter indifference." She puts this down to the undenominational day schools or boarding schools "where there is no chaplain or chapel, and no training in religion"; and also "to the fact that a fairly successful, attractive girl with no religious background has no sense of need, and can live at college for three years in the state of happy irresponsibility." These people will find any reason but the real one—that most intelligent girls see that if the science they are taught is true, religion must be untrue.

The question of the absolute indissolubility of "Christian" marriage is still the subject of lengthy discourses, and violent controversy among the Bishops and laity of the Church of England. There is a society called the Seven Years Association of Fundamental Believers, whose principal spokesman, Mr. Peter Winckworth, is very much concerned that "two Bishops alone from our episcopate have refused to diminish the teaching of Our Lord and of our Church up to now on the indissolubility of Christian marriage." The Bishops of St. Albans and Ely both attack any proposals to remarry divorced people; but anyone reading their nonsense about "sin" would imagine we were back in the days of the disciples and apostles of the first century. But these Bishops may rest assured that "Our Lord" or not, nothing will stop the long-needed reform in our marriage and divorce laws. And we have an idea that when these reforms are passed, the credit for them will be given to "Our Lord" and to Christianity!

One reason given by the Bishop of Ely is that "we are trustees of the Church's historical traditional standards of marriage." Most of the historical and traditional standards of both "Our Lord" and his Church are anachronisms in a modern world. They are not merely out-of-date; they are positively harmful, and should go the way of first century sanitation and belief in evil spirits as the cause of disease.

Modernists are not particularly in love with the beautiful saying of Jesus, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," and do their best either to explain it away, or try to show that the good, kind, gentle Jesus could never have said it. Besides, it shows Jesus believing in a literal hell, devil, and angel, and that looks too much like fundamentalism. Well, we are glad to note that Roman Catholics have nothing to do with such damnable heresy. Jesus said it; he believed, as he ought to, in hell, devils, and angels; and the "refresher" course in their Catechism, given by the *Universe* is proud of his belief. This is as it should be for we, like the Catholics, deprecate any watering-down of, or denying, primitive beliefs. The Old Faith is good enough for any thorough believer.

That impish pillar of the Church, Dean Inge, found very satisfying reflections on the Coronation in Carlyle, quoting from "Sartor Resartus," as follows:—

When I read of pompous ceremonials, and I strive, in my remote privacy, to form a clear picture of that solemnity, on a sudden, as if by some enchanter's wand, the (shall I speak it?) the clothes fly off the whole dramatic corps, and dukes, grandees, bishops, generals, the Anointed Presence itself, every mother's son of them, stand straddling there, not a shirt on them; and I know not whether to laugh or weep.

Airing some of his excellent philosophy, the Dean remarks most truly: "People who can see too far below the surface are out of place in the majority of official positions," yet he strives to discover merit in the Abbey ceremonies and display on such grounds as "mysticism," and the "sacramental" and "emblematical" features therein. And after remarking, "There would be some-

thing childish in our love of processions and ceremonial if we were not saved by our sense of humour," Dr. Inge stultifies his own sense of humour by concluding on the nation bringing its

hopes and fears, its pride and penitence, into the presence of Him who has been, and is, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come.

Cardinal Augustus Hlond, Primate of Poland, is issuing invitations to a "World Congress of Christ the King," to vanquish the "Red threat and world materialist mentality." He informed a London evening paper correspondent that the Pope is sure the papal encyclical, "Divine Redemption," will not remain unanswered by the faithful. (It is, obviously, too risky to trust to a "Divine" answer). The Congress will "end the Red menace by bringing justice to those who believe in God, and to those whose belief has been shaken." . . . 'Od's fire and stake?—can't one visualize Catholic "justice" on the backsliders if "Holy Church" had only the power to administer it?

Perhaps to prove religious mentality superior to "materialist mentality," the Cardinal told the pressman the following story: "A Communist worker of Poland came to a bishop of my diocese . . . and said he wanted to discuss social problems." The two "talked together for an hour and a half. When the worker stood up to leave, he said: 'I'm a Communist in my stomach, and a good Catholic like you in my heart. If only my stomach was satisfied I would be completely like you.'" We hope the "Communist" was not making an "odious comparison" between the abdominal proportions of an underfed "Red" and those of an average protuberant priest?

## Fifty Years Ago

BUT to return to the clergy. When they have taken up their positions in the Abbey, and her Majesty is seated, the Archbishop of Canterbury will commence the performance by asking a blessing on the Queen. What blessing does she require, unless she wishes to see another Jubilee? She has health, wealth, and a flourishing family, all maintained at the nation's expense, to say nothing of countless courtiers and unlimited flattery. What more can a modest woman desire? If God is disposed to grant a blessing, and the Archbishop is able to obtain it, let him seek out some hungry, sorrowing, anguished wretches, and implore the divine beneficence to lighten their misery. But this would be expecting too much both from God, who helps those who help themselves (often to other people's money), or of the Archbishop, who receives a salary of fifteen thousand a year to preach the gospel of poverty, and lives in a palace to represent the carpenter's son of Nazareth who "had not where to lay his head."

The music and prayers have all been approved by the Queen. Even an Archbishop cannot venture to address the Almighty in her Majesty's presence without consulting her tastes. God might be pleased, but she might be annoyed, and her displeasure would outweigh his approval. How far the clergy toady the Queen is seen in the fact that three of the musical selections were composed by the Prince Consort, whose genius in this line is apparently thought to dwarf Bach, Handel, and Beethoven into pigmies. Even the Litany has been altered for the occasion, although it is settled by Act of Parliament. Loyalty is above the law, and "the Queen can do no wrong."

The first petition, after the special one for the Queen, will be the Lord's Prayer. Thousands of rich people, worth hundreds of millions, who have had a fashionable breakfast and will be looking forward to a fashionable dinner, will ask the lord to give them their daily bread. For the suppression of hypocrisy, and the growth of sincerity, we should like to see them reduced to live for a week on the portions sent them from the heavenly larder.

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# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H. LARKIN.—Thanks for circular. It will prove useful.

G. HENRY.—Much obliged for information.

R. MASON AND E. BROWN.—Thanks for address of likely new reader. Paper being sent.

L.M. asks what is the sin against the Holy Ghost. We don't know. Only the Ghost knows, and he is uncommunicative. The problem appears to be one that concerns Christians, but we, as Freethinkers, cannot work up an interest in it.

S. O'DONNELL.—Thanks for copy of Manifesto. It is worthy of its origin.

F. R. ELMORE.—We appreciate your criticisms and suggestion. But to carry them out properly would require larger financial resources than we possess. We are doing the best we can in the circumstances, but will bear your suggestion in mind. And you must remember the *Freethinker* is being run at a loss.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Sugar Plums

We have to thank those who have responded to our appeal for information concerning the steps that are being taken to give the churches a stronger hold on the education of children. But we would still like more, for if the information is to be put to use it must approach completeness. What we require is information from as many districts as possible concerning the kind of pressure that is being brought to bear on either teachers, children or Education Committees, to increase the amount of religion taught and whether teachers and Education Committees are induced to co-operate with churches to attend Sunday Schools or places of worship. In a word, we want to have all possible information as to where and how the schools are being utilized for either direct or indirect religious propaganda. Now, will our friends get to work, and at once?

Apropos of what has been said, it may also be noted that the Government is now giving a larger proportion of the cost of Church schools than ever before given. This fact is being used as an inducement by the Birmingham Diocesan Conference in an appeal for £35,000 to build new schools. The appeal is made in the *Birmingham Post* for June 8, and it is pointed out that if the £35,000 is raised by Churchmen the Government will give enough

to make the total amount up to £120,000. The buildings then become the property of the Church. Not a bad bargain, and then Church of England supporters have the impudence to say that the Church gets no financial aid from the State. As a matter of fact, there are millions of public money given indirectly to churches and chapels in this country.

Our readers will remember, with appreciation, the interesting articles in these columns on W. H. Hudson, by "C-de-B." They, at the time led many to read Hudson for the first time, and to read him is to love him. He is one of the few whose work bears the stamp of immortality. "C-de-B." has now rewritten and published those articles in a slim little volume with a charming woodcut by his daughter. It makes a charming essay, and we cordially commend it to our readers. This can be had from the Pioneer Press at 2s., postage two pence extra. The title chosen by the author is *A Naturalist and Immortality*. The essay can be read at a sitting, but it will linger long in the mind of an appreciative reader.

Freethinkers interested in Education should read the work of Mr. A. S. Neill, a pioneer of co-education and of mental freedom. He does not believe in killing originality by overloading the child-mind with parental prejudices, however "respectable." In his school, no religion is taught. In his story of Summerhill ("That Dreadful School") he answers the question: "What is your policy with a child brought up in a sincerely religious home?" Mr. Neill says:—

I find that no child wants to practise religion when he is free. . . . I see no signs that worship is a natural thing in children. When the sense of sin is washed out, prayer is never used. Generally children from a religious home are insincere and repressed. That is inevitable under a religious system that has lost its original love of life, and concentrates on its fear of death.

Mr. G. Whitehead will spend the next three weeks in the North-East areas, and will speak in Newcastle each evening from June 20 until 25. There is a North-East Federation of N.S.S. Branches which will co-operate at all meetings during Mr. Whitehead's visit, in which Sunderland, South Shields, and Tees-Side will be included.

The Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph tells us in its issue of June 5, 1937:—

According to one well-known novelist the four books which can be classed as permanent "best sellers" are the Bible, Robinson Crusoe, The Age of Reason, by Thomas Paine, and Black Beauty, by Miss A. Sewell.

The Bible and The Age of Reason! Bane and antidote!

The *New York Times* reminds its readers that although the Bible contains some very "naturalistic treatment" of matters not usually mentioned in polite society, "Puritanical prudery" has always been more or less the same. Its instances:—

The fate of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's weekly, called *The Watchman*. The first issue was a great success, but when he prefaced his *Essay on Faiths*, in his second number with the apt biblical quotation, "Wherefore my bowels shall sound like a harp" (Isaiah xvi. 2), he lost most of his subscribers and his publication soon died.

The *New York Times* will allow us to make a slight correction. The verse quoted is verse eleven (not verse 2) in the Chapter mentioned.

The *Freethinker* is being repeatedly stolen from the Reading Room of the South Shields Public Library, and because of this, the journal is only supplied now "on demand." Mr. Berry, the Secretary of the local Branch N.S.S., has a useful letter in the *Shields Gazette* complaining of the success of this clearly pious move, and the publicity this letter gives to the question will, it is hoped, lead to the replacing of the paper on the reading-room table.



## A Threat to Civilization

(Concluded from page 386)

### King As Symbol

Of old the deification of the King expressed the savage. To-day it *masks* him. In the one case it was an attempt of the uninstructed human intelligence to deal with the facts as they were understood. To-day it is an example of the danger to civilization that Frazer indicates. Mr. Churchill apologizes for the garishness of the Coronation by saying that the people like pomp, and it brings the throne nearer to them. Others explain that the people are naturally interested in the principal figures in the State. These are idle subterfuges. There is a President in the United States and in France. People are interested in them—as Presidents. But there is not this showman's parade of them and their families, and if neither President ever said anything or did anything out of the ordinary, if their chief function was to open institutions, to visit hospitals and talk to selected cases, to attend a dinner or a garden party or an exhibition or a theatre, and to have even the shortest of speeches written for them, one may question whether Frenchmen or Americans would regard their Presidents as extraordinary men, who demanded for their sustentation some force superior to that which bears upon ordinary individuals. Neither the President of France nor of America ever talks of "my Army" or "my Navy," nor is there in either country the legal fiction that the land of the country belongs to the President, and that law and justice come from him. These are all heritages from the age of the god-king. There is no talk in either America or France of Presidential blood; nor is there when the President is enthroned a sanctification service that endows him with some quality of the divine.

It is said that the King stands to his people as a "symbol"—a word which, suggestively enough, is used to rehabilitate the decaying belief in a god. But why a symbol? Are we to believe that the Englishman does not love his country or respect his institutions enough to save them for their own sake? Are we to believe that although the Frenchman or the American can act upon an intelligent appreciation of national institutions, the Briton can only do this when they are embodied in a man or a woman? If so, this is a very curious way of praising the inhabitants of the British Empire. But if the people are to take an absurdity seriously, it must be stated very solemnly.

Of what is the King a symbol? Of the permanency of our institutions? That is impossible. The duration of our institutions is a matter for the people and Parliament. The King has nothing to do with that. Is he the symbol of our liberties? Again, impossible. Recent events have shown that the King must do as he is ordered by his ministers; and it is a common lesson of history that everywhere the liberties of the people have been wrung from the throne. There is no instance in history where the reverse is the case. Mr. Churchill, speaking in the House of Commons, said that the King was our greatest protection against dictatorships. Nonsense! It is actually the countries where the Kings really took part in the control of the country that have gone over to the worst forms of dictatorship. It is in the two countries in which Kings do not exist, and the one in which their power is most severely curtailed that democracy has come best through the post-war years.

It is said the King is a symbol of unity. A unity of what? Of religion? The King is so little a symbol of unity here, that not only is his religion selected for him, but to change it means that he would cease to be King, and while he is by law an Episcopalian in England, whenever he enters Scotland he again is

by law, a Presbyterian. And taking the British Empire as a whole, the King's dictated religion represents the belief of only a very small minority of the people of the Empire. Mr. Churchill's philosophy—and it is not peculiar to him, appears to be that the only way to rule the people is to fool them.

The King is a symbol! That is an insult to the King disguised as a compliment. For a symbol is a sign that stands for something not itself. A flag may be a symbol of a country, but the piece of bunting is nothing. Mathematicians deal with symbols, but the signs they use are in themselves mere scratches on a piece of paper. One of the symbols of some American colleges is a howl that reminds one of feeding time at the Zoo. When these people defend the hereditary monarchy on the ground that it is a symbol, they are really saying that the King in himself is nothing; anyone or anything will do once we have got accustomed to it. They tell us we are not asked to pay respect to the man or woman on the throne. They are nothing. They are mere symbols. If that is not insulting the occupant of the throne, what is it? And if it is not Twain's philosophy of hereditary cats, what is it?

Again, I must guard myself against misunderstanding. I am not arguing that the *appointed* head of the State shall not be called King, although that term carries certain bad implications. I am only trying to guard against the repetition of an orgy of barbarism such as the country has recently witnessed, and the "tongue-in-the-cheek" philosophy that has been served up by such men as Mr. Churchill. The Archbishop's "Recall to Religion" has been used to cover the forced abdication of Edward VIII. The lavish Coronation-cum-Hollywood show had the magical nature of the Coronation emphasized as part payment to the Archbishop. A man with so much cunning in his eyes is not likely to do what he did without securing a *quid pro quo*. Church and Throne have worked well together. They were together in origin. They will be together at the end. A King minus the religious nimbus round his head becomes an officer of the State, to be judged as other State functionaries are judged. He is not a symbol. He is something.

One cannot say when the semi-magical King and the overpaid fantastically-dressed medicine-man will disappear from civilized society. Thousands of generations ago the wild dog contracted the habit of trampling down the grass before taking its rest. It served to warn the dog against any noxious thing that might lie hidden in the grass. To-day the domesticated descendant of that wild dog goes through the same performance before settling down on the dining-room hearthrug. Thousands of generations ago the King came into being as an incarnation of nature spirits—a God. Then the god-king caused the sun to shine, the rain to fall, the crops to grow, and held at bay, disease. He was, as the Archbishop of York said of George VI., an incarnation of the life and health of the community. The generations pass. Conditions change, but the frame of mind that was common to our openly savage ancestors persists. We still pray for victory through the King. We still sanctify and anoint him to mark him off from common human nature. The ceremonial approach to the god-king, necessary to protect the subject against the powerful "mana" of the King, is still with us in our court ceremonies. The touch of a King is still treasured as bringing us momentarily within the sacred circle. Times have changed, knowledge has widened and deepened, but old habits remains with man as with the domesticated dog. Like the dog in the dining-room trampling down non-existent grass, protecting himself against dangerous things that are not there,



man still secretes in his brain-cells the potentiality of the superstitions that hung as a constant terror over the life of our earliest ancestors.

If the existence of the savage meant no more than fondness for display, a childish love of decorations or of a uniform, the whole might be passed with a smile. The more dangerous aspect is that a calculated use of these primitive impulses by those who are skilful enough to utilize them to advance their own ends is a constant threat to all that makes for the real dignity of manhood and the sure progress of the race. Germany offers us to-day the extreme example of how a people can be induced to turn their backs upon art and literature, and even to value science only to the extent to which it can minister to the most brutal passions and to the most primitive ideas. The hope of the world lies not so much in the extermination of the primitive in man, as in its "sublimation," in enlarging the mental outlook and in broadening the human sympathies, and in establishing a real conviction of the fundamental equality of human nature. There can be no such conviction while we encourage, some of us in ignorance, others of set purpose, the primitive superstition that lies so deeply embedded in king-worship.

It is with this deeper end in view that I have dwelt so lengthily on the real significance of the brazenly published magical nature of the Coronation Service, and the impudent advertising of the Royal Family as the source of family purity and national greatness. We have come a long way from palæolithic man; but we have not travelled so far that we may not find ourselves back to him, led there in the wake of a cheap and tawdry popular pageant, with the present-day medicine-men as masters of the ceremonies, and by the aid of a prostituted science and a debased culture.

The old Roman Civilization fell before the inrush of hordes of barbarians and barbarian culture, which achieved its end in the name of a "Recall to Religion." To-day we have no such outside horde of barbarians to fear. The barbarians of to-day are within the gates. It is they we have to fear. In the words of Frazer, already cited, our culture is "sapped and mined with superstition" that "may at any moment break out in smoke and fire to spread ruin and devastation."

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## Masterpieces of Freethought

LETTERS TO THE CLERGY

BY

C. J. HASLAM

II.

HASLAM makes great play with the contradictions and the absurdities of many of the statements contained in Genesis. They have always formed part of our case, but few writers have succeeded in putting it so well. Cain, for example, tells the Lord after the murder of Abel, that "he would be slain by everyone that findeth him." Haslam comments:—

The idea of Cain being slain by *everyone that findeth him* is certainly very intelligent. Only think of a man being slain a dozen or a score times over. But the sensible idea is, the possibility of being slain by everyone that findeth him, while the only beings that were then in existence were his own father and mother.

And when "Cain went out from the presence of the Lord," Haslam asks how was that possible if

"God is omnipresent, is *everywhere*"? Point by point he takes equally stupid Bible statements, and shows how they contradict reason, logic, history, and common-sense. "The blunders, the ignorance, and the nonsense of the 'sacred Word of God' are," he declares, "without parallel in any other book extant. One would suppose they are too glaring and palpable to require exposing. Yet, how many millions of the human race believe them to have proceeded from infinite wisdom!" A hundred years after Haslam wrote his work, in our own day, there are still millions who believe the Bible contains infinite wisdom, a direct revelation from God. There are still whole peoples who insist that every Bible miracle is literally true, that such places as Hell and Heaven actually exist, with sinners frizzling for eternity in the one, and the righteous constantly singing Christian hymns in praise of the Almighty in the other. Most of these believers know, however, that unbelievers, laughing and happy unbelievers, exist, a veritable puzzle for the pious. But in Haslam's time the infidel was looked upon with horror, and life was made as beastly as possible for him. It is as well to remind Christians of this sometimes. The "love" and "gentleness" of Christianity are merely words. In history, Biblical religion was responsible for the torture, imprisonment and execution of millions of innocent people.

Haslam did not forget this, and he rubs it in without mercy. In particular, he takes up the "gentle" Jesus myth and shows how the Son of God acted entirely inconsistently with his own principles. To say "Love your enemies," and then scream at them, "ye serpents, ye generations of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" is certainly *not* "blessing them that curse you," or "doing good to them that hate you." And to condemn a whole city because it refuses to admit his apostles—"Verily, I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city"—is surely the very antithesis of "love" and "gentleness."

I am not sure that the criticism passed by Haslam on the doings of Moses and the Israelites is not more acute and telling than that of Ingersoll in his classic *Some Mistakes of Moses*. Ingersoll was a great humorist, and his famous work is full of chuckles at Bible absurdities. Haslam is far and away more serious, and perhaps that is one of his faults. Ingersoll asks, "What and who was the serpent? He was not a man, for only one man had been made. He was not a woman. He was not a beast of the field, because he was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. He was neither fish, nor fowl, nor snake, because he had not the power of speech and did not crawl upon his belly until after he was cursed. Where did this serpent come from? Why was he not kept out of the garden?"—and so on.

Haslam puts it this way:—

The serpent, I imagine, previous to this [the cursing] went upon its back; or how did it go? Or had it legs, and were these legs chopped off? Or did it hop about upon its tail end? But the question is, was this a serpent, or was it not a serpent? Some of you [clergy], to get out of your absurdities, pretend that it was the devil, who assumed the serpent's shape; and others, I believe, say that it was a compound, consisting of the devil and the serpent united, the devil having entered into the serpent as a sort of medium through which to execute his designs. . . . I am quite aware of this rubbishy nonsense . . . but where is your authority?

The story of Adam and Eve and the serpent is still believed in by millions of people. It is not, even in



these days, flogging a dead horse to criticize it as drastically as did both Ingersoll and Haslam. I know quite well, of course, that the readers of this journal do not require this kind of criticism, but most of us know scores of people who look upon the whole story as "Gospel truth"; and we ought, now and then, to remind them that it is the most absurd nonsense if taken literally, one can imagine. Haslam did it as far back as 1837. It is difficult to understand that such a legend could have modern defenders.

Haslam never minced his words. He used the word "trash" when he felt it was the best description of any part of the Bible he was dealing with. And for the Old Testament he had nothing but contempt. He concludes his examination of the greater part of the Bible thus:—

I have shown that the Old Testament is a book of lies and absurdities, and as much the Word of God as the *Arabian Nights* or *Gulliver's Travels*; and the same I intend to do with regard to the New Testament.

When he came to deal with the New Testament Haslam considered it "a monstrosity" that God should require the murder of his own Son "before he would give up the anger and resentment he felt towards the human race," because "Adam and Eve ate an apple"! It had been said many times before but so long as there are Fundamentalists it is as well to keep on reminding them what they believe. That people do believe it is shown by the fact that "Our Lord" is still called "the Saviour."

The examination of the Virgin Birth is very drastic, as may be imagined; so is that of the ridiculous prophecies which, once upon a time, used to be the great rock of scriptural truth. One does not hear quite so much these days about the way in which God "foretold" the person and character of "Our Lord" in the Old Testament. As Haslam says, "These passages have no more reference to Jesus Christ than they have to the child yet to be born." The truth is, of course, that the Gospel writers wanting to write up the life of their hero, and not always knowing what to say, went to the Old Testament for "texts" to write around him; to call these texts "prophecies" is unadulterated nonsense.

Haslam also could hardly conceal his boundless contempt for "miracles." He called them *lies*; for "men tell lies daily," he said, "but the laws of nature go on eternally the same." "What," he asks in scorn, "could Matthew mean when he said that 'the heavens were opened unto him,' and 'he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him'?" Does he mean to say that the Almighty became a pigeon? Haslam, a Deist, thought this "blasphemy." Would it not be clearer to say it was just—nonsense?

H. CUTNER.

## Henry Hetherington 1792-1849

(Continued from page 379)

At the conclusion of the defence, the Attorney-General rose to reply. To this, Hetherington in his remarks after the trial, says, "A privilege which I think he was not entitled to, as I called no witnesses. Had I anticipated he would have claimed the privilege of reply, and abused it in the most shameful manner that he did, I could have overthrown by witnesses, the false impression he so unjustly laboured to establish on the minds of the Jury—that I was the publisher of the work, because my name was affixed

to the book first of the London agents." Hetherington goes on to say that the Attorney-General, instead of replying to the defence, commenced an attack on his character, and after the charges had been more than once repeated, he had intervened, declaring that the Attorney-General was acting most unfairly to him. Words were imputed to him which he never used. He had never used such language, but quite the contrary. The Attorney-General had charged him, that he had declared that he was neither responsible for his belief NOR HIS ACTIONS. Now, what he maintained was, that he was not responsible for his belief, but that he *was* responsible for his ACTIONS. If he injured a friend, a neighbour, or a fellow-citizen, he was amenable to society for the injury he had done. The Attorney-General continued his "reply" using every opportunity to prejudice the defendant to the jury. Lord Denman was very brief in summing-up. Reading between the lines, one can easily perceive his personal feelings in the matter. He ruled that vending a book was legally equal to publishing it. He went on to say in regard to Hetherington's personally conducted Defence, that he had listened WITH FEELINGS OF GREAT INTEREST, AYE, AND WITH FEELINGS OF RESPECT TOO. He went on to say that as to the im- policy of this sort of prosecution that was a ques- tion with which they had nothing to do; the only question for them to determine was, whether the pub- lication in question was a blasphemous libel, and whether it had been published by the Defendant. The Jury immediately returned a verdict of GUILTY. The Attorney-General prayed the immediate judgment of the Court. This was not complied with—Lord Den- man deciding that the passing sentence had better be deferred so as to have the opportunity of considering the subject. At the next sessions he was sentenced to four months' imprisonment. In regard to this, Charles Southwell, who was being prosecuted for blasphemy in January, 1842, said "The Jury having brought in a verdict of guilty, Lord Denman, having no choice, awarded a verdict of four months' im- prisonment. He made the punishment as light as possible, and his conduct upon that occasion reflects the highest honour upon him. It was, however, a great disgrace to the Jury, who thus compelled his lordship to punish a man, against the conviction of his own mind, for an imaginary offence." The full report of the trial was published by Hetherington, with his own observations, and dedicated to his most intimate friend, James Watson. W. J. Linton, who was also a friend of Watson, and wrote his biography, says of Watson and Hetherington, "for twenty years they were tried and trusty comrades. What Hether- ington did was ever seconded by Watson; what Wat- son did had surely Hetherington's endorsement. One cannot be praised but the other will 'divide his crown.' In Watson's own words, spoken at his friend's grave, their 'single friendship never knew two interests.' During the struggles of the Un- stamped they were as David and Jonathan (we would prefer to compare them to Damon and Pythias); the two were as one. Hetherington's victory was decisive. That battle gained, they stood in as close brotherhood in preparation and in action for the People's Charter." The present writer retains a vivid recollection, dating back to his boyhood days in his country home, of a visit paid to his father by James Watson, and well remembers seeing and hear- ing that grand old man of the Chartist and Free- thought Movement. He died a few years later, at the age of 75, "in his sleep, without a struggle, without a sigh," as Linton relates, and was buried in Nor- wood Cemetery. A plain granite obelisk erected over the grave, through the ready action of Joseph W. Cor- field, bears the following inscription:—



## JAMES WATSON

1874

ERECTED BY A FEW FRIENDS AS A TOKEN OF REGARD  
FOR HIS INTEGRITY OF CHARACTER  
AND HIS BRAVE EFFORTS TO SECURE  
THE RIGHT OF FREE SPEECH  
AND

A FREE AND UNSTAMPED PRESS  
and on a square block of red granite beneath:—

IN MEMORY OF  
JAMES WATSON  
PUBLISHER

Born Sept. 21, 1799—Died Nov. 29, 1874

We shall show later on the interest Hetherington displayed in regard to the *Oracle of Reason*, perhaps the most aggressive publication that has ever appeared under Freethought auspices, which first saw the light in Bristol, November 6, 1841, with Charles Southwell as its Editor. It was not to remain long undisturbed. For an article on *The Jew Book* in No. 4, Southwell was arrested and prosecuted for blasphemy. He was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment, and Holyoake carried on the editorship, calling himself "the second priest of the *Oracle of Reason*." In a lecture at Cheltenham on Home Colonies, in reply to a question he said, he would put *God upon half pay*; he was arrested and tried for blasphemy, 1842, and sentenced to six months' imprisonment. Paterson now assumed the editorship with No. 37 of the *Oracle of Reason*. With him the paper became more aggressive than it had been before. He exhibited profane placards in the window, which attracted crowds of people. An individual who smashed the window was prosecuted, and the case was dismissed. This shows a difference from the case of Carlile, who received damages when he had exhibited a picture of the Jew God, and had his windows broken by a Jew. Paterson still continued his placard attack upon religion. It was not long before prosecutions began. Paterson was indicted under four charges. In the first case he was defended by Mr. Thomas, and in the second case Paterson defended himself. He commenced a most vigorous defence. He had not proceeded very far when Jardine, the magistrate, interrupted with "If you continue to make use of such language, I shall take upon myself to commit you at once; I am not bound to sit here to hear the vilest blasphemy ever uttered." "It is part of my defence," replied Paterson, "and I shall read as much of it as I think proper." He then proceeded with his speech, but had not gone far when the magistrate interrupted and ordered the papers to be taken from him, which Tyrell, the gaoler, immediately did. Paterson (coolly taking from his pocket another paper), "Very well, expecting as much, I have another," and then went on with his defence. In a very few minutes, Mr. Jardine said: "Let that paper be taken from the prisoner." And thus the prisoner was deprived of the second paper.

Mr. Paterson (quietly): "Oh, I have plenty more beside me."

Mr. Jardine: "I will not allow you to read that paper if it is the same as you have hitherto read."

Mr. Paterson: "What I am about to read is essentially necessary to my defence, and I shall certainly insist upon being allowed to read it. The press has attempted to put me down, and the magistrate, imitating the example, has combined to the same effect; but I will show you, sir, that though a magistrate, you will not put me down as easily as you imagine." After a few more words, for a third time the papers were snatched from Paterson's hands and afterwards the Bible from which he was reading. Mr. Thomas, who had defended Paterson in his first case, came into Court at this moment, and protested against the

action of the Court. The magistrate in regard to having ordered the Bible to be seized, said "Yes, and from that he was reading such texts as might tend to throw discredit on religion, therefore I had it taken from him."

On the third indictment he was defended by Mr. Thomas, and the fourth case was abandoned.

In the first three cases he was sentenced to a months' imprisonment in each, the sentences to run concurrently. This trial was published under the title of "God versus Paterson," and makes very interesting reading. At the back of the title page are given FAVOURABLE NOTICES, of which three may be quoted:—

*Times*: Greatest blasphemy ever uttered.

*Jardine*: The dreadful language of your defence is ten times more awful than the blasphemy charged against you.

*Chambers*: The Court made an arena of ribaldry.

Though now three successive editors were in prison, the *Oracle of Reason* pursued its course with all the force and character it had hitherto manifested. There is an instance in which a contribution was sent which was too strong meat even for the *Oracle*. "Hydrocephalus Higgs" sent in a poem entitled, "The Apple: a legend of Paradise, translated from the Egyptian of Cornelius Coppernose," which its editor was very reluctantly compelled to refuse insertion. Just to show how it would shock its readers a sample verse is quoted:—

Alas! 'twas vain she spoke, the thing was done,

My lord grew angry and refused to listen;

And sternly ordered them to cut and run,

When Eve's soft eyes began to glare and glisten.

"Is this your justice?" she again begun

"To sack us in this destitute condition?"

Adam, get up, my cock, it's no use kneeling,

I'm damn'd if this old brute has common feeling."

AMBROSE G. BARKER.

(To be continued)

## Correspondence

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"  
FREE SPEECH

SIR,—I do not wish to trespass unduly on your space, so I deal only with a few main points of the recent criticisms of me. First, I am well aware that the *Freethinker* has treated me generously; it is precisely because I respect it for its independence and its hospitality for all "suppressed" opinion, that I am so interested in it.

Secondly, I think it is unfair to suggest I want to "use" the N.S.S. Everyone associated with it wants to use it as an instrument fighting for freedom. I have done nothing but suggest that the N.S.S. should implement concretely the proposals adopted by the recent international gatherings of Freethinkers.

Thirdly, I should like to say that Athoso Zenoo's description of the Communists as causing sectarianism is, in my opinion, exactly on the line of, say, the criticism any tory patriot would make of Mr. Cohen's articles on the Coronation. "This effort to divide and split at a time of rejoicing in national unity, etc." The compromise of the lie, social or intellectual, has nothing to do with real unity, the enduring human bond which can rest only on Truth.

The charge of splitting against the Communists merely refers to the fact that they insist that unity must be built from the bottom upwards—in short, democratically—if it is not to be a fiasco, the kind of thing that happened in Italy and Germany when Fascism launched its attack.

JACK LINDSAY.

SIR,—In his letter to the *Freethinker*, Mr. Lindsay attacks Mr. Baldwin for "potentially Fascist legislation," the Public Order Act being mentioned as an example. Mr. Lindsay overlooks the fact that this Act was passed in response to the demands of the Labour and Communist



movement for suppression of the Fascists from all activities, and was supported by a huge majority of Labour M.P.'s. Further, the attack on the right of the Fascists to march in orderly procession, was, according to the statement of Harry Pollitt, led by himself and the Communist Party, of which he is the leader; and Mr. Pollitt boasted to an *Evening Standard* representative that his party had been chiefly responsible for the procession being cancelled. The Communists, needless to say, lead processions through the East End of London carrying banners with provocative slogans, many of the members meanwhile incessantly shouting insulting and provoking challenges to political opponents.

If Communists are suffering as a result of the Public Order Act, much as one may regret the suffering, it seems unfair to blame Mr. Baldwin because the police apply the law for which Socialists clamoured. J.L., in his attempt to indict the authorities for sympathy with Fascism, will perhaps take into account the case of three members of the Social Credit Party, who were charged at Luton with wearing *their* green "political uniforms. Although it was proved that men wearing green shirts, green collars and ties, and beating green drums and carrying distinctive banners led a procession, the case was rightly dismissed, but at Leeds in January, a man was fined 40s. for wearing a black shirt, tie and a black leather motor coat. No complaint was voiced by Mr. Lindsay and his supporters.

Mr. Lindsay's reference to the repression of opponents in Germany and Italy is refreshing coming from a defender of similar repression operative in Russia.

Let us demand free speech for Communists by all means, but let Freethinkers plead that their opponents also should have a fair share, which unfortunately they do not receive to-day, as a result of Socialist and Communist bigotry.

F. BRANSBY CARLTON.

[We have printed Mr. Carlton's letter despite its length, and need only say that if he read the *Freethinker* regularly and attentively, he would know that we have always protested against interruptions at meetings, and other forms of denial of freedom of speech, without the least regard to the colour of the parties engaged. Our belief in freedom of speech is not for ourselves, but for all. We believe in the right to hold and express what is wrong.—EDITOR.]

## Obituary

MRS. ELIZABETH ADAMS

WE deeply regret to record the death of Mrs. Elizabeth Adams, of Birmingham, whose death occurred on June 8, at the advanced age of 87. For many years she was a firm and generous supporter of the Freethought movement, and an admirer of the *Freethinker* and its work. We never had the pleasure of meeting her in person, but her many letters gave us the impression of great intellectual strength, with opinions that were based on good grounds and held with firmness. Freethought has always been remarkable for the number of able and independent women it has attracted, and Elizabeth Adams was worthy of being placed in the foremost ranks of them. Greater praise than this none could offer, for a movement which promises nothing in the shape of financial or social prestige, by its very nature is selective of the quality of those who ally themselves to it. We offer our sincere sympathy with those of her family who are left, and feel sure that the memory of her will remain with them as a treasured possession.—C.C.

MRS SARAH ANN ORGAN

WE regret to record the death, which occurred on Monday, June 7, of Mrs. Sarah Ann Organ, of Glasgow. Mrs. Organ died of pneumonia after a very brief illness. She is survived by her husband and daughter Elsie.

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Organ have been active Freethinkers for nearly half a century and are widely known and highly respected.

The funeral of Mrs. Organ took place on Wednesday, June 9, the Secular burial service at Lambhill Cemetery being conducted by Mr. John S. Clarke, ex M.P. for Maryhill, and a very old friend of the family.

## 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

#### INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Horace J. Bridges, D.Litt. (Chicago Ethical Society)—"President Roosevelt and the Supreme Court."

#### OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.30, Mr. G. F. Green.

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES BRANCH N.S.S. (Kingston Market): 7.0, Mr. C. Tuson—A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Highbury Corner): 8.0, Saturday, Mr. L. Ebury. White Stone Pond, Hampstead, 11.30, Sunday, Mr. L. Ebury. Parliament Hill Fields, 3.30, Sunday, Mr. L. Ebury. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, Mr. L. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 6.30, Sunday, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Rushcroft Road, near Brixton Town Hall, 8.0, Tuesday, A Lecture. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, Friday, 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes and Evans. 6.30, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes, Leacy, Connell and Tuson. Wednesday, 7.30, Messrs. Bryant and Tuson. Thursday, 7.30, Messrs. Saphin, Bryant, Carlton and Tuson. Friday, 7.30, Messrs. Barnes, Perry and others. The *Freethinker*, *Age of Reason* and Mr. Chapman Cohen's latest pamphlets on sale outside Marble Arch Tube Station every evening.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. Outing to Hainault Forest. Train 10.15 a.m. Forest Gate (L.N.E.R.) Day Return of Lunch to be carried. Tea arranged at Forest Drive Tea Rooms, Lambourne End, 4 p.m.

### COUNTRY

#### OUTDOOR

BEDLINGTON (The Station): 7.0, Wednesday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

BIRKENHEAD BRANCH N.S.S. (Well Lane Corner): 8.0, Tuesday, Mr. J. V. Shortt—A Lecture.

BLACKBURN: 8.0, Monday, Mr. J. V. Shortt—"Does Man Survive Death?"

BLACKBURN MARKET: 7.0, Sunday, Mr. J. Clayton.

CHESTER-LE-STREET (The Bridge): 8.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

ECCELES (Cross): 8.0, Friday, with the co-operation of Manchester Branch N.S.S., Mr. J. V. Shortt—"Evolution of Life."

CRAWSHAWBOOTH: 7.30, Tuesday, Mr. J. Clayton.

FONBRIDGE: 7.45, Friday, Mr. J. Clayton.

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

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Albert Road): 8.0, from Tuesday, 15 to Saturday, June 19, Mr. G. Whitehead will lecture.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Grant Street): 8.0, Sunday, Mrs. M. I. Whitefield. Albion Street, 8.0, Monday, Mrs. M. I. Whitefield. Albert Road, Wednesday, 8.0, Mrs. M. I. Whitefield.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive, opposite Walton Baths): 8.0, Sunday, Mr. J. V. Shortt and Mrs. Thompson. High Park Street and Park Road, 8.0, Thursday, Messrs. Robinson and Coleman.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Alexandra Park Gates): 8.15, Saturday, June 19, Mr. W. A. Atkinson—A Lecture. Platt Fields, Sunday, 3.30, Mr. W. A. Atkinson. Stevenson Square, 7.30, Mr. W. A. Atkinson.

NORTH SHIELDS (Harbour View): 7.0, Tuesday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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