

THE  
FREETHINKER

• EDITED by CHAPMAN COHEN •

— Founded 1881 —

VOL. LVIII.—No. 16

SUNDAY, APRIL 17, 1938

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

	Page
Religious Body-snatching—The Editor - - -	241
Two Infidel Graves—Mimnermus - - -	243
"By Thy Sorceries . . ."—C. Bradlaugh Bonner -	244
A Formidable Canon—Alan Tyndal - - -	245
Nature Notes of a Freethinker—Nicholas Mere -	246
Obituary—W. J. W. Easterbrook - - -	250
A Strange Eastern Isle.—T. F. Palmer - - -	250
The International Congress of Freethinkers— C. Bradlaugh Bonner - - -	252
The Flatulent Claims of a Catholic Archbishop— J. Y. Anderoney - - -	254
Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.	

Views and Opinions

Religious Body-snatching

I was never impressed by the Christian stories of death-bed conversions. And when I say I was never impressed by them I mean that I never grew angry about them, or paid them any attention other than a smile. It seemed to me of so great importance how a man lived, and of such small public importance how he died. I agree with Ingersoll that it is far better to die silly and live sensibly than to die sensibly and live silly. I, of course, was aware that to a Christian the matter stood very differently. For centuries the majority of Christians lived in a state of fear and died in a condition of funk. The intense joy that Christians professed to feel was an expression of relief at being freed from the fear that had overcast their lives. Their joy had all the quality of the pleasure of a man feeling he is on dry land when he has just been saved from drowning. So I was never impressed by death-bed conversions. I did not even care very much whether the stories of this or that Freethinker dying a Christian were true or false. If true it pointed to brain-weakening and a return to the beliefs of childhood. They were cases for the physician, not for the scientist or the philosopher. And if otherwise, it was just a case of a man who had played the humbug during life, and was frightened into a spasm of honesty because of his religious fears. As I was never religious my thoughts had much to do with how men lived and very little with how they died.

But there are still a great many about who appear to be concerned whether these death-bed stories are true or not, and a little while ago I received a letter asking whether it was true that Lord Morley—better known as John Morley—died a Christian and received a Christian funeral. The answer to these questions is, to the first No: and to the second, Yes. And thereby hangs a tale that is perhaps worth the telling.

Lord Morley and Christianity

In his day Morley was a thorn in the side of the godly. For some years he was editor of the *Fortnightly Review*, which admitted many articles of a very heretical character. The general press then was hardly so well organized for persistent and successful lying as it is to-day. Morley himself shocked the godly by writing "god" with a small "g." He was also the author of series of books on the eighteenth century French Freethinkers, and also a work "on compromise," which laid down many good rules for the conduct of the intellectual life, which said rules were nearly all broken by Morley himself. He died in September, 1923. His will contained the following explicit passage.

I desire that my ashes, after cremation, should be placed in some spot in Brookwood, or other cemetery, without ceremonial or spoken words.

Morley was never a bold man, had he been such, there is little doubt that his instructions might have been even more explicit, and we might have had the wording to run "no religious ceremonial." But during his life he had explicitly renounced the fundamental doctrines of religion, and there was no doubt whatever as to his beliefs. The man who had written these words of a common type of Christian character:—

We all of us know men who deliberately reject the entire Christian system, and still think it compatible with uprightness to summon their whole establishment round them at morning and evening, and on their knees to offer up elaborately formulated prayers, which have just as much meaning to them as the entrails of the sacrificial victim had to an infidel haruspex

could hardly have intended to be pictured at his own funeral as one of the type on which he had poured such scorn.

The contempt that Morley expressed for those who went through a formal observance of a religious ceremony in which they had no belief made more contemptible the religious ceremony organized for his own cremation. I do not know how far Lady Morley was responsible for the religious service performed, it is certain that she took no steps to prevent it, and when she handed over the arrangements to the Rev. H. Trundle, Vicar of St. Albans, she must have been aware of what would happen. The *Daily News* described Mr. Trundle as "a man of tact, good sense and discretion." Mr. Trundle turned out to be—just a parson. He did not intend to miss a chance of advertising his creed. He gave the dead unbeliever a Church of England service, a proceeding only a trifle less indecent than Lady Burton having prayers said over her husband's dead body, in spite of his rejection of religion. Mr. Trundle, that man of tact and good sense, might well have stood for an illustration of the clergy as depicted by Morley himself, in one of his lesser known works *The Struggle for National Edu-*

caution. After saying that national education can only be secured through the agency of men who have faith in intelligence and ample hope of social improvement, he added:—

The Anglican clergy have as a body shown themselves to be without either one or the other. Like every corporation representing great privileged sects, they identify all their efforts with the extension and confirmation of sectarian supremacy. . . . All that they understand by higher national life is a more undisputed ecclesiastical authority. Clergymen are not like other men. They are very apt to look at laws as those people do who can never be taught that it is wrong to smuggle or cheat a railway company.

That was writ in 1873. Fifty years later the leopard had not changed its spots. Morley had also written of the clergy:—

It is no light thing to have secured a livelihood on the condition of going through life masked and gagged. . . . One can hardly imagine a more admirable training for a low-class attorney than a short apprenticeship to one of those heroic evangelists whose whole lives seem to be spent in finding out by how little devices of costume, banners, processions, practices, postures, they can strain and evade the law without being convicted and punished. . . . Tartuffe was a man of honour, a creature of fine moral sense compared with the sly priest, solacing or chastening the penitent soul with his tongue in his cheek.

Lady Morley had in complete defiance of her husband's wishes offered his dead body as material for a Christian holiday, and the man of tact and good-sense had sunk the citizen and man of honour in the parson. Over the body of the man who had rejected the doctrine of the resurrection he intoned, "I am the resurrection and the life." Mr. Asquith, whose own religious opinions were of a very nebulous character, read the Lesson for the Day, and over the remains of his fellow believer and friend declared that "The souls of righteous are in the hands of God. . . . They that put their trust in him shall understand the truth." He probably agreed with the dead man that all this was mere verbiage. If the dead could have heard, one can imagine the confined lips curving in a smile at this confirmation of all he had said of the character of the clergy and the influence of the Christian Church. The "low class attorney" was in power and acted according to his kind.

\* \* \*

#### Great are the uses of Advertisement

The era of death-bed conversions seems almost to have come to an end. The type of Christian who regards these as evidence of the truth of his doctrines is getting rarer, although there are still plenty of them to be found, and the theory that a man needs religion to comfort him on his death-bed is still fairly common. And I agree that a Christian may need this comfort—but a *man*, No. But more than ever Christianity depends for its existence upon advertisement. And the advertising game that begins with the seizure of the helpless child, finds its fitting conclusion in the advertising that seizes the body of a dead unbeliever, and by giving him a religious funeral makes him play a part in the lie that is enacted at the grave. I do not know how this can be completely prevented. Nothing but a sense of decency and intellectual responsibility will be thoroughly effective, and these qualities develop slowly where Christian interests are concerned. Christianity was built on fear, and of fear, humbug and hypocrisy are natural consequences. I am glad to say that in a growing number of cases the religious relatives of Freethinkers are showing a greater sense of responsibility to the dead.

But in the case of men and women who bulk in the eye of the public, their funerals offer the clergy an opportunity for a public advertisement they cannot and will not forgo. No one can carry out silently the funeral of a prominent man or woman. And the clergy cannot afford to make it unmistakably public that he or she was a non-believer in religion. They must advertise their wares as much as possible, and, to their discredit the relatives of these men and women—thinking more of the way the world will regard *them* than of duty to their dead, acquiesce to this last act of imposture. So it was in Morley's case, so it has been in the case of innumerable others. Morley had written in *On Compromise*:—

Those who agree with the present writer are not sceptics, they positively, absolutely, and without reserve, reject as false the whole system of objective propositions which make up the popular belief to-day, in one and all of its theological propositions.

Note the very name of sceptic, as one who is in doubt about the truth or falsity of a particular proposition is rejected. Morley said as plainly as may be, that he is not sceptical of the truth of the theological propositions of Christianity, he believes strongly they are all falsities. It is not claimed that he ever departed from that position. I do not think the clergy have ever claimed that he did. The religious service designed by the Vicar of St. Albans, into whose hands Lady Morley had delivered the body of her husband, was pure advertisement, as gross, as impudent, as obvious as any advertisement ever issued by a maker of soap or the advertisers of quack medicine or magic rings. For such an advertisement the big advertising firms would offer a very large sum of money. And the Church, which, in the case of Edward VIII. manoeuvred his abdication because of his "Ostentatious disregard of public worship" (an unostentatious neglect would not have been publicly noted) is not likely to let go the advertising that is offered by the funeral of a man who bulks large in the eye of the unthinking public. A religious funeral over the body of a man who during life has repudiated theologies of all sorts is the last, the crowning insult that the Church has to offer a man. Pity 'tis; a pity also that the moral sense of the general public should be so ill-developed, and their intellectual quality so poor that it offers this last insult to one whom it pretends to honour.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

#### Impressions of an Indifferent Newspaper Reader

BALLYHOO,

Murder riotous glamour girls,  
Good news one thousand dead  
The ugly fat, robbery of actress's jewels.  
Cured in one night.  
Gentle laxative shooting party shot up,  
Raid on Temperance Bars keeps  
The head steady. Balloney.  
We wants yer pennies.  
Pools, Totes, The Dogs, Horses,  
Sawn up in Sack Envoy recalled.  
Naps and Lingfield Bookmakers  
Leather is a Racket.  
The Newspapers are good for  
Prevention of knowing anything  
Worth knowing.

NICHOLAS MERE.

## Two Infidel Graves

"Authors who have influence are merely those who express perfectly what other men are thinking; who reveal in people ideas or sentiments which were tending to the birth."—*Joubert*.

SOME infidel tombs are held in high honour. Even among the unnumbered wonders of the Eternal City, the tree-clad burial-ground outside the Porta San Paola holds a place apart. Pilgrims come from remote corners of the earth to linger in that quiet corner where John Keats lies beside his friend Joseph Severn, his gravestone bearing the bitter words: "Here lies one whose name was writ in water." Not far away rises the slope where the heart of Percy Shelley lies buried beside the body of his friend, Edward Trelawny.

It is curious that when Shelley visited the place years before his own death, he described it as "the most beautiful and solemn cemetery I have ever beheld," and, in the preface to *Adonais*, he says, "It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place." Nor is this all, for Shelley's little son, William, was buried in the same cemetery, which afterwards received the body of Keats, and Shelley's own ashes. No stone marks the child's grave, for Shelley and Mary were unable to superintend the erection of a tombstone.

Shelley's death was untimely. He was drowned in the sea he loved, and whose praises he had so often sung. From his early years the sea fascinated him. Even as a boy he loved to watch the drifting of paper boats down a stream, and thought that drowning would be the most beautiful of deaths. Thrice he had narrow escapes from shipwrecks—once fleeing with Mary across the English Channel, then with Byron on the Lake of Geneva, and, again, with his friend, Williams, in Italy. Shelley was unlucky with all his boats. His unfortunate first wife, Harriet, sought the same mode of death which at last overwhelmed the poet. Shelley himself prophesied his own end, though few have noticed it. In *Julian and Maddalo* he makes Byron (Count Maddalo) address to him a jesting warning:—

"You were ever still,  
Among Christ's flock a perilous infidel,  
A wolf for the meek lambs."

And the warning concludes:—

"If you can't swim,  
Beware of Providence!"

A prophecy the more sinister for its levity, its unconsciousness of hastening destiny. The recurrence of this thought in Shelley's poetry is very singular. The last lines of *Adonais* might be read as an anticipation of his own death by drowning. In *Alastor* we read:—

"A restless impulse urged him to embark  
And meet lone death on the drear ocean's waste."

The *Ode to Liberty* closes on the same fateful note:—

"As waves which lately paved his watery way  
Hiss round a drowner's head in their temptuous play."

The *Stanzas Written in Dejection, near Naples*, re-echo the same thought:—

"And I might feel in the warm air  
My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea  
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony."

In a dirge, written in 1817, he gives vent to the same idea:—

"That time is dead for ever, child—  
Drowned, frozen, dead for ever."

What Shelley might have done had he lived longer, or whether he would have lived much longer if he had not been drowned, are idle questions. His friend, Trelawny, thought that the poet would have lived to a good age, as his father did. Shelley himself, shortly before the end, said, "I am ninety," meaning that he had lived and felt so intensely, that he felt older than his years. Nor was it an idle boast, for he was himself the "Julian of his own poem:—

"Me, who am as a nerve o'er which do creep  
The else-unfelt oppressions of this earth."

Shelley, was the supreme poet of the French Revolution. The poet and the Revolution were actually contemporary. On his birthday, August 4, 1792, it was decreed by the French National Assembly that all religious houses should be sold for the benefit of the nation, and Louis XVI. was no longer recognized as King of France. It was on this same day in August that the Emperor of Germany and the King of Prussia issued their manifesto announcing their mission to destroy the Revolution and "console mankind" by giving up "the city of Paris to the most dreadful and terrible justice." Nor is this all, for Mary Wollstonecraft, the mother of Shelley's Mary, had just published her *Vindication of the Rights of Women*. This was the world in which men were living on that quiet day when the great poet of the Revolution first saw the light in that little room looking out on the peaceful Sussex pastures.

Talk of miracles! What marvel is like to genius? In that room, in that quiet rustic dwelling, from a rough country squire, and from a mother who was nothing remarkable, sprang *Adonais*, *Prometheus Unbound*, and some of the loveliest lyrics of a thousand years of English literature. If instead of Shelley, an infant Squire Western had been produced on that August day, everyone would have thought it natural, but instead of a bucolic squire, we have a great poet, and a thinker five hundred years ahead of his own time. His own generation hated him, trampled upon him, and cast him out, but in the wilderness of exile he still delivered his message in deathless song, which a few brave spirits heard and treasured, and which now, a century later, commands a wider audience, and which will be hailed ultimately as the gospel of humanity.

All through his literary life Shelley expressed Freethought ideas in his poetry, and his consistency is proved from the publication of his youthful poem, *Queen Mab*, to the issue of his masterpiece, *Prometheus Unbound*. No one can doubt for an instant his passionate sincerity. The glorious lyrical cry of a later poet concerning Liberty may be applied fitly to him:—

"I am the trumpet at thy lips, thy clarion  
Full of thy life, sonorous with thy breath;  
The grave of souls born worms and creeds grown carrion  
Thy blast of judgment fills with fires of death."

"Thou art the player whose organ-keys are thunders,  
And I beneath thy foot the pedal prest;  
Thou art the ray whereat the rent night sunders,  
And I the cloudlet borne upon thy breast."

"I shall burn up before thee, pass and perish,  
As haze in sunrise on the red sea-line;  
But thou from dawn to sunset shalt cherish  
The thoughts that led and souls that lighted mine."

John Keats's grave is the older in this Roman cemetery. Shelley sang the younger poet's death-song in *Adonais*, having in that immortal rhapsody coupled the name of Keats with his own for ever. When Keats was dying of consumption, his friend, Joseph Severn, cheered his last days. "Poor Keats," he wrote, "has me ever by him, and shadows out the form of one solitary friend; he opens his eyes in great doubt and horror, but when they fall on one they

close gently, open quickly, and close again, till he sinks to sleep." Is not this the true pathos and sublime of human life? Is there a finer thing in the world than pure affection shining through the mists of death? At the last, Severn held his dying friend in his arms for seven hours. Severn outlived Keats for fifty-seven years, and his remains were removed from their original resting-place and buried beside those of Keats. It was well and happily done.

Because of these infidel graves, generations of English and American visitors to Rome make pilgrimage to where they lie beside the Pauline Gate at the opening of the Ossian Way. These pilgrimages are a public confession that these two great Freethought poets confer glories upon one of the greatest cities of the world, and that even the Eternal City, "half as old as time," is made more honourable and more illustrious by their presence.

MIMNERMUS.

### "By Thy Sorceries . . ."

(Concluded from page 229)

POPE PIUS XI. launched against this "fatal plague" an encyclical "On Atheistic Communism," for which, it declared, "Liberalism prepares the way." In this letter a terrible picture is drawn of Russia, Mexico, and "Our beloved Spain," in which facts are a minor consideration, and reference is made to "a struggle, cold-blooded in purpose and mapped out to the least detail, between man and 'all that is called God,'" although the Pope had already laid down the "means of saving the world to-day from the lamentable ruin into which *amoral* Liberalism has plunged it." The development of this cold-blooded struggle "means that all diligence should be exercised by States to prevent within their territories the ravages of an anti-god campaign which shakes society to its very foundations." "No oath," says Pius XI., "will bind which is not sworn in the Name of the Living God." This may explain the disregard for truth which may be met with in the Catholic Press, since any ordinary respect for decency will not be binding unless "sworn in the Name of the Living God," that is, among Roman Catholics; Freethinkers hold their plain word as the most binding promise that can be made.

Bearing in mind these things, it is not difficult to explain the wherefore of the outrageous attacks which have originated in the Catholic press against the International Freethought Congress, which will be held from September 9 to 13 next.

Last July a joint committee of the National Secular Society, the Rationalist Press Association, South Place Ethical Society, and the Union of Ethical Societies sent an invitation from the four societies to the World Union of Freethinkers to hold its next Congress in London in September, 1938. The World Union of Freethinkers changed its name from the International Federation of Freethinkers in August, 1936, at the proposal of the English member of the Executive. This Federation was in 1880 established, following a Congress at Brussels, at the joint instances of the National Secular Society, the Belgian Societies and the Dutch Societies. It has always been non-party and non-political, that is to say, it takes no side in politics except in self-defence, and does not regard the politics of its members' societies. As long as these reject authority in matters of opinion, accept reason as the essential test, and adhere to the political neutrality essential to the work of the union they are proper members. The Union embraces Deists, Positivists, Secularists, Rationalists, Agnostics, Atheists of all sorts.

Early in the autumn the Catholic press in Belgium and Holland and other countries launched a savage attack against the World Union alleging that a "Godless" Congress, organized and financed in Moscow, was to be held in Brussels in April, 1938. The Catholic attack on Freethinkers on the Continent has not been limited to the press. Catholic Action, of which Cardinal Hinsley is establishing a branch in England, has done its part. Breathing the spirit of St. Bartholomew's Day, it has endeavoured to break up meetings and succeeded last month in raiding an Antwerp Theatre, and persuading the Socialist Mayor of Antwerp to forbid the production, that was to have taken place there, of a comedy, "The Black Mark." This play has been given by the Liege Freethought Dramatic Society in more than fifty places now, and always with great success. The damage done on this occasion has led the Antwerp Freethinkers to ask the courts for heavy compensation. In Holland the Catholic campaign has had the support of at least some of the ministers of the crown, in particular the Minister of Justice (!) and last year the Dageraad, after 56 years as a national Freethought Association and many years more as an Amsterdam Society, has been banned as illegal, and its monthly broadcasting period taken away.

In January the Catholic press in England took up the cry. The Roman publicity agents had at least discovered that the Congress was to be in London, but they still clung to a date in April. The pious papers of other sects caught on too. The chance was too good to be missed. A "Godless" Congress, an "anti-god" Congress (these are luscious words and roll well from pious tongues) to be held in the Albert Hall on April 6, organized and financed from Moscow, its aim to introduce "revolutionary Atheism" into England!

This is supremely funny. I.o, the agents of a foreign power (for the Catholic is the agent of Rome, which claims supremacy in this country) attack the Congress, declaring quite untruly that it is organized and paid for by another foreign power, which is endeavouring to introduce "revolutionary" ideas into England. Would you not say that the man who submits his conscience and his intellect to the direction of a foreign power which claims to be supreme in our England is a "revolutionary" and a traitor to his King and Country? It is supremely funny that devout Anglicans should swallow the taradiddles of Rome, and pass resolutions and sign petitions that this terrible Congress should be prevented. It is comic indeed when Miss This and Miss That, good Conservatives, should persuade their fellow Tories to vote resolutions against an "anti-god" Congress at the moment when the Conservative Government of this country is going on hands and knees seeking the friendship of the author of *La Bibia e Immorale* (The Bible is Immoral), better known as Benito Mussolini.

At the Prague Congress of 1936, a Protest was made against the persecution of Protestants and Roman Catholics by the German Government. International Freethought has ever fought, not only for freedom of thought, but for freedom of worship, for those who wish to worship. In Germany now Freethinkers are doing what they can to help persecuted Catholics and Protestants. Behold our reward! When have the pious ever played fair?

A characteristic of present-day politics has been the readiness of democratic parties to fish for votes among Catholics. They appear to forget or to be unaware of the Encyclicals to which I have referred; they do not know that the Infallible Pope has condemned Liberalism, Socialism and Communism, that every individual Catholic is under the immediate authority of the Vatican. Oblivious or ignorant, they extend a hand to the Catholic.

What has the Church to report of progress in these islands? In Great Britain, the *Osservatore Romano* states that the Roman Catholic population has increased from 2,206,553 in 1910 to 2,948,067 in 1935, an increase of over 33 per cent.; the Catholic Archbishops were three in 1910 and six in 1935; the number of priests has risen from 3,747 to 5,118 and the churches and chapels from 1,773 to 2,638 in this period.

Is it to distract attention from a proper consideration of figures such as these that this hullabaloo is directed against the very small minority of Free-thinkers? Is it in order to gain greater influence among the unthinking by playing on their absurd fears? Is it by sorceries such as these that all nations are deceived.

Then, O Babylon, remember the fate of the Devil that deceived them! (Rev. xx. 10).

C. BRADLAUGH BONNER.

### A Formidable Canon

It is a sad reflection on our modern attitude, when we consider how lightly the parson is esteemed in many circles to-day. Time was when he was considered as a rival to the squire in importance in village life. In some respects the parson was more powerful, for he was in close partnership with Divinity. He could influence the weather and the crops. He could, by a magic word, moderate a plague, and alleviate a famine. He could sprinkle our children, join our young men and maidens in holy wedlock after Heaven's ratification. And he was the only one qualified to perform the last sad rites after the pangs of death; ensuring a safe passage over Jordan, and the briefest of visits to a purgatorial residence.

Now all that seems to be changed. No more do we regard him as "at least one gentleman in the parish." Sometimes he is not even a gentleman—however that elastic term be defined—we scarcely pull our forelock when he passes, and if it were not for his collar and his cloth, he might just be regarded as an ordinary person—like any commercial traveller on the road, anxious to push his wares. Yet, in a very special sense, it was to this man that the Oracles of God were committed. To him, we looked in our dire distress, trusting that he would be good enough to jog the arm of the Almighty.

Perhaps some of them may have themselves to blame. They may have forgotten their serious mission in this vale of tears. Some have been foolhardy, ignoring such texts as "God is a consuming fire." "It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Some parsons have been fox-hunters. Others have gone to theatres, while others have actually enjoyed a public function, when they know very well that myriads of their fellow creatures were careering madly on the broad road that leads to destruction.

Take Bishop Still for instance in his glorification of the tipping habit. That divine had the nerve to proclaim the benefits of good ale:—

"Though I go bare, take ye no care,  
I nothing am a-cold.  
I stuff my skin so full within  
Of jolly good ale and old."

Surely a quaint employment for one who was in the direct line of apostolical succession! What will Peter think?

And there was Sydney Smith, a Dean of the Church of England, who once solemnly declared he would like to roast a Methodist. Could inhumanity further

go? When his hearer protested against this barbarous treatment, Sydney sought to extenuate by saying that he would be content with "just one."

Every now and again one comes upon disrespectful allusions to our advocates before high Heaven. Gilbert, we remember, said something about "Bishops in their shovel-hats being plentiful as tabby-cats, in point of fact too many." This sounds highly derogatory to the men of God. And here I find Capt. Harry Graham in an *Anthology* by E. V. Knox having the temerity to refer to Bishop Bulge in a distinctly free and easy manner. It is in a poem called *Sons*, when the father was so delighted that he had "achieved a son" that he hurried off to his club to spread the glad tidings. All the good fellows there assembled were delighted with the news; some willing to drink his health—at his expense. There was Lord Basingstoke, slumbering in the throes of *Punch*, and Col. Wembley-Byrd, who threw all his cards upon the floor when this son was announced. And there were two clergymen in the silence-room, who had been interested in *La Vie Parisienne*, who flung down the paper

"And, with suppressed and tactful mirth,  
Discussed the Miracle of Birth."

These would-be experts, having for years pored over *Virgin Births*!

The reference to Bishop Bulge is equally out of place. The News had this effect on this Pillar of the Church:—

"And Bishop Bulge, that great divine,  
Who always used a little wine  
And quoted, as his Pauline plea,  
I Timothy v. 23.  
Toasted my offspring in a quart  
Of Pillby's Convalescent Port."

We must agree, I think, that the good Bishop somewhat overdid it on this occasion. After all, the "offspring" turned out to be rather a mediocrity in later life. At college, he was one of those. "Who read in a falsetto voice, the earlier works of Mr. Joyce," and so, the Bishop was hardly justified in tossing-off a "quart" of Pillbys. Had it been rich Communion wine (if there be such a thing) and he had asked the club members to join, one might have agreed. But, Pillbys!

Capt. Harry Graham's reference to a Canon of the church is equally disturbing. It may be found in a slender volume entitled *The World's Workers*, and, really, one must rank him with Gilbert for his clever versification. In the section dealing with the "Orator" we come upon Canon Gloy. One is glad to know that at least the Canon achieved some distinction in a wordy encounter. Often Prelates of the faith fight shy of opponents worthy of their steel, but here, the Canon never hesitated. The challenge came in this wise: A friend of the writer had twitted him about the inarticulation of the English. In fact he called us "Big stiffs! The dumbest ever." Resenting such an aspersion the Englishman was willing to find a man who could stand up to Col. Yeo, who had a great reputation as a Senator, and of whom it was said: "in fun, of course, he'd talk the hind-legs off a horse." A wager ensued, and a hall in Wigmore Street was engaged. Canon Gloy's Lenten sermons were known to have lasted for hours. Great Excitement prevailed, and even Mr. C. B. Cochran came to act as Umpire.

The encounter started on Monday night, and Gloy began in his best pulpit manner a discourse on "Honest Doubt," while the Col. told tales about two negroes in Savannah. At midnight there was no sign of weariness from either. The Canon, having settled *Honest Doubt*, began on "Palestine—its Fauna and its Flora," a subject dear to his heart, which gave him scope for oratorical prowess. It was

said at midnight that "bookies" were laying six to four on Gloy. The Col. had to introduce two other niggers. This was on Tuesday.

Still the Canon was going strong; Palestine was a meaty subject.

"The Canon made some dull remarks  
On Jonah and his way with sharks,  
And gave his views on Noah's Arks,  
(with diagrams and figures)  
But neither seemed inclined to yield;  
'Twas even money on the field."

The contest went on till Thursday afternoon, when the Wigmore Hall was strewn with men and women snoring. It was indeed a ding-dong race. At the finish Mr. Cochran disqualified Col. Yeo "for bumping and for boring." And naturally:—

"Canon Gloy romped gaily in,  
The winner—by a double-chin."

After this Homeric battle, it is said that Canon Gloy, proud of his laurels, resumed his life of ritual, while the doughty Col. entered a Trappist Brotherhood.

"Here, mute, inglorious evermore,  
He bumps about—but cannot bore."

ALAN TYNDAL.

### Nature Notes of a Freethinker

And lastly came cold February, sitting  
In an old wagon, for he could not ride,  
Drawn of two fishes, for the season fitting,  
Which through the flood before did softly slyde  
And swim away: yet had he by his side  
His plough and harness fit to till the ground,  
And tooles to prune the trees, before the pride  
Of lasting Prime did make them burgein round.  
So past the twelve Months forth, and their dew places  
found." *Spenser.*

"I've had a carol singer to-day," was the announcement for my return on the evening of February the twenty-third. "I was doing some darning by the window and, looking down on the step, there was the thrush singing. When he had finished he just looked up as though to say, 'There now! What do you think of that?' He ate a piece of fat thrown to him and then flew up in a tree and began singing again." He sings in the poplar with one eye on the door. If the door opens he will stop his song and come down to us. A week ago he turned up at ten minutes to seven in the morning; to-day (the twenty-fifth) it was half past six when his musical jingle had the morning quiet for a setting. His speckled breast faces the east as he runs over his repertoire—"Did your mother let you do it? Give it up! Give it up! Stick to it! Stick to it!" and other turns and phrases I cannot translate as being music of

"Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew,  
And I was unaware."

He is a trim good-natured bird with the smaller birds; the the blackbird is a blustering bully, but the thrush glides noiselessly among the thicket and comes out for food, but does not fight for it, and looks on without reproach at the bold sparrow that steals food from under his beak. His skill in pulling a worm out of the earth made me wonder what worms thought of his song. It seems to be all a matter of point of view, and the problem cannot be solved from the angle of benevolence or malevolence. But the thrush's song is chronicled by poets ancient and modern; he has carolled in Spring in woods and over ploughed fields for countless generations, but his song is as fresh and welcome now as it was when the rushlight was a modern invention. It is something to be treasured as a memory in the same way that one remembers human songsters who enchanted us with beautiful melodies and lovely words. I have in mind the singing of Courtice Pounds in "As You Like It." His rendering of "Under the Greenwood Tree" comes easily to mind. Madame Blanch Marchesi as a superb singer also joins with a pleasant memory, and there is also Elizabeth Parkina as Titania in the "Midsummer Night's Dream,"

produced by Oscar Ashe and Lily Brayton. These, and other recorded enchantments of harmony come tumbling from the sack of memory, through hearing the song of a thrush.

"The mice are eating our potatoes," was the news. "Get a trap," I said, "Not one of those that kill 'em." And proof that we were living in a wonderful world of progress was forthcoming when the old penny mouse-trap was brought home; it had cost threepence. Overheads, I expect. It was set, and the first night we caught a field mouse. Rather timid at first, we surveyed it under the electric light. It munched a few crumbs dropped in the trap, and after having a look at Bewick in an old second edition, 1791, we made up our minds it was a field mouse. Then followed a long walk up the garden by moonlight, and he was emptied out to roam anywhere between Guildford and Penzance. The trap was set again the following night, and the identical mouse was caught a second time. He was lectured severely, and at night emptied out again further from the house. Once more the trap was set and for the third time the same mouse was caught. We kept him in a big flower-pot for a day, and it was a sight to see him go for the water out of a small glass we had put in with food. Then, most wonderful of all, he sat up and got on with his toilet—just like the bunnies in the fields. He was let out for the third time, as we had no intention of increasing the number of concentration camps in the world. How did we know it was the same mouse? Quiet simple, the poor little chap was blind in one eye—the right. He had been trapped three times; if he could understand I would tell him that Burns had made him immortal, and the succession of captures sent me to the poet; eight verses—I like best of all of the good eight the second and the last, although in the seventh there is the well-known aphorism about "best-laid schemes":—

"I'm truly sorry man's dominion  
Has broken nature's social union,  
And justifies that ill opinion  
Which mak's thee startle  
At me, thy poor earth-born companion,  
And fellow-mortal!"

Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!  
The present only toucheth thee:  
But, och! I backward cast my e'e  
On prospects drear!  
And forward, though I canna see,  
I guess and fear."

A young friend of mine called one evening, and in the course of talk he told me that his friend was "nuts" on Peacock. The term was expressive, and I don't mind how people spell enthusiastic so long as they mean it. Peacock had the grand style; his thinking was logical, and his matter could not be popular, although it was true. He moves from grave to gay, from first class wit to excellent satire; to me, he seems like a writer from the golden age. Reading "Melincourt," one short sentence arrested me: "The daisy has more beauty in the eye of childhood than the rose in that of maturer life." The same flower has greeted me these last mornings, and old Chaucer, rather dusty on top, had to be opened. Again, the Great poet with the simple subject:—

"Save, certeynly, whan that the month of May  
Is comen, and that I here the foules syng,  
And that the floures gynnen for to sprynge,—  
Farewel my boke, and my devocion!  
Now have I thanne such a condicion,  
That of alle the floures in the mede,  
Than love I most thise floures white and rede,  
Suche as men callen daysyes in our toune.  
To hem have I so grete affeccion,  
As I seyde erst, whan comen is the May,  
That in my bed ther daweth me no day,  
That I nam up and walkyng in the mede,  
To seen this floure agein the somer sprede,  
Whan it uprysith erly by the morwe;  
That blisful sighte softneth al my sorwe,  
So glad am I, whan that I have presence  
Of it, to do on it alle reverence,  
As she that is of alle floures flour,

Fulfilled of al vertue and honour,  
And evere ilike faire, and fresshe of hewe.  
And I love it, and evere ylike newe,  
And ever shal, til that myn herte dye;  
Al swere I nat, of this I wol nat lye;  
Ther loved no wight hotter in his lyve."

So sings Chaucer of a common country wild flower; glimpses of such beauty, a picture of fresh loveliness, may help a man to cease roving away from himself, may help to prevent him from being caught up in the hundred and one things that do not matter. Positive advice beckons with a friendly hand to remain true to earth.

NICHOLAS MERE.

## Acid Drops

Hitler had promised to give a *special charter* to every town and village in Austria that voted 100 per cent for him in the plebiscite. We do not know what privileges the charter will confer, probably it will give that town preferential rights in the robbery of Jews and in the ill-treatment of Jewish women and girls. The papers of recent date report that in Austria these things are on a more degrading scale than they were in Germany. Jewish women are seized in the street and compelled to wash motor-cars, and to scrub the streets on their knees under the supervision of Storm Troopers. On the other hand, if preferential privileges in this direction are taken from the Storm Troopers, whose worst outrages do not appear in English papers, he may fall out with them. In any case Hitler and his gang appear to be doing nothing that is new, and so may count on the continuation of the support of Lord Redesdale, Lord Londonderry, Lord Halifax, and other British democrats.

There seems to have been a great deal of excitement because Mr. Shinwell slapped the face of Commander Bower, a fellow M.P. The Speaker was inclined to take no notice of it. Perhaps he thought that as the Government itself had received so many slaps in the face from Germany, Italy and Japan, not forgetting General Franco, a slap in the face received by one of the members of the Government party did not matter. On the other hand, the Government might feel inclined to let the world know that it was ready to protect—in Parliament—even the poorest of its members.

Mr. Rowland Oliver, K.C., at Folkstone Quarter Sessions, said that when a prisoner before him had been invited to waylay and rob a man he had replied, "No violence for me." It appears that this man had already undergone an application of the "cat" for a previous offence, so the Recorder thought he would improve the occasion by observing:—

It is interesting to note in these days when there is so much talk about the "cat" that the reaction of a man who has had it was "no violence for me."

It is equally interesting to note that the prisoner was at the same time sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment with hard labour for *inciting three young men* to break into an office and steal contents. The moral is curiously imperfect.

The Recorder, however, in his anxiety to put in a good word for the "cat" is in good company. A friend has sent us a paragraph from a *Freethinker* of nearly fifty years ago, which, we think with him, is worth reprinting:—

The Bishop of Chester, distributing the prizes to the boys on the reformatory ship *Akbar*, took occasion to celebrate the virtues of flogging—not for officers, of course, but for common sailors. "Perhaps they would forgive him," he said, "if he remarked that he was glad to see that corporal punishment was not entirely abolished on that ship. He believed it would be a dark day for education when corporal punishment was completely banished, although he knew it was of rare occurrence. He said this from a deep conviction, and he re-

joined to know that there was an instrument known as the birch to be found on the ship, although it was very rarely used." How pathetic are those expressions—"rare occurrence" and "very rarely used"! Sadness creeps over the episcopal mind at the thought that flogging is so infrequent. Still he is consoled by reflecting that it has not disappeared altogether, and while there is birch there is hope.

It was ever thus. The episcopal mind, unfortunately, is not the only one that longs for a renewal of the good old times.

In Ebernoe, a Sussex village (the *News-Chronicle* tells us):—

A grey-bearded West Sussex farmer, Ephraim Holden, sat in the inglenook of the chimney where bacon is still smoked, while his sister, Annie Holden, made tea from a kettle that had boiled on a crane over a wood fire. It was five o'clock, but the grandfather clock pointed to four.

"We depend on him," said Ephraim. "He's been in the family well over a hundred years, and never missed a tick. He tells sun time, not summer time. God's time, not man's."

"Well put, Ephraim," said Annie. "I uphold you and quite glory in your pluck."

We are afraid it is God who will have to toe the line in the long run. The day will come when Grandfather's Clock will "stop short never to go again."

We learn from the *Catholic Bulletin*, of April, that the Most Reverend Dr. Fogarty has expressed himself in no uncertain fashion:—

The heart of Catholic Ireland is with the noble Spanish nation that under General Franco are now fighting, at tremendous cost to themselves, the sacred cause of Christianity against the anti-God ferocity of the Reds from all over the world; and may Heaven bless their crusading valour with success.

That Gallant Christian Gentlemen arouse the enthusiasm of Christ's tender lambs, is of course to be expected. "Onward, Christian soldiers!"

Mr. A. P. Herbert asks if we could by a vote abolish one invention, which horror would you scrap? *Our* vote would go for *Jehovah*.

In its *Hundred Years Ago* column in the *Times*, there is a reference to the approaching coronation of Queen Victoria. It runs:—

The anointing is a part of the ceremony more recommended by antiquity than delicacy, and will probably be omitted altogether.

The writer of that paragraph required to be reminded that the anointing, in its most familiar aspects, was as usual *symbolical* of something or other. The usages of antiquity manage to carry on, delicate or indelicate, by subterfuges of this kind.

In a recently published volume entitled *Land of No Regrets*, the author informs us that there was an Indian potentate of so august a character that the rules of cricket were modified for his convenience. In a similar way the Oracles of God are being modified to suit the convenience of a host of professional theologians who are having difficulty in peddling their wares.

Epsilon Aurigæ, recently discovered, is 3,000 times the size of the sun. This is one of the stars that God made also.

"There was more religion in Darrow than he himself recognized." The person who knew more about this matter than Clarence Darrow did himself was a writer on the *New York Sun*. Acquiring information of sorts is, of course, a journalist's job.

A priest accompanied Frank and Anthony Di Stasio, father and son, to the electric chair in Boston, following

their conviction for having brutally murdered Daniel Crowley, a labourer, to collect insurance on the life of the father. Their last words were repetitions of "The Hail Mary." Their reception in heaven was enthusiastic.

The Bill providing that a woman who wilfully kills her child may, in certain cases, be convicted of infanticide instead of murder, was given a second reading in the House of Lords. And the Archbishop of Canterbury expressed *approval* of this long-overdue measure to do away with the death sentence and black-cap formality in such cases! Not in the name of "the Lord" or of the Church did the Primate offer support: "On the whole I support the Bill in the interests of justice and pity," he said. "*Justice and pity*—those noble attributes against which "divine" wrath has ever contended from the Bench of Bishops! May we welcome "his grace" at last within the grace of our common humanity.

The Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, the most noted shrine (so we are told) in Christendom, is to be closed to the public because it is not safe for the faithful to foregather there. God, it appears sent an earthquake last October, and has brought about this lamentable state of affairs. If God thinks so little of the traditional site of the tomb of Christ, we should have thought that that is intended as a lead to his followers on the matter. If God has so arranged that first the Kathlikon Dome with its high vaults and heavy masonry falls, and then the many piers of the Rotunda and the Apse, there is only one thing for Christians to do. That is to cease bothering about the tomb of the Son of God and get from under when the crash occurs. They have had their warning.

At a meeting of the Scripture Union recently:—

Sir Thomas Inskip, referring to the profound influence of the Bible on the history and character of the British people in the last 400 years, said that it was because men and women were allowed the Word of God to sink into their hearts and lives that England had been given her great and proud position among the nations of the world. Her true greatness would only be preserved and strengthened if this generation could maintain and develop the habit of reading the Bible. (*Times*)

We have read something like this before. It is only bits of the word of God that Sir Thomas Inskip means—only he doesn't say so. The Scripture Union, while they keep up the pretence of taking the readers through every little bit of God's revelation to man, knows better than to give the Almighty a free hand. We haven't examined the details of the Scripture Union's conducted tours recently, but we know their journey through the Old Book used to be, and we surmise, still is, marked by ingenious and very advisable divagations.

There has just been published *The Silver Branch. A Collection of the Best Old Irish Lyrics*, chosen by Sean O'Faolain. (Cape, 5s.). A *News-Chronicle* reviewer from a Christian angle, does not like the compiler's view that these nature poets were pure pagans, diehards of the Christian age, and that "There is not the slightest trace of even a pantheistic belief in their Nature verse: Nature *was*, and nothing more." But—replies the critic (!) "the absence of mythic content . . . indicates a Christian power of regarding Nature objectively, or . . . of admiring creation"! And, thinks the critic:—

Despite Mr. O'Faolain's views on the inhumanity of the Church and the Schools, the poems themselves are convincing.

"Convincing"—because he has discovered the word "God" in several of them, and, like the Christian, puts on the term his own crude and limited construction.

Touching the blatant advertising of so-called "spiritual" and "faith" healings, it is worth noting that a Leeds mother took her five-years-old imbecile and paralysed son to a "Four Square Gospel" Church to be

anointed and prayed over—without success, of course. After many searchings for cure or relief for the child, she concluded that, "as God would not take him away I thought it my duty to help." Hence the poor woman had to undergo the formality of the death sentence for poisoning the doomed infant by gas. "God" was equally callous or deaf in a sad case the very same day. While the mother of 27-years-old Leslie Clarence Martin prayed on her knees in the women's waiting-room at the Old Bailey; he was being condemned and sentenced to death. A humane jury, however, showed a most un-"God"-like disposition by recommending the man to *mercy*.

The *Sunday Dispatch* says that regardless of the damaging effect abroad, the Labour Party is planning to make a farce of our parliamentary system. We are afraid the *Dispatch* never looks at the foreign news, or it would have discovered that this has been dinned into the Government's ears for a long time by Hitler and Mussolini, of whose friendship and reliability we have Cabinet assurances.

The *Helensburgh and Gareloch Times* gives a couple of columns of congratulatory remarks regarding a new minister. They include the compliment that in his previous pastorate he had given his congregation good grass, "and left behind a community of fat and well-nourished sheep."

Because he had sought a true doctrine to take the place of the obsolete creationism, the B.B.C. held that he was not a theologian, protested Dr. R. F. Rattray, of Memorial Church, Cambridge, in his Presidential Address at the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches held in Leeds. Questioning whether the B.B.C. were wise to pay too much attention to keeping in step with orthodox churches, he asked if they ought not rather to adjust themselves to the 90 per cent or so who were outside the churches. "The religion of the future," he held "should be one that was verifiable in the experience of everybody." . . . How can Dr. Rattray expect the B.B.C. to suspend the bias of which he complains when he (the Dr.) comes so near to Freethought teaching? Dr. Rattray may feel honoured that he is placed in a category similar to Atheists so far as broadcasting is concerned.

By the way, Dr. Rattray has written of man's religious instinct having expressed itself at different periods in the world's history, in *From Primitive to Modern Religion*, published by the Lindsey Press at a shilling. He deals candidly in that volume with the "shortcomings" of the Christian Church, and shows how the position of women deteriorated during the first three centuries. This he contrasts with the liberating influence of Islamic civilization, to which he ascribes the rise of chivalry and romance in Europe.

## Fifty Years Ago

THERE is very little belief in prayer nowadays. A million or two snug Christians go to church or chapel on Sundays in this pious home of Beer and Bible, and supplicate the Lord in a perfunctory way; while the parson or minister, for the most part, spins off his applications to Providence with the regularity and indifference of a Buddhist praying-machine. Some church dignitaries go so far as to assert that we should not ask the Lord for *material* blessings. *Spiritual* comforts should be requested, of course, and for these we should wrestle with the Almighty as vigorously and tenaciously as Jacob did in his famous match with his Maker. This line of "argument" was taken by a bishop who preached at the British Association last year; though another bishop, addressing the same congregation on the very same day, fervently begged the Lord for daily bread. Perhaps the art of adulteration is carried pretty far in that locality, but unless the authorities are blind, and the public are blinder, there must be *some* material blessing supplied from the worst-regulated baker's shop.

*The Freethinker*, April 15, 1888.



# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A. J. ASHBY.—We are obliged for your efforts to secure new readers for the *Freethinker*. "Although we says it as shouldn't," we cannot think of a better way of helping the Freethought cause than in making regular readers of this journal. Papers are being sent.

J.L.—Sorry crowded out this week. Will appear in next issue.

A. SHARPLES.—Mr. Cohen is pleased to hear that his lecture at Blackburn did good.

C. BEESLEY.—*The Coming International Catastrophe*, with its Biblical interpretations, is a fine specimen of evangelical lunacy.

C. VICK.—It is not of much use to send a lecturer anywhere for an isolated effort. Continuity is the thing that tells in propaganda.

TEES SIDE BRANCH.—It is not the slightest use sending announcements of meetings that reach us on Wednesday morning. We go to press on Tuesday. Why cannot the lecture notices reach us on Monday?

To Circulating and Distributing the *Freethinker*.—D. W. Foster, 2s. 6d.

J. M. HILL.—The specimen copy of the paper you received was part of the advertising that is being carried on. Glad to know that in your case you are an old subscriber, but such things are bound to occur.

G. LEWES.—We do not expect all our readers to agree with all we say. We should think very little of them "all" if they did. But there are surely instances where purely personal or even "national" considerations must give way to those of a higher humanitarian order. The Spanish children was a case of this kind. So was the question of the admission of the few Austrians who were permitted to escape. And this country has profited far more than it has lost—even on the lowest ground—by offering hospitality to political and religious refugees.

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.

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

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

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.

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

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 "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.

## Sugar Plums

We must ask the indulgence of readers and correspondents this week for several omissions. A breakdown in the composing-room on Tuesday, the day on which the paper is prepared for the press has compelled us to hold over letters and paragraphs until next week. These are matters over which we can exert no control.

As already announced, the Annual Conference of the National Secular Society will take place on Whit-Sunday, June 5, in Glasgow. We are looking forward to a much larger gathering of delegates and members than has taken place for many years. Glasgow offers this

year the attraction of what looks like being one of the finest international exhibitions held for many years, and those who can take their annual holiday in June will find this one of the best months to visit the Highlands. The daylight is longer than it is with those who live in this part of the country, and the scenery is glorious. And those who have friends north of the border know the warmth and thoroughness of Scottish hospitality.

The programme of the Conference will be as follows. Saturday evening there will be a reception of the delegates. Sunday the Conference will sit in the morning and afternoon. There will be a Public Demonstration in the evening at 7 o'clock. On Monday there will be a charabanc ride round Loch Lomond, including lunch. The cost of the trip and lunch will be six shillings. From London, and probably from other centres, arrangements are being made for the conveyance of parties of not less than twenty-five on special terms, leaving on Saturday morning, and reaching Glasgow at 5.45. This, of course, is the time for London travellers. Times from other centres will be different, but will be announced as soon as known.

On Monday evening there will be a Civic Reception at the City Chambers, at 7.30, by the Lord Provost and Corporation of the City, with music, refreshments, etc. It is important that those who wish to attend this reception should send in their names as early as possible, as these names must be forwarded to the civic authorities in order to issue the cards of invitation. Every member will have the privilege of introducing a friend to the Reception. Further details will be published as soon as possible, but it is important that the names of those who hope to visit the Conference should write as soon as possible. The names of all who wish to be present at the reception must be in the hands of the Glasgow Corporation not later than the fourth of May. Other, or further, particulars may be obtained of the General Secretary of the N.S.S. We rely upon members in all parts of the country to make the Conference what it ought to be, a very memorable one.

The West Ham Branch ask us to announce that a Social will be held on Saturday, April 23, at the Earlam Hall, Earlam Grove, Forest Gate, commencing at 7 o'clock. The usual programme of Dancing, Games and Singing. Admission free. A cordial welcome is extended to all Freethinkers and friends.

In the March number of the *Islamic Review* there is an article entitled *The Status of Woman in Islam*, in which the following interesting paragraph appears:—

The preliminary step taken in this direction [the improvement of the position of woman] was to remove the stigma of responsibility that had hitherto been put upon woman with regard to original sin and the fall of man. Islamic theory about this incident is that both Adam and Eve were simultaneously and equally deceived, and that the blame attaches not to Eve alone, but to Adam also in like proportion. The Quran does not say, as said St. Paul, who had a strong antipathy against the female sex, that "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in transgression." In the Quran, Adam bravely confesses: "Our Lord, we have done wrong to ourselves," and he does not say that it was Eve who deceived him. The Quranic text is: "Wa Azallahumus Shaitan," which means Satan made them both fall. The legends of other religious systems further improve the story and make Adam take the *entire* responsibility; and, as Ingersoll said, "That's the kind of man to start a world with."

Every rustic who delivers in the village alehouse his slow, infrequent sentences, may help to lull or keep alive the fatal superstitions which clog his race. Every hard-worked wife of an artisan may transmit to her children beliefs which shall knit society together or rend it to pieces. No simplicity of mind, no obscurity of station, can escape the universal duty of questioning all that we believe.—*Prof. W. K. Clifford.*

## Obituary

W. J. W. EASTERBROOK

WE recorded in our last issue the death of William John Werry Easterbrook, a loyal and tried Freethinker, at the age of seventy-five. The immediate cause of death was heart-failure. He passed away painlessly on April 2 at his home in Saltash, Cornwall. His association with the Freethought movement dated back to his early years, and his interest in it never wavered. He was a member of the N.S.S. Executive, a director on the board of the Secular Society, Limited, and a trustee of the *Freethinker* Endowment Trust. According to his wishes his body was conveyed to Golders Green, where the cremation took place on April 8. The building was filled with members of the Society, personal friends, and the members of his family.

Mr. Chapman Cohen delivered the following address:—

To-day it falls to my lot to say a word of farewell to one whose passing means the breaking of one of those personal links that become fewer as the years pass. The familiar scene remains, but the figures that once filled them are lacking, and those of us who knew William John Werry Easterbrook with intimacy feel the sense of a personal loss that cannot easily be compensated. It is indeed this loss that marks the true sadness of death, a sadness which sometimes develops into a tragic sense of loneliness. The fantastic imaginings of established and inherited superstition mean nothing to us. But the sense of loss remains, in spite of our lifting grief to a higher level in the recognition of the true function of death in life.

I first came into contact with Easterbrook nearly a quarter of a century ago. My first acquaintance was by letter, although he told me he had known me for many years. Correspondence led to a closer acquaintance, which developed into a strong personal friendship. I held him in high respect, and I counted his confidence in me as a great compliment. He was a man who habitually formed judgments of others with care, and his respect was a compliment on whomsoever it was bestowed.

He was also a man of singularly open character, and although he had spent part of his life in the political and financial worlds, he displayed a lack of prejudice, and an appreciation of the better motives in human nature that resulted more from his own qualities than from the influence of the circles in which he had moved.

From his earliest years he had been in contact with advanced movements. In his youth one of his tasks was to bring home weekly copies of those two terrible papers, *Reynold's Newspaper* and the *National Reformer*—not only bring them home, but to read portions of each to his elders. This was strong meat for a youth, but Easterbrook was dowered with a good intellectual digestion that was fit to prepare this weekly meal for assimilation.

It must have been in the early years of the "fighting eighties" that he came into close contact with the Freethought movement, then under the dominating influence of Charles Bradlaugh. In that movement his interest never flagged; it remained strong to the last moment of his conscious life. I am afraid that we in these later days often fail to appreciate the value of the men and women, who in those days fought for Freethought. To belong to it was a test of character—to publicly work for it was a greater test still. I am not here concerned with the rightness or wrongness of the opinions championed, but I do insist that voluntary association with a movement that offers nothing in the shape of social prestige or financial gain, and encounters the bitterest opposition and often personal loss, is an earnest of character that other movements cannot offer. Such movements call for moral courage, intellectual honesty, and sincerity.

It is these qualities that I would mark out as characteristic of our dead friend. He possessed them in a marked degree. There was a poise of the head and a glint in the eye when talking of things in which he was really interested that marked the man who dealt faithfully with the world and expected fair-dealing in return. I have met few men who so disliked falsehood and false dealing. He hated them with the whole strength of his nature.

His generosity was wide. He helped many, and many were never aware of the source from which the help came. I do not stress this joy of giving over-much because it is not difficult to give, and Easterbrook had mastered the lesson that he who has learned to give with pleasure receives much in return. He who gives most receives most. What Easterbrook possessed was that rare quality, a strong sense of justice which resents wrong and fights for its removal. It is in this light that he stands clearly out in my memory.

Courage was shown in another matter. I happened to be with him when the medical warning came that it was imperative he should exercise the greatest care, for the end might come at any moment. He had asked for the information and he received it with his head up and a smile on his face. He had no foolish fears about death, and none of the coward's clinging to life at all costs. To him "pale-browed death" brought no fear. It meant at most a sleep, dreamless and unending. Life may carry the promise of pain, death should have with it no alarms.

I have said that to-day's ceremony marks the snapping of a link with the past. I think that that is open to misunderstanding. Death comes to us with a shock because it sets aside the familiar face and the loved presence. But when all is said and done the past remains ours, nothing can rob us of that, nay, it even consecrates the dead, and the memory of them becomes some of our dearest possessions.

So we will not think of death as breaking links with the past but as animating the present as the present will pass into the future. When we take our farewell to-day of the body of William John Werry Easterbrook we shall carry with us the memory of one who hated mean things, who loved truth and justice, and who did what he could to help the emergence of a better humanity.

Old friend farewell; now free from pain  
You sleep the sleep that kings have wooed in vain  
To you the rest so truly bought,  
To us the lesson that your life has taught.  
The most that now awaits you measured right,  
Is a sound slumber and a long good-night.

## A Strange Eastern Isle

CELEBES, in the Dutch East Indies, is one of the most remarkable islands in the world. Borneo, Sumatra and New Guinea surpass it in size, but its extraordinary configuration, its curious flora and fauna and other peculiar features combine to render this sea-circled area a study of intense interest. The Macassar Strait separates Celebes from Borneo on the west, while the Molucca Islands are scattered over the ocean to the east. To the north the Celebes Sea divides it from the adjacent Philippines, while southwards the isle-strewn Flores Sea separates Celebes from the Sunda chain.

The form of Celebes is most fantastic as a glance at the map will prove. As Dr. Guillemard states: "It consists of a central mass, from which radiate four enormous arms forming three deep gulfs on the eastern side, while the western side has a curved and nearly even coast-line. The northern peninsula sweeps north and east in a double curve for nearly 500 miles, having an average breadth of not more than 40 or 50 miles."

Celebes has been a Dutch possession for over 200 years, but only on its northern and southern shores have any European settlements been established. Its interior is still largely unexplored, and appears only thinly peopled. Its population is roughly estimated at more than 2 millions, although the island's area is approximately 71,400 square miles.

In 1529, Ribero's celebrated map was published in Spain, but in this Celebes is not indicated, although several of its neighbours appear. Later references made by Portuguese navigators are so vague and indefinite that it seems unlikely that these intrepid explorers ever made any permanent settlement there. It is very conjectural as to the extent the island was influenced by early Hindu immigrants, although sculptured remains of Siva-worship are said to survive. So little attention was paid to Celebes that the natives were not introduced to the Moslem until 1600, although its near neighbour Sumatra was converted to the faith of Islam in the thirteenth century. During the seventeenth century the Netherlanders entered into trading relations and in 1660, Van Dam, their naval commander, sank the Portuguese vessels stationed at the coast and captured their fort. The Dutch then converted Celebes into a colonial possession.

Not until the decade—1893-1903—when the Sarasins scientifically surveyed Celebes were the physical features of the island determined. The entire area is mountainous, and two parallel ranges extend from north to south. These elevations are separated by wide rift-valleys watered by numerous streams. These remarkable valleys are adorned with a series of splendid lakes, while clear evidences of earlier and very extensive volcanic action are noteworthy. Both active and quiescent, if not extinct, volcanoes abound while the numerous hot springs, jets of inflammable gas, lava deposits and kindred phenomena are very striking. A site near Lake Tondans is thus described by Russel Wallace: "A picturesque path among plantations and ravines brought us to a beautiful circular basin about 40 feet in diameter, bordered by a calcareous ledge, so uniform and truly curved that it looked like a work of art. It was filled with clear water, very near the boiling point, and emitted clouds of steam with a strong sulphureous odour." About a mile from this spot are mud streams even more remarkable, while some of the larger lakes are of enormous depth, ranging from 1,000 to 1,500 feet.

With its elevated areas and exposure to the sea, Celebes is favoured with a fairly cool and comparatively healthy climate. Sumatra and Borneo shelter it from the violence of the west monsoon, while the arid east winds which are apt to parch adjoining islands are greatly mitigated. Tropical diseases, however, are not unknown, but are much less prevalent in Celebes than in most other islands in the Malay Archipelago. Rainfall varies from 125 inches in the Makassar region to a mere 20 inches per annum at Palû.

The flora and fauna of the island are interesting. In its northern area plant life is largely related to that of the Phillipines, but many of the island's indigenous species are peculiar. Many introduced plants are now under cultivation and have even run wild. Rice, maize, sugar, indigo, coffee, tobacco, cloves, pepper and nutmeg flourish, and valuable timber and oil-yielding trees abound.

Animal life in Celebes is more extensively known than its native flora. In the light of its central position its faunal life is both poverty-stricken and peculiar. In striking contrast to Sumatra and Borneo, Celebes is destitute of tailed monkeys, canine and feline animals, insectivorous organisms, the ele-

phant, rhinoceros and tapir. So far as is known, this island's higher fauna comprises five large, and about twelve small terrestrial mammals. There is a dark tailless baboon, a species of deer, a dwarf buffalo, wild boar and the babirusa—the curious "horned pig." The lesser animals are the tarsier (a species of lemur); civet cat, five varieties of squirrels, a couple of rats and two kinds of cuscus, members of the marsupial family. The tarsier, civet and deer resemble those of Borneo. These last have all been domesticated as pets by the Malays, and were probably introduced by them while those that roam at large may have escaped from control. The wild pig and the rodents—the squirrels and rats—although special to Celebes are obviously akin to species resident in Java and Borneo.

When one considers the facility with which birds fly from one island to another the aves of Celebes furnish many remarkable anomalies. Celebes contains about 160 species of terrestrial birds, and 90 of these are strictly confined to the island and its immediate islets, but some 50 species betray Asiatic affinities, while the remaining 20 are Australian in character.

On the whole, the animal life is strikingly suggestive of the types that flourished millions of years ago in the Miocene Epoch. In their isolated home modifications have, of course, occurred, but the general resemblance remains. Dr. Guillemard concludes that: "The peculiarities of the animal life of Celebes may be best explained by supposing it to be an outlying portion of that Miocene continent, which became detached from it, and has since never been actually joined to any Asiatic or Australian land. It has thus preserved for us some descendants of ancient types, and these have become intermingled with such immigrants as were enabled to establish themselves in competition with the ancient inhabitants."

Remembering the remote antiquity of Celebes, low types of humankind might be anticipated. But immigration has been long in operation, and the incursions of aggressive outsiders may have driven the primitive aborigines to the wall. Still, it seems probable that a lowly race once inhabited the island, and its remnants may still be traced in the savage Toalas of South Celebes, who are a dark non-Malay, dwarfed, flat-nosed and thick-lipped stock. All the other natives are of Malay race. These form two groups: the semi-civilized Moslem tribes and the "Pagans," who are the merest savages. The former live under governmental rule, are well attired, and not entirely illiterate. They are also quite equal to the Javanese and true Malays in agriculture and artistic ability. The Pagans, however, are rudely primitive and lack the arts of writing, weaving and metal working.

The Bugis are perhaps the most progressive people in Celebes. Their position in the island appears of recent growth, but they are now regarded as the most efficient and enterprising mariners and traders in the Archipelago. Their settlements are numerous in the urban areas of the various islands, and they seem much more energetic than the average Malay, but they closely resemble them both in pride and vindictiveness. A brave but passionate people, their "running amok" may occur at any time.

The Mandars are another stock who dwell in Western Celebes. Goa, the residence of their raja, is distant but a few miles from Makassar, the Dutch capital. Most of the other native communities are similar in culture to the Dyaks of Borneo. Head-hunting and even cannibalism prevail. Dr. A. H. Keane notes that: "Human skulls ornament the chief's houses, and when he dies, it is necessary to obtain two fresh human skulls with which to adorn his grave."

Apart from the Javanese towns, Makassar, where the Hollanders erected their earliest fort, is the most thriving centre in the Dutch East Indies. Its pre-eminence is mainly due to the remarkable mercantile ability of the Bugis, who rival the industrious and enterprising Chinese in the adjacent Asiatic regions.

The Menado Residency has become a delectable district under Dutch dominion. This floral paradise is thus described by Dr. Keane: "In many of the villages the streets are bordered with hedges of roses in perpetual bloom; the cottages are symmetrically arranged, nicely painted, and embowered in flowering shrubs and fruit trees; while the people are well dressed, well fed, well behaved and contented, presenting a marvellous contrast to the naked savages of 80 years back, who were fathers and grandfathers of the present generation."

In the chain of islets environing the main peninsula of Celebes is Great Sangir celebrated for its copra. Its seafaring natives build excellent boats, while a neighbouring race is still unacquainted with the use of metals.

T. F. PALMER.

---

### The International Congress of Freethinkers, September 9-13, 1938

---

LAST July an invitation was sent from the National Secular Society, the Rationalist Press Association, the South Place Ethical Society and the Union of Ethical Societies to the World Union of Freethinkers, to hold its next International Congress in London in September, 1938.

The programme of this Congress will be as follows: Friday evening, September 9, Reception and Social Evening. Saturday morning, Opening of the Congress and addresses on the subject of "Science and the Churches." At the afternoon session, the subject of discussion will be "Youth, the Schools and Free-thought," and at the evening session "The Menace of the Vatican." On the Sunday morning, addresses will be delivered on "The Reality of a Secular Ethic"; at the afternoon session reports on the situation of Free-thought in different countries will be given, and in the evening speeches will be made on "Free-thought and the Struggle for Peace and Freedom." At the Monday morning sitting the reports from various countries will be continued, and resolutions arising from the subjects studied will be proposed. The Monday afternoon will be devoted to sightseeing, and the evening to a dinner at the Trocadero. On the Tuesday a visit will be paid to the Bradlaugh tomb at Brookwood.

These Congresses have been of the greatest significance to progressive secularism in the past, and have had the active support of men such as Ludwig Buechner, Ernst Haeckel, Marcellin Berthelot, Cesare Lombroso, Sergi, Hector Denis, Aristide Briand, Nicholas Salmeron (President of the Spanish Republic of 1873), T. G. Masaryk, Benes, Braga, Arriaga, Emile Combes, Herbert Spencer and Henry Maudsley, as well as Moncure Conway, Charles Bradlaugh, etc.

This coming Congress has the support of M. Edouard Herriot, the famous French statesman, who is the President of Honour, and of Professor Bouglé and Dr. P. L. Couchoud (France), Professor Molengraaff (Holland) and Mr. G. E. Macdonald (U.S.A.), who have promised to speak, send papers or otherwise help. Answers to other invitations will be forthcoming.

Among the English supporters are: Miss Marjorie Bowen; Messrs. H. N. Brailsford, Gerald Bullett, Joseph McCabe, F. S. Marvin, W. Somerset Maugham, H. W. Nevinson, H. G. Wells, Dr. Stanton Coit, Sir Arthur Keith, Mrs. Whale, Professors P. Sargent Florence, J. C. Flugel, J. B. S. Haldane, F.R.S., Lancelot Hogben, F.R.S., Laurence Housman, C. E. M. Joad, H. J. Laski, H. Levy and Bertrand Russell.

In the meantime great efforts are being made in France, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Holland and Luxemburg to send a good number of delegates as well as from the United States, and three or four leading scientists are expected from Russia.

Admission for the meetings will be by ticket. All Freethinkers are cordially invited. Application should be made either to the Local Secretary of the Branch to which the applicant belongs for tickets for himself and friends, or to the headquarters of the Association to which he belongs. There will be one ticket for all the meetings, except the dinner and the visit to Brookwood. The dinner will cost 10s. 6d., and the fare to Brookwood, by special train, is 2s. Additional tickets for the Sunday evening meeting will be issued, as it is hoped that this meeting "Free-thought and the Struggle for Peace and Freedom," will be very well attended. All meetings except this one will be held in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London. This is very central, being close to Holborn and to Kingsway, and easily accessible from the railway termini from the North.

If you cannot get away to attend all the meetings come to as many as you can. There has been nothing like this Congress in England for fifty years.

C. BRADLAUGH BONNER.

---

### The Flatulent Claims of a Catholic Archbishop

---

THE Catholic Archbishop of Sydney (Dr. Kelly) has been celebrating his eighty-eighth birthday. The occasion, of course, has brought from him a number of his customary oracular utterances. Merely one of these may be cited.

"Catholic doctrine on all points," he said, "is founded on proved truth regarding the origin and destiny and supreme welfare of mankind."

Proved truth!

Clearly, by this, Dr. Kelly implies that it has been proved true that the world originated in the way described by the Bible—a mere matter of six thousand years ago, some mysterious, pre-existent Power beginning it with the words, "Let there be light, and there was light."

What proof has Dr. Kelly in support of such a primitive, preposterous assumption?

He may believe it, if he wishes. But belief is not proof. In shattering refutation of what he declares to be "proved truth" is the accumulated, overwhelming evidence to the contrary of historians, archaeologists, geologists, astronomers, and biologists—to say nothing of the discoveries and conclusions of others outside these spheres of the intellectual progress made by the world, particularly within the last hundred years.

A more flatulent, impudent boast than that made by Dr. Kelly could not possibly be compressed into the same given number of words.

Is it not just the same regarding his claim concerning the destiny of mankind?

Heaven and hell are beliefs based on the Bible. Therefore, the "proved truth" of heaven and hell—in other words, that they are the destiny of mankind—entirely vanishes with the "proved truth" claimed by Dr. Kelly for the Bible. Proof regarding our origin or destiny is as absent in the one case as it is in the other.

But, if we could believe Dr. Kelly, Catholic doctrine on all points is founded on "proved truth."

Let us have a look at just one of the things embraced in this doctrine.

"Proved truth," in the practices of the Church, is characteristically illustrated in purgatory.

In a recent issue of *Filipinas*, a paper published in Brisbane (Queensland) with the imprimatur of the Catholic Archbishop of that State (Dr. Duhig), there is an article of some pages devoted to this subject. Thus, it is to an authoritative source that we are going for our information.

"When a soul leaves the body," we are told, "it is in a state of perfection, and ready to enter heaven; or in a state of absolute damnation, and ready to enter hell; or in a state of imperfection, not worthy of hell, and not fit to enter heaven."

Purgatory, it seems, concerns itself with those in the imperfect state.

Such souls must be cleansed before they may enter heaven. But what a conflicting process is that to which they are subjected! "They see the Eternal Judge; they know his sentence upon their lives; and they understand the reasons for the sentence." But it is, we are assured, a state of joy and pain—the two, it would seem, being a simultaneous experience. To remotely comprehend this, I would imagine, you must first be blessed with Christian faith.

"The soul has the joy of seeing that it is in the state of grace, and is only going through a state of purgation."

The pain, however, appears to enormously outweigh the joy. Firstly, the soul has the pain of remembering that it "has thrown away the immense treasures of eternal felicity for the mere vain baubles of earth." But an infinitely greater pain in purgatory is "a punishment by fire of the same nature as the fire of hell"—without, however, the purgatory fire being eternal.

Still, blissful is the expectation of heaven.

"Can we not, then, easily imagine with what eagerness—and even joy—the soul delves into the cleansing flames that will free it from this self-inflicted remorse—all the more so because there is no other remedy; there is no pleasure that might give relief; and there is no distracting oneself from the loss."

The self-inflicted remorse, of course, refers to the sins committed on earth—among them, presumably, the sin of non-attendance at church, or the failure to make the expected response to the collection-box.

But there are means at our disposal, we are reminded, by which we "may bring help" to the souls thus described. "They cannot help themselves, except in one way—which is that they can beg God to move good souls on the earth to come to their assistance. This they do; and their loving Father in Heaven, Who yearns for their release, listens to them, and urges us to help those dear ones in purgatory."

Help may be rendered by—among other things—the good souls on earth making gifts to the church in the shape of alms, in having masses celebrated for them, and in participating in novenas.

Novenas, by the way, must be a source of considerable wealth to the Church, judging by the pages devoted to them in *Filipinas*, the paper from which I am here quoting. Briefly, they appear to consist in keeping lighted lamps before shrines—preferably the

shrines of saints. The duration for which a lamp is kept burning is determined by the amount paid by the person who is making this votive offering. In return, benefits are asked and expected—benefits that range from the release of souls in purgatory to others of a distinctly worldly character.

How deluded, too, these gullible paying supplicants can be in their appreciation of imaginary favours is shown by this one letter, reproduced from a long series of letters in *Filipinas* of a similar nature:

"Recently my daughter, aged 14, began to work in the city. Knowing she was of a highly-strung, nervous temperament, and fearing she would meet with an accident, I asked 'The Little Flower' to look after her. My prayers were answered, for a short time ago, when returning home, she got into a wrong train—a non-stop. When the train came tearing through the station without stopping, she realized that she had made a mistake, and became very excited. She was the only one in the carriage; and, therefore, you will understand the seriousness of the position. When the train drew near the station where she usually alighted, the signal was against it, with the result that it slowed down coming through the station. By this time, my daughter was in a state of collapse, standing in a corridor near an open door. Suddenly the signal dropped, and the train began to gather speed—my daughter falling on to the middle of the platform. Whether she attempted to jump out, or fell out, we do not know, as she remembers nothing of what happened. Immediately the accident occurred, word was sent to me, so that I was able to get to the station before the ambulance arrived, and then I had her conveyed to one of the Catholic hospitals. Her injuries consisted of concussion and slight facial abrasions. It was indeed a marvellous escape from death. After a short stay in hospital, she was able to leave, fully cured; and since then has lost most of her nervousness. It was, indeed an act of our Heavenly Guardian, through the intercession of 'The Little Flower'; and it is to express our deep gratitude to this wonderful saint that I write to you. 'Little Flower of Jesus, pray for us, and watch over our family,' is the prayer I would recommend to parents; and they would find that their prayers would not be in vain."

Here we have illustrated the purpose of the novenas, together with the character of the people upon whom they depend for their continuance. We have seen, too, the picture that is painted of the torture of the souls in purgatory. Consequently, in the appeal made for the relief of these there must be a stupendous financial return to the church through alms, masses, and novenas.

Purgatory, it is plain, has a most purposeful, lucrative place in the doctrine of the church.

Does it aid our exposure of the practice to add that the wealthier you happen to be the greater is the number of masses you will be able to sponsor; that by such means you can simply buy a soul admission into the heavenly realms; and that in this way is completely exploded the priestly fiction that all—the rich and the poor—are equal in the sight of the Lord?

Briefly, it all amounts to your being provided with a seat in heaven—not because of what you yourself happen to be or happen to have done—but in return for the amount that your relatives or friends are able to put up for you.

There still remain a few comments to be made.

"Proved truth," we have seen, is claimed by Dr. Kelly (1) in the Bible being the work of God and (2) in enlightening us as to our origin and destiny. But on all points, he declares, the Catholic doctrine is founded on "proved truth." Therefore,

the claim of "proved truth" extends to purgatory—a fundamental doctrine of the church.

Does reason permit us to accept as "proved truth" the teachings and practices of the Church with regard to purgatory? Must we not, if we exercise a glimmer of intelligence, recoil from such a barbarous doctrine? And is it not debasing—even to those who may be spiritually inclined—to visualize a God that could ordain or countenance such an obvious humanly contrived, self-snaring device?

Empty, indeed, is Dr. Kelly's protestation that it is upon "proved truth" that the Church is founded; and less and less stable must the Church become in view of the way the "proved truth" of the Bible is daily disappearing with the ever-increasing advance that is being made in our common knowledge.

There is just a further reference to *Filipinas* that I would like to make.

In the copy I have, there appears an intimation, very prominently displayed, headed "Every day, somewhere, someone makes his or her will." Then follows an appeal that there may be remembered as a beneficiary "the Missionaries of the Most Holy Eucharist, St. Jude's Seminary, Brisbane." In due course we come to the point that I regard as of particular interest. This is in the closing lines, where the testator is reminded that "it is much better to transfer your gift before death," because in this way "you AVOID loss in taxation."

What a disclosure have we here regarding all the pretences as to origin and destiny—the treading of the path of righteousness, and the nobility generally of the God-modelled Church—in the request that the gift be so made as to elude the death duties; or, in plainer words, to swindle your fellow-citizens out of the payment that the law prescribes is due to the community!

Possibly, in the Catholic way of viewing things, such turpitude on earth is accounted a virtue in heaven.

At any rate, the suggestion—made through a church paper, let it be remembered—distinctly reveals that, while Catholicism may purport to make you an angel in the life to come, it emphatically does not encourage you to be a decent citizen in the life that you are still living.

J. Y. ANDERONEY.

Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

## Correspondence

### THE WORST MAN

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

SIR,—I have read your contributor's article "Symptoms of Saintliness," in which he suggests that I am meek and malicious. Judged as a piece of journalism, with plenty of restrained force, not to say malice, it seems to be quite a commendable effort. T. H. Elstob must be, as we say in Fleet Street—"a good man." He says the same about me, but he says it with his tongue in his cheek.

I wish, however, that he had not read into my *People* article that I knew Ingersoll to be a bad man. He was doubtless much better than I shall ever be. If not God help him now! The sense of what I wrote must be taken as this—just as the worst men can give the best advice, so a Freethinker can preach good Christianity. I have not the slightest wish to be offensive to Ingersoll or to your own spirited paper, even though your occasional references to myself have not so far been marked with excessive cordiality. Moreover I should be the last person to assume that the *Freethinker* staff are among the world's worst. The truth probably is that you are just slow starters towards sainthood.

Many of the saints began just where some of you, fellow-journalists, probably now are; some I think, a good deal further away from Christ, the living Saviour of the world.

May your rise be more rapid.

A. J. RUSSELL.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

### LONDON

#### OUTDOOR

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place): 7.30, Saturday night and Sunday night, Mr. J. W. Barker will speak at each meeting.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Highbury Corner) 8.0, Friday, 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.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday, Miss E. Milliard, M.A., Mr. E. Bryant and Mr. G. Barnes. 6.30, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes and Tuson. Thursdays, 7.30, Mr. E. C. Saphin.

### COUNTRY

#### INDOOR

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Laycock's Forum, Albion Court, Kirkgate): 7.15, A Lecture.

#### OUTDOOR

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (The Mound): 7.0, Muriel Whitefield (Glasgow N.S.S.)—A Lecture.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Stevenson Square): 3.0, Sunday, "The Dawn of Life." 7.0,—"God and Immortality." Mr. W. A. Atkinson will speak at each meeting.

## THE EXPLANATION

"Uncle Ephraim what be ye millin' over?" asks Mirandy, as I wuz silent on the way home from church.

"I wuz thinkin' how that visitin' preacher lambasted folks in his sermon," I replies.

"He was eloquent against sinners, that's certain," Mirandy agreed.

"Yes, he sizzled against the military, the capitalists, the communists, the dictators, the bootleggers and the corrupt politicians!"

But Mirandy insisted, "They all deserve a good rakin'."

"Sure," sez I, "but did you take notice who wuz at church?"

"The usual run of folks, looked like to me," Mirandy sez. "What do you mean?"

"Did you notice there wuzn't a single soldier, not a capitalist, nor a communist, nor a dictator, nor a bootlegger in the whole congregation. Not even a politician, though the way Jeff Reezer got elected as delegate to conference might bear a little lookin' into. Some preachers like to preach about the sins we aren't guilty of. They use the wrong ammunition. Huntin' rabbits with a trench mortar, and tryin' to bring down a chargin' rhinoceros with buck shot don't make sense. If that feller this mornin' had talked about gossipers, and bad tempers, and nasty dispositions, and jealousy, and stinginess, and laziness, there would have been some squirmin' in the pews.

*The Religious Telescope (U.S.A.)*

## The Scientific and Sensible Diet is Vegetarian

Free Literature on application to  
THE VEGETARIAN SOCIETY  
57 Princess Street, Manchester, 2

# NEW VOLUME

# ESSAYS IN FREETHINKING

## CHAPMAN COHEN

EDMUND BURKE ON ATHEISM  
 GEORGE BERNARD SHAW AND THE N.S.S.  
 CHRISTIANITY AND INTOLERANCE  
 THE WAYS OF GOD  
 AN APOLOGY FOR PARSONS  
 A CHRISTIAN MYTH  
 MYTHOLOGY AND HISTORY  
 WHAT IS BLASPHEMY?  
 BLATANT ATHEISM  
 THE GHOST OF RELIGION  
 CHRISTIANITY AND MYSELF

WHOSO WOULD BE A REFORMER!  
 THE FUNCTION OF ATHEISM  
 SHOULD OPINION BE FREE?  
 THE GREAT AND THE SMALL  
 GOD SAVE SUNDAY  
 LIFE AND DEATH  
 THE REAL CHESTERTON  
 THE HOLY BIBLE  
 AGAIN—THE BIBLE  
 CHRIST AND CHRISTMAS

Price 2s. 6d.

Postage 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.

### CONTENTS OF FIRST VOLUME

PSYCHOLOGY AND SAFFRON TEA  
 CHRISTIANITY AND THE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST  
 A BIBLE BARBARITY  
 SHAKESPEARE AND THE JEW  
 A CASE OF LIBEL  
 MONISM AND RELIGION  
 SPIRITUAL VISION  
 OUR EARLY ANCESTOR  
 PROFESSOR HUXLEY AND THE BIBLE  
 HUXLEY'S NEMESIS  
 PRAYING FOR RAIN  
 A FAMOUS WITCH TRIAL

CHRISTMAS TREES AND TREE GODS  
 GOD'S CHILDREN  
 THE APPEAL TO GOD  
 AN OLD STORY  
 RELIGION AND LABOUR  
 DISEASE AND RELIGION  
 SEEING THE PAST  
 IS RELIGION OF USE?  
 ON COMPROMISE  
 HYMNS FOR INFANTS  
 RELIGION AND THE YOUNG

### CONTENTS OF SECOND VOLUME

RELIGION AND OPINION  
 A MARTYR OF SCIENCE  
 AS GOOD AS CHRISTIANS!  
 A FEARFUL EXAMPLE  
 THE HAPPY ATHEIST  
 THE GOSPEL OF PAIN  
 CHRISTIAN PESSIMISM  
 PERSECUTION AND TRUTH—THE GOSPEL OF  
 SUFFERING  
 RELIGION AND SEX  
 VULGAR FREETHINKERS  
 GOD'S WILL  
 VICE AND VIRTUE

RELIGION AND THE STAGE  
 RELIGION AND TO-DAY  
 WHY WE LAUGH  
 PUBLIC OPINION  
 THE BENEFITS OF HUMOUR  
 THE CLERGY AND PARLIAMENT  
 ON FINDING GOD  
 THE CONDESCENDING CHRISTIAN  
 GOD'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
 AN OLD MAXIM  
 TRUTH WILL OUT  
 WAR AND WAR MEMORIALS

### CONTENTS OF THIRD VOLUME

ATHEISM—ENGLISH AND FRENCH  
 RELIGION AND THE FEAR OF DEATH  
 GOD AND MAN  
 RELIGION AND THE STATE  
 DESIGN IN NATURE  
 GOD AND HIS BIOGRAPHERS  
 GOD AND MORALS  
 FASTING AND FAITH  
 THE CHRISTIAN MYTH  
 THE DISCONSOLATE ATHEIST

WITCH DOCTORS IN LONDON  
 OUR FATHER—THE SAVAGE  
 THE ETHICS OF THE PULPIT  
 MAN AND MORALS  
 CIVILIZATION AND THE CROSS  
 THE BLESSED "SAWBATH"  
 DYING LIKE A CHRISTIAN  
 DO MIRACLES HAPPEN?  
 THE BRAIN AND THE "SOUL"

2s. 6d. Each volume

Four volumes post free 10s.

## Hail the Pioneers!

### HENRY HETHERINGTON

(1792-1849)

Ambrose G. Barker

The claims of orthodoxy are glorified along with their dead; the pioneers of heresy—religious and political—are promptly buried, and their names are either not included in future history or they are passed by slightly. Of how many to-day who call themselves reformers can it be said that they know the name of Henry Hetherington? Very few indeed could say *what* he did. Yet Hetherington was a pioneer in the fight against religious orthodoxy and tyranny, a pioneer of Trades Unionism, of the cheap Newspaper Press, and of many other reforms. An avowed Atheist, he served three terms of imprisonment, but, like Carlile, the Government could not bend and, in the end, did not break him.

This is a document that everyone should read.

Sixty-four pages, with portrait: Sixpence, by post, Sevenpence

## THE BIBLE HANDBOOK

i. BIBLE CONTRADICTIONS. ii. BIBLE ABSURDITIES. iii. BIBLE ATROCITIES. iv. UNFULFILLED PROPHECIES AND BROKEN PROMISES. v. BIBLE IMMORALITIES, INDECENCIES, AND OBSCENITIES

By G. W. Foote and W. P. Ball

Millions of people have read "The Bible"; but only a few read it with an unprejudiced mind. Believers read it in the light of inculcated obsessions and with their minds closed to a real understanding. "The Handbook" sets forth the Bible message as it really is, it is made to tell its own story. Every text is cited accurately and exact reference is given. It is a book that is useful, even indispensable to Freethinkers and it is educational to Christians.

Cloth 2s. 6d. Postage 3d.

## TWO NEW ISSUES PAMPHLETS FOR THE PEOPLE

by CHAPMAN COHEN

No. 11. Deity and Design

„ 12. What is the Use of a Future Life?

- No. 1. Did Jesus Christ Exist?  
2. Morality Without God  
3. What is the Use of Prayer?  
4. Christianity and Woman  
5. Must We Have a Religion?  
6. The Devil  
7. What is Freethought?  
8. Gods and Their Makers  
9. The Church's Fight for the Child  
10. Giving 'em Hell

Each Pamphlet contains Sixteen Pages

Price 1d.

Postage ½d.

CHEAPEST EDITION EVER PUBLISHED

## THE AGE OF REASON

THOMAS PAINE

Complete edition, 202 pp., with a 44 p. introduction by Chapman Cohen. Price 4d., postage 2½d. Or strongly bound in cloth with portrait, 1s 6d., postage 3d.

## AN ORATION ON THOMAS PAINE

COLONEL R. G. INGERSOLL

Price TWOPENCE.

By post 2½d.

## THOMAS PAINE

JOHN M. ROBERTSON

An Investigation of Sir Leslie Stephen's criticism of Paine's influence on religious and political reform. An indispensable work for all who are interested in Paine and his influence

SIXPENCE

Postage 1d.

## RELIGION AND SEX

CHAPMAN COHEN

Studies in the Pathology of religious development

Price 6s.

Postage 6d.

## THE OTHER SIDE OF DEATH

CHAPMAN COHEN

A critical examination of the belief in a future life, with a study of spiritualism

CLOTH 2s. 6d., postage 2½d.; PAPER 1s. 6d., postage 2d.