

# THE FREETHINKER

• EDITED *by* CHAPMAN COHEN •

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## Views and Opinions

### Some Shibboleths

A READER reminds me that I committed what he calls a breach of good manners in last week's "Views and Opinions" in omitting "Sir" when speaking of Hugh Walpole. I can assure him, and others, that the act was committed without malice aforethought. I had not the slightest intention of being rude, even by implication, to Sir Hugh Walpole, and I hope, for his own sake, that he is not hurt at my leaving his title unmentioned. I had in mind but one thing when writing my notes—that of indicating the absurdity, even the dangerous absurdity, that gathers round the religious terms used by Sir Hugh. But I have no reason for believing that Sir Hugh Walpole's feelings will be hurt by my omission, or that he even sees the *Freethinker*. I am of opinion that Sir Hugh is not one who reads a paper with the opinions of which he does not agree. But he has friends, and one of the functions of a friend is to let one know all the nasty things that other people say concerning one. Otherwise we should often be unaware that they existed.

I must confess that I am very careless concerning titles. Not that I disagree with some mark of public appreciation of public services or even of private virtues. But as things go there is not the slightest guarantee that titles indicate this. They are too often given publicity without indicating the reason why. Such titles as B.A., M.A., M.D., or the membership or fellowship of learned bodies are *prima facie* evidence that they who wear them have at least done something, or know something of value. Even the title of D.D. shows that its owner has worked hard at muddling his native intelligence, and has become an expert at defining the indefinable, understanding the inconceivable, and expounding the inscrutable. But there is a whole group of titles, Knight, Lord, Earl, Duke, etc., which guarantee nothing at all. The wearer of any one of these titles *may* be a man lively in intelligence, upright in his judgment, and entitled to public honour and respect. Nothing is more

stupid and more essentially snobbish than the type of "democrat" who, for instance, labels the House of Lords as made up of fools and rogues.

\* \* \*

### A Suggestion

But there is a very big "but" here. The owner of a title may have gained it because he has subscribed heavily to party funds. (There is, I believe, a semi-official scale of prices regulating titles). He may have *bought* the title and wears it as a wealthy ignoramus stocks one of his rooms with books ordered by the yard, in order to convince those as ignorant as himself that he has a taste for literature. If an hereditary title it *may* owe its origin to something useful done by a remote ancestor, or it may be due to an ancestress of an accommodating nature where a king or a prince was concerned. One never knows. I recall the case of one whom I had known for some years. One day he informed me that he had been given a knighthood. I replied, "Well, I have known you for many years; let's hope you have done nothing to deserve it." I think that the only time in our history when this question of titles was well-managed was in the time of James I. He is said to have sold them on a regular scale of charges. Sir John Simon might consider this plan. Anyone who wished to have a title should be at liberty to buy one as one may buy a wireless licence. As things go at present, the man who really deserves recognition may be confused with those who have no public claim to it. Perhaps if titles were conferred posthumously it would be better still. Spencer, Mill, and others one might name, would accept no titles. It would have added nothing to their greatness. The public would honour itself if they built more monuments to *great* men after their death, and fewer to soldiers. Earl Haig on a horse will mean little to posterity. A few more statues of great writers and artists and musicians might do something to raise the level of life.

At any rate titles should not be hereditary. Of all stupid and indefensible things an hereditary title is the greatest. One of the plainest of eugenic facts is that genius follows no definite family lines. Wise parents are not always, or even generally (when one allows for other factors), followed by wise children, and ordinary folk are *not* found to be parents of brilliant men and women. Felix Mendelssohn was a great musician. His grandfather was a man of letters of considerable ability. But between the two? Well, the situation was expressed in the comment, "When I was young I was known as the son of my father. Now I am old I am known as the father of my son." Heredity laughs at titles, and genius refuses to be confined within the narrow limits of a family tree. There are social systems in the world where a man is condemned to a lowly career because his father belonged to a particular caste. But it does not lie with anyone to laugh at any such system so long as he believes



in the value of an hereditary peerage and hereditary rulers. Even an hereditary god is now getting out of date.

\* \* \*

### Democracy

Of late we have heard loud cries that we are fighting for the preservation of democracy. I am afraid I cannot give that cry unqualified support. The English people are not a democracy. We have had a mere outline of democracy for little more than a century. A real democracy must have much firmer basis than that which is sometimes expressed in the phrase "one man is as good as another." Unless we consider men as mere units in a sum, one man is not as good as another. Democracy is more a question of equal rights rather than of equal capacity or value. So I prefer to put it that we are fighting to maintain the right to create a real democracy, a society in which man shall be respected, as man, with every individual possessing the same rights and responsibilities as other men.

No one can say that this is our case to-day. That we have not yet established a Democracy must not be placed to the credit of the man exalted by a title or made great by the possession of wealth. It is not the fault of a god because men grovel before him; it is the fault of men that they have created a god before whom they delight to grovel. A title is glorified by the man who bows before it, not of necessity by the man who wears it. He is a mere accident in the situation. A slave is only a real slave so long as he honours the badge of slavery. When he does not do this he may be in bondage, but he is not a slave, *and the slave-owner knows it*. A true slave not merely wears the badge of his slavery, he glories in it. There is often in the statement one comes across "We have been servants in the family of lord . . . for so many generations," a confession of the real slave spirit. There is a glory in the praise that comes from servitude. A dog loves a pat on the head from its master.

So I prefer to say that the present war is, at least partly, for the preservation of the right to create a real democracy, and that if we lose the war it will mean the end of democracy in Europe for a long time to come. If we do not preserve the right to create a democracy in this country nothing else matters very much.

\* \* \*

### Uniforms

We are apt to lose sight of the man in a title; we are also likely to commit the same error with a uniform. From my earliest days, I think before I was able to consider my prepossessions, I disliked a uniform. Somehow it seemed to smother individuality. No one that I can recall has ever worked out the narcotising influence of a uniform, not merely in its effect on others, but also in its effect on the wearer. Its attractiveness begins with childhood. Children love to "dress up," and if one notes a child strutting round with others in some markedly distinctive dress we have a promise of the mentality of many when they have reached an adult stage. The child is nowadays followed very closely by the boy scout and girl guide, and from that up to a court ceremonial with its cocked hat, knee breeches, dress sword, etc., we have a continuous series of exhibitions of the power of the uniform. If a man were asked to walk down Oxford Street in a court dress he would become a laughing stock. Place him as one in a court presentation and he feels he is among the elite, and ordinary folk gather to watch with open-mouths a purely pantomimic display which they will, with all seriousness, describe as "impressive." Knights of the Garter marching to a Church service in the royal chapel at Windsor are not essentially different from the be-

scarved parade of the Order of Buffaloes. The monarch in his robes is on all-fours with the members of the Klu-Klux-Kan wrapped in their winding sheets. There is with them all the intoxication of wearing a uniform, a childish delight in being separated from others by a dress which is the indication of their superior position. Even in the general carrying of gas-mask cases during recent weeks I have noted that a great many appear to carry them with a certain air of being dressed in a uniform.

Another Carlyle is needed to write a book on clothes. It is beyond me, and I can only note one or two distinctive features of this worship of a uniform—which is perhaps only another aspect of the feeling of content that so many show when they have merely to obey an order or follow a set rule. But the first, and perhaps the most important, feature is that a uniform does give a sense of importance, only for it to be followed by the wearer becoming the slave of the clothes he wears. There is too a probable confusion between "distinct" and "distinguished." Lacking a sense of importance within, one seeks compensation by a visibility that is believed to impress others. Such a man impresses himself as a step towards impressing others. The advisers of Hitler were so far wise in dressing up his followers in a special uniform. Outside that they would never have been more in the public eye than a gang of ruffians. Even in this country the pantomimic Mosley attracted mainly because of the imitation of Italian and German uniforms, and weakened at once when those uniforms were prohibited. If Al Capone had only thought of dressing his gangsters in a uniform, he might easily have gathered around himself an atmosphere he was never able to obtain. But he dressed as did other folks, and the end was prison.

Even criminality gains a considerable measure of respectability once it appears in a uniform, and absurdity wears an air of considered wisdom. Black, Brown, Green, and Red Shirts, old school ties, and the robe of the priest, the cheap glitter of a coronation, the wig of the judge and the lawyer's gown are all so many witnesses to the shallowness of the average human intelligence, evidence that the adult is not very far removed from the child, and the civilized man is not so far removed from the savage. The day that soldiers are deprived of their uniforms, armies will begin to crumble, and there will be dealt a heavy blow at the glamour of war. When court ceremonials are abolished, when titles are given for worth publicly and truthfully indicated, when men earn their positions and do not inherit them, when in peace time we keep the parades of soldiers apart from our civic ceremonies, when a uniform is regarded as a mark of inferiority we shall have definitely reached a higher level of civilization.

CHAPMAN COHEN

### A Sonnet

THERE—subtle serpent, twisted, stood in thought—  
(An earlier Caliban by Prospero caught)—  
Wondering where his own Creator's sport  
And eccentricity should next be sought,  
What devilish discomfiture mis-wrought.  
"Proud demi-gods that twain do so comport  
Themselves straight-limbed and supple . . . surely  
brought

Low in the dust and by my cunning bought  
And bound over for my thralldom, my design . . ."  
So through the garden slunk and the snake malign;  
Till woman fell, prey-flattered, and then man  
For breasted fruit; till mutual shame began.

Cool evening stillness stirred the Tree Hereafter,  
And shuddered, snapped by sound of mocking laughter.

C. R. B. SUMNER



## A Village Valhalla

The great defend us from our contemporaries. They are the exceptions which we want, where all grows alike.—Emerson.

The infidels of one generation are the saints of the next.—Ingersoll.

A NEWSPAPER paragraph states that a memorial is to be placed in Westminster Abbey, "the National Valhalla," to the memory of the three Brontë sisters. No one would be churlish enough to dispute the right of Charlotte and Emily to such an honour, and it was well nigh impossible to reject the slighter claim of the third sister Anne, but what is to be said concerning such a belated recognition? All the sisters have been dead near a century, and the rare genius of Emily, the author of *Wuthering Heights*, and of two great poems, has long placed her name in the glorious company of Keats, Shelley, and others, who have enriched the literature of our country with immortal things.

It must be said, however, that the Abbey does not deserve the grandiose title of *National Valhalla*. The reason is that the building is primarily, a Christian temple, and is controlled by Sectarian Christian priests. Owing to their action the building is but a restricted and irregular commemorator of greatness. It has never been, for a moment, a real national monument like the French Pantheon, with its proud inscription:—

Aux grand hommes la patrie reconnaissante.

The English priests have been handicapped always by the knowledge that all outside their own narrow sect are heretics, and that only their own communicants have been really welcomed. Even in the present instance Emily, far and away the greatest of the sisters, was a Freethinker, as is evidenced by the words in her greatest poem, *Last Lines*:—

Vain are the thousand creeds  
That move men's hearts; unutterably vain,  
Worthless as withered weeds,  
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main.

If that is the reason for the belated recognition of the Brontës, it explains the Anglican Church's fondness for "body-snatching." For this Church dare not exclude all heretics from the Abbey, otherwise its roll of honour would be restricted to the bodies of its own clergy, and a few outsiders, and would lose all claim to be entitled national. But just as the most important thing about the so-called Church of England is that it is not the Church of England, so the truth about Westminster Abbey, so far as its alleged monuments are concerned, is that far too many of its statues and memorials commemorate, what Shelley calls, "the illustrious obscure." Oliver Goldsmith put the matter wittily when he said: "I remember that many of the statues were made by little Roubiliac, but I do not remember the names of the great people he commemorated."

Cumbersome statues to forgotten and half-forgotten admirals and generals, fulsome memorials to little people with great titles, occupy too much floor space. Anne Bracegirdle, a once-popular actress, has her memorial. The great Oliver Cromwell was buried there, but at the "glorious Restoration" his dead body was disinterred and actually hanged at Tyburn. At a much later date the poet Swinburne was refused burial there. The reason given was that the Abbey was already over-crowded. The real reason, however, was that Swinburne was a Freethinker and Republican; for room was found at that time for the remains of the wife of one of their own archdeacons, a blameless nonentity.

Keats and Shelley, two of the greatest of our poets, have no memorials in the Abbey, for both were Freethinkers; but Longfellow, who was not even an Englishman, is duly celebrated. What pleased the clergy was that Longfellow never wrote a line that could not be chanted in a Sunday school. When Swinburne was accused by Robert Buchanan of audacity in his writings, his reply was: "I do not write for school-girls. I leave that to the Buchanans." Even Swinburne was not so audacious as William Congreve, the most licentious of the Restoration dramatists, who has his due monument in this "House of God."

Yet there are very ironical exceptions. One of the greatest opponents of Christian teaching was Charles Darwin. He devoted thirty years of his life to proving that the dogma of the fall of man was unscientific. He did not attack the Church, but his explanation showed that it was extensively in error. His reward was to be buried with extreme honour in the Abbey, his pallbearers including Huxley and the most eminent English scientists. Why was Darwin accorded this honour, when even Byron, the only poet beside Shakespeare who has a European reputation, was denied the right of entry to this Valhalla?

The answer plucks the secret from the puzzling conduct of these priests. Their desire was to make their shrine an attractive place, with some claim to be a national Valhalla. This could not be achieved by burying respectable nobodies, and an archdeacon's wife, in the sacred building. Keats, Shelley, and Swinburne were all fiery Freethinkers or Red Republicans, but Darwin was a scientific investigator, and, in any case, his work was unfamiliar to Christian congregations. So the tragic-comedy was played through of burying the great man in the "sure and certain hope" of a creed he had smiled at whilst he was alive, and thus give the lie direct to his life's work:—

To what damned deeds religion urges men.

Indeed, Lucretius's caustic line is the most fitting to commemorate such a piece of hypocrisy and humbug.

Who will civilize our boasted civilization? In a real Valhalla a niche should be found to record the intrepidity of a Richard Burton, the linguist and traveller, and another for Charles Bradlaugh, the Tribune of the People. Why should George Meredith be neglected, whilst half-forgotten poetasters are commemorated? And why should Sigmund Freud go unrecognized? In his lifetime he revolutionized our knowledge of the human brain, a triumph of scientific investigation of no less importance than that of Darwin's. But the priests who control the Abbey's destinies are fanatics. Science is a closed book to them; the petty quarrels of creeds are important events; culture is an affair of the old school-tie; their knowledge of progress is confined to a mere suspicion that there is such a thing. There are so many things these "sons-of-God" do not know. The passion for humanity; the stern resolve to see justice done though the sky falls; the larger world beyond their cloister walls. That is why these men thought more of the burial of their archdeacon's wife than of the commemoration of Shelley and Keats, two of the finest singers of a thousand years of their country's literature.

The plain truth is that a National Valhalla should be under the control of the State, and not of a purely sectarian body such as the Anglican Church. The rule should be that any man or woman achieving worthy eminence should be commemorated. To exclude Herbert Spencer, the philosopher, and to honour a parson's widow, is to excite derision. As it is, the Anglican hierarchy has a second Valhalla in St. Paul's Cathedral, which acts as an "overflow" from



the Abbey at Westminster. Wellington is buried there, and a number of journalists have a brass memorial. But where is the monument to William T. Stead, one of the bravest of the brave, and of G. W. M. Reynolds, who kept the flag of Democracy flying during the dark days of distress and reaction? Where is the memorial to Charles Scott, of the *Manchester Guardian*, one of the very greatest of English editors? To enquire too closely would be almost cruel, for it would show that, under purely clerical control, the so-called National Valhallas have no more claim to such an august title than a travelling wax-work exhibition, which shows the models of the notorieties of the day, without a thought as to what the morrow may bring. What is needed is a building to commemorate England's worthies, freed entirely from sectarian and priestly control, so that our greatest citizens can "rule us from their urns":—

With the sound of those they wrought for,  
And the feet of those they fought for,  
Echoing round their tombs for evermore.

MIMNERMUS

## Heresy and Heterodoxy

THE Head-Master of Alleyn's School—my own Alma mater—made an interesting contribution to the Twenty-Sixth Annual Conference of Modern Churchmen (reported in the current *Modern Churchman*). Mr. Henderson's paper is called *Tests for Orthodoxy*.

Apparently Mr. Henderson has an unorthodox definition of "Heresy," and it should be said that he shows an exceptional toleration to "Heretics," which almost excuses his discrimination between Heretics and the Unorthodox. In any case toleration is much appreciated in these days of Totalitarianism.

All the same we must register a mild protest against what we consider a purely academic definition of Heresy. Mr. Henderson is, of course, right in his etymology when he says that Heresy means "choosing" and that (if that were the full and only definition of Heresy) a Heretic can be perfectly orthodox. And this merely because a Heretic may choose the same alternative, which the Orthodox have adopted on purely authoritarian grounds. You see a Heretic is heretical because he chooses for himself, even if he "chooses" exactly what he is compelled to believe. What the Orthodox hate—and persecute if they can—is that a man does not accept anything without investigation and reason or weighing of evidence. If Mr. Henderson's desire is to encourage consideration and logic and a profound regard for truth, we are wholly with him.

Probably Mr. Henderson implies that we are orthodox if (for instance) we accept authoritative scientific theories without individually "proving" them for ourselves. It seems, however, straining a definition to imply that the Professors and students who agree with a theory only after careful study are "Heretics" in regard to a theory which some of them devote their lives to propagate.

We prefer the ordinary dictionary meaning of "heretic":—

The adoption and maintenance of opinions contrary to the authorized teaching of the religious community . . . an opinion adopted for oneself in opposition to the usual belief . . . heterodoxy.

(*Chambers' Dictionary*)

Perhaps people use the word "heresy" when they mean "heterodoxy"—a small point of little practical

importance, considering the ghastly persecutions to which unorthodox opinions have been subjected for many centuries. We may say that heretics (whatever name is given them) are those who can be proved to hold opinions contradicting or modifying opinions held by those in authority.

As to the question, "Can a heretic be a saint?" Mr. Henderson says "the answer is easy." We hope and believe that Mr. Henderson means it is beyond dispute that the ethical standard (and practice) of heretics has never been inferior to that of those the Church calls "saints." If anyone doubts this axiomatic truth "the answer is easy."

But, says Mr. Henderson, "Good-will, benevolence, is not enough of itself to ensure good living. There must be right-thinking also." As it stands, Mr. Henderson's remark does not admit of dispute. But what does Mr. Henderson mean by "right thinking"? Right-thinking about what?

Other things being equal, it is obvious that a man may have quite a lot of "wrong thinking" about Astronomy, Geology, the rotundity of the earth, and even the law of gravitation—and yet may perform with enviable satisfactoriness all the duties and opportunities of ordinary decent human intercourse. I knew a native of a small Algerian village who thought that England was in the U.S.A. (I have since then met a Londoner who thought the U.S.A. was in the British Empire). The Algerian was a charming and gifted French writer.

All the theologians I have known mean *theological* "right thinking" when they speak of "right thinking." Mr. Henderson may be right about what point of view, what principle or method of approach is essential to membership of any particular society. He has an undisputed right to suggest the "terms on which men and women, boys and girls—should be allowed to enter and to remain in the church." Accordingly the Head-Master addresses himself to the difficult or impossible task of "trying to see what the New Testament has to teach us about the infallible signs of orthodoxy." Mr. Henderson ignores the Old Testament, dismisses the Gospels with a haughty gesture, and turns with natural discretion to St. Paul! After all St. Paul's teaching from the earliest days, completely obliterated all but the worst of the alleged doctrines of Christ, and has been the basis of all the Christian Creeds.

The damnation of heretics (Mark xvi. 16) and other similar hatefulness MAY have been interpolations. Pauline (or post-Pauline) scribes were opposed to the alleged "Gentle Jesus Meek and Mild." All the same Mr. Henderson ought to remember that the Bible as it stands—"with all its imperfections on its head" is the real basis—and therefore the test—of orthodoxy.

"The main purpose of the Church," says Mr. Henderson, "is nothing more nor less than the propagation of the Spirit of God." If so there is no "purpose"—main or otherwise—in any organization with so entirely indefinite and useless a creed. We lay aside for the moment the Materialist objections to gods and spirits. It is more to the point to ask whether there ever was any kind of primitive barbaric "heathen"—however ignorant, however fanatic—whose aim (expressed in his native dialect) would not prove on analysis to be exactly this "propagation of the spirit" of his god? It is this "spirit of God" which has "inspired" ancient Medicine Men and their more modern imitators to strive after the eradication of "heretical" principles.

We welcome Mr. Henderson's frank words about all the Creeds of his church:—



One may question whether a single theologian who had a hand in them at the time of their formulation could honestly subscribe to them if he were living to-day.

Even so we may rejoice that they are NOT living to-day. Mankind is all the better for having survived the authors of the silliest dogmas that ever served as barriers to human liberty, fraternity and truth.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH

## Let us give thanks unto the Lord

"All is safely gathered in" they are singing in the tabernacles. Every year they sing it with a supreme disdain as to whether the harvest has been good, moderate or calamitous. This attitude is only one of the "reeling subversions," that John Galsworthy called attention to as characteristic of the Christian creed. The state of the "table" depends upon the Harvest. Man must eat in order that he may live. But an "Act of God" can deplete his "table" to a dangerous extent. No matter! Let us meet together in our Churches and, at least, refrain from annoying God. Let us thank him when there is nothing or little to thank him for. Let us beware lest God be even more niggardly next year. Let us sing cheerfully, "All is safely gathered in," even though it be a plain lie. It is better that we lie than run the risk of offending God. God loves praise and is no stickler for fine points. As Huxley put it, "Beloved Brethren, in order that we may be spotlessly moral, before all things let us lie."

But this is a Christian nation, and this year this Christian nation is at war with other Christian nations, engaged in killing, either quickly or by the slower method of starvation, the creatures that are made in the image of God. It is imperative therefore that this year the Lord help us with a good harvest in order that we may be able to circumvent the devil in the shape of the depredations of the U Boats. So we have been praying rather more sincerely than usual for a bumper harvest. This in addition to the prayers in the Litany that roll up to the Throne of Grace with wearisome iteration.

That it may please thee to give and preserve to our use the kindly fruits of the earth so as in due time we may enjoy them.

We beseech thee to hear us good Lord.

And at the same time we have chanted:—

From lightning and tempest, from plagues, pestilence and famine, from battle and murder and from sudden death.

Good Lord deliver us.

There appears to have been some faint-heartedness about the petition as regards "battle, murder, and sudden death," for we do know that in some way or another that prayer has gone "aglee." As all things asked in prayer, offered with "faith," are answered; we can only conclude that such a petition has been put up without any real faith. Such cannot be said in the present circumstances about praying for a good harvest; those prayers have been sincere enough and God has answered them. Our harvest this year has, to all accounts, been highly satisfactory.

There is an element in English Law which stipulates that in any agreement nothing can be done, whether specifically stated in that agreement or not, which would render the concession granted of "no

avail." For instance, a Contract to deliver 100 gallons of milk daily at the Elysium Dairy, would not permit of the milk to be delivered there by spilling it upon the ground floor of that building. This way of reading the agreement would render the concession granted to be "of no avail," and it is felt that in equity such a construction put upon the letter of the bond would not be permissible. That is equity, however, as man understands it; it is not equity as God understands it. Man wants a good harvest this year, more particularly in order to defeat the wicked machinations of the enemy. God grants the Englishman his prayer, knowing what he means when he is praying, and why he is praying for it. But, alas, in Germany, they also pray for a good harvest, and they, too, receive it. Answering both prayers is much the same thing in the special circumstances, as answering neither.

We know, of course, that the prayers of a *righteous* man availeth much, and we are puzzled why God didn't take advantage of this "escape" clause and give the Germans a lean year. But the facts are that the Germans are particularly satisfied with the results of their prayers this year for their harvest. The Spiritual Council of the German Evangelical Church prepared a "Harvest Thanksgiving Proclamation," which was read in all the German Churches on October 1. It contains the following:—

The God who watches over the destinies of nations has this year blessed us German people with another harvest, no less rich. . . .

We thank God that He gave a speedy victory to our arms.

We thank him that he has allowed age-old Germans to return to the Fatherland, and that our German brothers, henceforth free, can sing hymns of praise to God, in their mother language. . . .

How could one be grateful enough to God for this?

And Hitler, and other leading Germans, have expressed themselves on their liberal harvest with a becoming piety.

We put it that this kind of answer to prayer is distressingly inadequate. God can answer prayers in as ingenious and unhumorous a way as a lawyer can find the track for a coach and four through an Act of Parliament.

Farmer Giles sits in his pew and listens to the thanks going up to God for the fine harvest. Thoughts are bound occasionally to glimmer as to where he and his labourers come in. He remembers how by doubling his men and allowing friendly helpers to give a hand, they got in the grain just "in the nick of me." For within an hour of it being "safely gathered in," there came that downpour which would have reduced his year's work to nil. Down in the little chapel in Cornwall sits Briggs, the Market Gardener, who wonders where his cabbages would have been if the Act of God in the shape of myriads of the larvae of the Cabbage White hadn't been picked off the leaves for "fun" by one of God's visitations in the district of hundreds of evacuated children. How good of God to send these children far away from their fathers and mothers, and interrupt their education, in order to crush and kill this divine visitation upon man's food—millions of clever, mobile and devilishly hungry caterpillars.

However all is now safely gathered in, and in spite of God's curious impartiality, it might have been worse. "All is safely gathered in." This means that all that is safely gathered in, is safely gathered in. That is, when little difficulties in the shape of God's blasts, God's rain at the wrong times, God's heat when it wasn't wanted, God's tricks with the



temperature, God's plant diseases in their infinite variety, God's insects in their billions of billions—after all these Acts of God have taken their toll. When man by his intelligence has circumvented in part these difficulties, what is left after the difficult and uneven conflict, is *gathered in*. What is gathered in, is all that is left after God has done his worst.

And then (Hurrah!) everything is ready for Man's Table. Well, not quite! Into the granaries all over the kingdom, walks another of God's little creations, the Granary Weevil, perhaps the most destructive, certainly one of the most destructive insects, and devours the food of the Paragon of Animals. Man has the job of circumventing him as well, but he only does his best. Man puts up a game fight though, and, as the years go by and knowledge grows from more to more, man may win decisively the fight against the Granary Weevil and all their tribe, and the food supply of man will be to that extent increased. May, one must say, for the fight is a serious one and the issue is still undecided. If Man is going to come out conqueror in the war against the Acts of God, it is going to be brought about by the closest scientific application to the thousand and one complex problems involved. It entails the taking of eyes from the heavens and the fixing of them on earth. It certainly is not going to be done by thanking God for the work he does not do. The work is not going to be helped by neglecting to give thanks where thanks are due; the withholding of reasonable tribute to those who have, for the sake of man, been soldiers for thousands of years in this fight against terribly disheartening circumstances. Come, let us thank great men! Luther Burbank, Professor L. O. Howard, thousands of lesser-known research men in scientific laboratories all over the world. And Farmer Giles, bless him! Even a spot of gratitude for the Farmer's Boy, the boy with the rattle that frightens off God's Crows.

T. H. ELSTON

## John Morley as a Freethinker

(Reprinted, *The Freethinker*, 1892)

MR. JOHN MORLEY is now the most distinguished statesmen in the Liberal Party after Mr. Gladstone, who continues to wield an incontestible ascendancy. Mr. Morley's rise has been rapid and secure. His position was a firm one before the recent election at Newcastle, and the result of that election has made it still firmer. If a man's enemies fail to overthrow him, they almost invariably heighten his power and reputation.

It is beyond our province in this journal to criticize Mr. Morley as a statesman. We only desire to write about him as a Freethinker. Our object is to give our readers some idea of his views on religion, and on others matters affected by it.

Mr. Morley resembles Charles Bradlaugh in one respect; he is to a great extent a disciple of John Stuart Mill, whom he has described as "the wisest man I ever knew, or am ever likely to know." He is also, but to a less extent, a disciple of Auguste Comte; and we believe he is not averse to being called a Positivist.

John Stuart Mill was a complete sceptic with regard to Christianity, nor had he any positive belief in Theism. He thought there *might* be a God of limited power and wisdom, but certainly not a deity who is all-wise and all-good. Auguste Comte went farther. While opposed to continued critical attacks on theology, he still set it resolutely aside as a mark of the childish stage of human development. He proposed

to reorganize Society without God and without King by the systematic cultus of Humanity. "All theological tendencies," said Comte, "whether Catholic, Protestant, or Deist, really serve to prolong and aggravate our moral anarchy." He even denied sincerity to the more zealous theological partisans. "God to them," he said, "is but the nominal chief of a hypocritical conspiracy, a conspiracy which is even more contemptible than it is odious. Their object is to keep the people from all great social improvements by assuring them that they will find compensation for their miseries in an imaginary future life."

During Mr. Morley's editorship of the *Fortnightly Review*, it was the organ of the most advanced minds in England. Mill, Tyndall, Harrison, Huxley, and Clifford contributed to its pages. Clifford took to spelling God with a small g, and the *Spectator* retaliated by spelling Clifford with a small c.

A great deal of Mr. Morley's best writing appeared in the *Fortnightly*. Profoundly attracted by the great men who prepared the French mind for the Revolution, he composed admirable monographs on Turgot, Condorcet, Rousseau, Voltaire, and Diderot—besides minor studies of such moralists as Vauvenargues. Most of them, if not all, have been republished. Rousseau and Voltaire have a volume each, and two volumes are devoted to Diderot.

Mr. Morley's is the best book by an Englishman on Voltaire. Without glossing over Voltaire's failings, he sees in the Heresiarch of Ferney a brilliant liberator of the human spirit, and a resolute friend of the victims of injustice and oppression. He does honour to Voltaire's heroism in the vindication of Calas, and defends him from the charge of levity, brought against him by men without a tithe of his passion for humanity. He justifies Voltaire's attack on the superstition of his age, and points out that he never ridiculed men of sincerity, who lived good lives in spite of a barbarous faith. But it can hardly be said that Mr. Morley is quite successful in his purely literary criticism of Voltaire. Strange as it may appear to Mr. Morley's enemies, he is overweighted by his convictions; and thus he brings a too great seriousness to the treatment of Voltaire's lighter and more fantastic work. When the great wit deliberately skins an enemy alive, it spoils the sport to be too considerate of the loftier motives of philosophy. The performance is done with such exquisite skill, and in nearly every case the victim deserved skinning.

Mr. Morley's study of Diderot is more satisfactory. Diderot was more a thinker than a *litterateur*. His was a mind of extraordinary fecundity. Comte called him the greatest genius of the eighteenth century, and certainly his anticipations of the leading ideas of modern Evolution were simply marvellous. Diderot was an Atheist, and it is difficult to read Mr. Morley's book without feeling that he is in thorough sympathy with the great Frenchman's rejection of all forms of supernaturalism. In one sentence, at any rate, he speaks out clearly and decisively. Referring to the "licentiousness from which the philosophic party did not escape untainted," he perceives in it "one of those drawbacks that people seldom take into account when they are enumerating the blessings of superstition." "Durable morality," he remarks, "had been associated with a transitory religious faith. The faith fell into intellectual discredit, and sexual morality shared in its decline for a season. This must always be the natural consequence of building sound ethics on the shifting sands and rotten foundations of the theology."

This is sufficient reply to those who would make out Mr. Morley to be, in a certain sense, a friend of religion. If religion means supernaturalism, he is profoundly irreligious. Nothing could be more stern



and sweeping than the close of that last sentence—the *shifting sands and rotten foundations of theology*.

Being so far gone himself on "the road to ruin"—as pious persons would call it—Mr. Morley does not lose his head for a moment in his long and fine chapter on Holbach's *System of Nature*. "It gathered up," he says, "all the scattered explosives of the criticisms of the century into one thundering engine of revolt and destruction." He perceives its defects, but he is also sensible of its merits. He especially praises "the inexorable logic with which the author presses the Free-Willer from one retreat to another, and from shift to shift," leaving him at last "naked and defenceless before Holbach's vigorous and thoroughly realized Naturalism." He also remarks that, in the chapter on the Immortality of the Soul, Holbach "examines this memorable growth of human belief with great vigour, and a most destructive penetration." Above all he points out the great ideas of political progress that were an inseparable part of Holbach's Atheism. The denunciation of the social evil of superstition is "an incessant refrain that sounds with hoarse ground-tone under all the ethics and the metaphysics of the book."

Mr. Morley pays a very high tribute to Diderot's herculean labours on the *Encyclopaedia*, for which he received—this mercenary Atheist!—the prodigal salary of about £130 a year. It was a project that "rallied all that was then best in France round the standard of light and social hope." Mr. Morley concludes his able instructive and beautiful chapter on the *Encyclopaedia* with the following passage, which is a good specimen of his best style:—

As I replace in my shelves this mountain of volumes, "dusky and huge, enlarging on the sight," I have a presentiment that their pages will seldom again be disturbed by me or by others. They served a great purpose a hundred years ago. They are now a monumental ruin, clothed with all the profuse associations of history. It is no Ozymandias of Egypt, king of kings, whose wrecked shape of stone and sterile memories we contemplate. We think rather of the gray and crumbling walls of an ancient stronghold, reared by the endeavour of stout hands and faithful, whence in its own day and generation a band once went forth against barbarous hordes, to strike a blow for humanity and truth.

The last chapter of Mr. Morley's book on Diderot closes with a translation of one of the great Frenchman's noblest pieces of writing. Diderot had been pleading for that fecund immortality which prolongs our personality in the grateful memories of those who come after us. His friend Falconet had replied in the spirit of another Frenchman who, on being told he should do something for posterity, inquired what posterity had ever done for him. Diderot "with redoubled eloquence, rising to his noblest height," replied as follows:—

The present is an indivisible point that cuts in two the length of an infinite line. It is impossible to rest on this point and to glide gently along with it, never looking on in front, and never turning the head to gaze behind. The more man ascends through the past, and the more he launches into the future—the greater he will be. . . . And all these philosophers, and ministers, and truth-telling men, who have fallen victims to the stupidity of nations, the atrocities of priests, the fury of tyrants, what consolation was left for them in death? This, that prejudice would pass, and that posterity would pour out the vial of ignominy upon their enemies. O posterity, holy and sacred! Stay of the unhappy and the oppressed, thou who art just, thou who art incorruptible, who avengest the good man, who unmasked the hypocrite, who draggest down the tyrant, may thy sure faith,

thy consoling faith, never, never abandon me! Posterity is for the philosopher what the other world is for the devout!

It is reasonable to assume that Mr. Morley shares this noble sentiment with Diderot. He also looks for no supernatural immortality, but aspires to join "the choir invisible whose music is the gladness of the world." He labours for the future by serving the present; and doubtless the hope of brightening and elevating, however little, the life of unborn generations of his fellows, is to him an ample substitute for the more selfish inspirations of faith.

G. W. FOOTE

(To be concluded)

## Acid Drops

*The Patriot* says that what must be done is to bring together all believers in God whether Christian, Mohammedan or others against Atheists. Well, if that could be accomplished we think we should be inclined to advise all Freethinkers to cease operations and sit back while the godites slaughtered each other. What a slaughter there would be! At the end all the Freethinkers would have to do would be to devise some plan for disposing of the corpses.

But the godites include the much greater proportion of Hitler's followers, and also Hitler himself, for he has declared many times that God has selected him for his job. And we believe that his warranty is as reliable as that given to the public by the Archbishop of Canterbury. What a book might be made on the subject, "Men whom God has called?" We have no time to write the book, but we would cheerfully help others by way of an outline and various suggestions.

The Ministry of Information, which has not come well out of the war, except in the direction of making itself an exhibition of ineptitude, has now sent a circular letter to the clergy announcing that it intends establishing a censorship of Parish Magazines. Meanwhile nothing is being done to prevent newspapers and politicians informing Hitler that we are at war with Germany, and mean to beat him. Yet this is giving the enemy very valuable information. But for the newspapers Hitler might never have known we were at war with him, and the information that "oor Jock" had been sent to France must have helped the enemy a lot.

The *North Mail*, noting the "solemnity" of the enthronement of the new Bishop of Sheffield, says that:—

The distant sound of bands and marching soldiers, sandbags protecting treasures of the Cathedral, air-raid shelters in the Cathedral yard, and the fact that many of the clergy and people were carrying gas-masks were reminders that the Bishop was being called to his high office in an apocalyptic day.

But what one would like to know is whether the "fixings"—gas-masks, sandbags, etc.—would have been any different had the occasion been the opening of a sports club? We have no doubt but that all the worshippers in the Cathedral were quite convinced that they were under the protection of God. The etceteras were merely ornamental adjuncts. All the same God might mistake them for evidence that his worshippers were not quite so certain of his help as might be.

The Very Rev. W. J. Margetson, M.A., is telling the readers of the *Church of England Newspaper* "What Is God Saying about the Present Conflict?" This very rev. gent. imitates Charlie McCarthy—minus the wit which has made McCarthy the most famous ventriloquial doll in all history. Unfortunately, instead of "God" speaking (without opening His lips of course) Mr. Margetson repeated only the words of the Devil—for all the world as if the Devil were the ventriloquist:—



"You forget," said the devil, "I too am evolving."

The parson does not explain why he lets the Devil's seem to be "his master's voice," nor does he fulfil the promise of his title. We have therefore to fall back on an earlier Charlie McCarthy, for instance Hosea xiii. 7-8, or Ezekiel vi. 12-13. For further specimens see *The Bible Handbook* collection of God's Sayings.

The Rev. James Mackay has got things a little mixed. Writing in the *Christian World*, he says that the story of Noah's Ark has an "abiding value." It has, but we do not see how that helps a Christian minister. God drowned the world because it was wicked. But the chief survivor got drunk immediately afterwards, and the world that followed the flood was worse than the one that preceded it. Eventually God had to send a third of himself to get crucified as part of some plan to again save the world. And the new world has just culminated in a second world-war in the course of a second generation. So we do not see exactly where the flood comes in as containing a lesson of "abiding value"—unless it is that the less we leave arrangements to God the better.

Mr. T. S. Eliot has written a book envisaging a "Christian" England entitled, *The Idea of a Christian Society*. We are very clearly given to understand that though quite Christian in this England "nothing is intended like a rule of saints." This is a great relief, as if we had been expected to emulate some of the rather unsavoury practices of most of the saints there would have to be a general exodus into some cleaner and happier land. We are also told that there would be a place for everybody—including Agnostics." To allow, in this kind way, English "Agnostics"—and presumably also "Atheists"—to live in their own country, is a magnificent example of true Christian tolerance for which Mr. Eliot and those who think like him ought to be duly praised. A pious reviewer concludes his summing-up with the comforting assurance that the book "is anything but dull, nor is the argument at all difficult to follow." Mr. Eliot, we hope, will be duly grateful for this fine and illuminating piece of criticism.

In his Presidential Address to the Diocesan Conference the new Bishop of London, after giving details of some harrowing difficulties which the Church is facing in these troublous times, declared he was no pessimist—that "the Church as a whole was more coherent, more solid so far as it does extend, more ready for trial, more attentive to what God would say, more worshipful than for a long time past." We expect all these things happened because Dr. Fisher was made Bishop of London, and he had to cheer his hearers up somehow. However, he made up for his praise by admitting that "by the measure of a man, it falls far short of its profession and of its opportunity, and by the measure of Christ we all know full well how much we fail." But one thing also is certain—by the measure of the War, the Church, God and Jesus are utterly helpless and useless. But Dr. Fisher did not tell his hearers that.

Some of the German papers quite enthusiastically gave God the credit of saving that other Deity, Hitler, from the recent bomb explosion, and it is quite probable that Hitler himself—for he has never renounced his religion—thinks it is true. However, the *Universe*, we notice, is very quick to spot any other Nazi leader who is religious, and proudly boasts of Herr von Papen, the gentleman who has always failed in everything, as being devout, and one who never misses Mass. The *Universe* also points out that Dr. Goebbels "owes at least part of his education to religious" [?] and Hess was certainly a Catholic, as well as Henlein, the Sudeten German leader. A little Catholic bunch of notables to be proud of, of course.

How many people have been identified as the "beast" of Revelations we cannot compute, but it is a fact that as soon as Christians begin to hate somebody very much, that somebody is almost sure to be bracketed with the balderdash which John or somebody of the same name wrote in the last book in the Bible. The "villain" of

the piece was endowed with the magic number 666, and this number has been given to dozens of people ranging from Nero to Napoleon III. as well as to the ex-Kaiser William. Needless to say Hitler's number on some absurd system also comes out as 666—so obviously he is the beast referred to in Revelations. We shouldn't think it was necessary to go to that piece of insanity to prove that Hitler was a beast.

You have deceived a very worthy young man who, up to then, had lived an honourable and Christian life.

You seduced him—of that I have little doubt. I cannot sentence you for that. That must be a matter for your conscience.

Thus spake Mr. Justice Croom-Johnson at Devon Assizes to Mrs. Lilian M. H. Carter, aged 44, whom he sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment for obtaining money under false pretences. The "very worthy young man" of "honourable and Christian life" so cruelly "seduced" is aged 38! (Let there be no mistake: *thirty-eight*). Furthermore, he is a married man, his wife in Paris; which did not prevent him living with Mrs. Carter and having a child by her. In order to keep the "young" man's affections and to supply him with funds for a mission (ah, now we're getting "warm"! ) Mrs. Carter, a mere domestic servant, defrauded people of "thousands of pounds." Charged with conspiracy and receiving £380 of the haul, the man was acquitted on the judge's ruling. So far, so ill.

The "mission" referred to above has the beatific aim of "Promoting Christianity Among the Jews" (complete with capitals). And the "missioner?" Oskar Henrys Prentki, an infant of 38 as aforesaid. *But*, though still of Polish nationality, an ordained deacon and priest of the Church of England! And for some time time assistant chaplain at the British Embassy in Paris.

While about a hundred women (the British United Press doesn't mention any men) were praying in a Bucharest Church, six masked bandits, with drawn revolvers, searched them and took their purses and jewellery. The priest summoned the police, but the robbers escaped. All that power of prayer and intercession without "summoning" God? Verily, this contretemps combined with the Almighty's deafness to the heavy bombardment of prayers for peace from Christians everywhere testifies to a shocking lack of "Faith"—obviously not enough to cover the proverbial mustard-seed.

## Twenty Five Years Ago

TALKING about being fair, even to the enemy, we venture to warn our readers once more against the moral danger of a false patriotism which follows so easily from a state of war, and from the partisan news which appears in all our daily papers. Everybody has seen some of the clever Berlin caricatures. They make many Englishmen angry—which, of course, is their object; they make other Englishmen laugh, for, after all, the world is too dull a place to lose a good joke in, even at our own expense. Now there are Germans, as well as Englishmen, who are angry about these caricatures. Here is a letter from a German officer to the *Cologne Gazette* on this matter—reaching us through the *Westminster Gazette* :—

In distributing the post to the troops I have again and again noticed postcards which, in vulgar fashion, exhibited contempt of the French, English, and Russians, whom we have beaten. The effect of these postcards upon our men is very remarkable. Practically all of them expressed their disgust, and I have even seen a soldier with tears in his eyes. We see how victories are won, and with what enormous sacrifices. We see the unspeakable misery of the battlefield. We rejoice indeed over the victories, but our joy is mitigated by the memory of the sad pictures which we have almost every day before our eyes. Our enemies, moreover, have, in truth, not earned such ridicule. If they had not fought so bravely we should not have had such losses.

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# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- "LIBERTY" (Preston).—There is no need for an apology. In these matters all that is needed is that each should help. Thanks.
- G. H. CALDWELL.—We are obliged for addresses. Papers have been sent.
- A. B. McDONALD (S.A.).—Sorry to hear you have been unwell, but the times are a tax on one's nerves, to say nothing of normal liabilities. And the abnormal strain does not, at the moment, look as though it is going to be a very brief one.
- H. G. MURRAY.—Please make yourself known when we come to Glasgow on the 26th.
- H. G. NEWLOVE.—It is gratifying to know that the paper has been of so much help to you.
- J. HAYES AND R. BROOKS.—Thanks for addresses of likely new readers; paper being sent for four weeks.
- J. SPENCE.—Our paragraph dealing with Mr. Wells was not concerned with whether he did or did not adopt a "specificism." It was concerned with his preference of "Monism," a term which covers anything from "matter" to "spirit," and therefore stands for nothing in particular, and his repudiation of "Materialism," a repudiation clearly based on an outworn conception of "matter."
- C. F. BUDGE.—Probably both influences are at work, but we would say that the second carries most weight with the combatants.
- M. VANSTONE (Teignmouth).—Crowded out; will be noticed next week.
- "LEERIE 64."—We appreciate the dilemma you state. The application of force always involves a cost to those who use it. But there are situations where there is no alternative, and the real question is then "In a given situation does the use of force introduce a greater danger than it removes?" Take the case of a man who is brutally beating a child, and there is no other means of preventing the brutality.
- D. KNIGHT.—Pleased you find this journal a "weekly stimulus." That is one of its principal functions.
- A. CORRICK.—We are not "hurrying" with the book. A detailed study of the Jewish religion would come as part of the study of religion in general. The difference between the Jewish religion and others are not of fundamental importance. What is called the "Jewish question" is really a sociological problem. So far as that involves religious beliefs, the way to end it is the same as in questions where any form of religious belief enters—end the belief in that religion. We are dealing with that aspect in the book.
- F. G. WEBB.—We recall the incident. Arthur B. Moss was a very faithful and a very loyal servant of the Freethought cause. We were proud of his friendship and confidence.
- 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.**
- Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.**
- Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. and not to the Editor.**
- 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.**
- 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.**
- 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.**
- Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, by the first post on Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.**

## "Jubilee Freethinker Fund"

THIS issue of the Freethinker goes to press some days before the date fixed for the closing of the Fund, so other letters may be in the post. We may make a final statement next week. Meanwhile we think that many of our readers may be as pleased to read some of the letters of subscribers as we have been to receive them. One from Mr. E. A. McDonald, for example, who writes from South Africa:—

In forwarding the enclosed sum of Five Guineas for the dear old *Freethinker*, I am performing a duty which is a real pleasure. I am confident that there are enough lovers of freedom in the English-speaking world to keep the paper going in these trying times, and whatever sacrifices we of the rank and file may make are as nothing to the example you have given us in your long career in the employment of talents which must have won you fame in the sphere of commercial journalism. That is the glory of the Freethought movement, that all along there have been men and women who have ignored the seductions of profit, and have generously lent their gifts to the service of truth and human emancipation. This is evidence of a sublime and inspiring faith in the potentialities for improvement of our fellows, a faith which the supporters of dogma find it difficult to understand. Long live the Editor of the *Freethinker*, and may his example lead to a worthy and equally disinterested successor! I have been a reader of the paper for close on forty years, and never for a moment has my interest dwindled. I am assuredly in good company in acknowledging my indebtedness to your work, and I don't care if I bring a blush to your cheek in saying so!

C. Hay, a reader for forty-five years, hopes that our health and strength will stand the strain of the present difficult times. We can only say that we feel quite well, and can, at present, not spare the time to be otherwise. Mr. D. W. Allan wishes to place on record his high appreciation of the *Freethinker*, and thinks "its contributors form a rare combination, and, with yourself as chief guide, would be difficult to match in the realm of thought."

One whose name is never absent when help is needed, Mr. S. Clowes, writes: "The good old paper must not be allowed to die—it won't while you are alive, that's certain—and it must not place too many difficulties in your path. You have enough of them without having others hanging round your neck." We can assure Mr. Clowes that we are not at all downhearted about what will happen while we are alive or when we are dead. Causes that are worth while do not die easily, and if we can make it easier for our successor, so much the better.

We have often referred to the way in which the late Bishop of London let his imagination run with regard to his devastating effects on Atheism in East London while we were busy in Victoria Park. Never very reliable in his statements, the Bishop felt himself quite safe when he was talking about Freethinkers. This has always been the ground on which Christian advocates have held an unlimited licence for lying. But here is at least one example—we could give more—in which one of Mr. Ingram's "hopefuls" was saved. Enclosing a cheque for Two Guineas A. J. H. writes:—

I first heard you in Victoria Park, over forty years ago, when I was attending the Christian Evidence platform. I was at that time horrified at your impiety and wondered the Lord did not strike you down. I have since been convinced that he held his all-powerful hand in order that you might lead me to the truth. At that time I was one of the hopes of A. W. Ingram. How I disappointed him. May



you continue long at hammering the Christian position.

At the risk of being counted conceited we may be permitted to wonder at the array of "scalps" we should be able to show if we were to catalogue the number of men and women we have "saved" during the past fifty years.

Previously acknowledged, £445 8s. 6d.; E. A. Macdonald, £5 5s.; C. Hay, £1; Per Nelson N.S.S. Branch (J. E. Edwards 10s., O. E. Fer, £1, F. Griffiths 3s. 6d., E. Sherrocks 3s., Mate 6d., A. H. Jones 2s. 6d., A. Rich 2s. 6d., E. Hughes 2s. 6d., A. Edward 2s. 6d., H. Stavin 2s. 6d., J. Williams 2s. 6d., H. Trichey 2s. 6d., J. Watson 3s. 6d., Eon 5s., J. N. Davies 2s. 6d., W. T. Dood 5s., and A. D. Hodgkinson 10s.), £4 0s. 6d.; T. Walmsley, £1; Liberty (Pres-ton), 10s.; R. Bordon, 2s. 6d.; Ismaelite (2nd sub.), 2s. 6d.; D. W. Allan, 5s.; W. K. Huty, 10s.; A. J., £2; N. Higham, 2s. 6d.; S. Clowes, £1 1s.; H. J. H., 2s. 6d.; H. G. Newlove, £1; Islay Freethinker, 2s. 6d.; Canonicus, 10s. 6d.; G. L. Jones, 2s. 6d.; G. Cowan, £5; Ismaelite (3rd sub.), 2s. 6d.; J. Aitken, 7s. 10d.; H. M. Scott, 5s.; G. Hooker, 5s. 3d.; F. G. Webb, 5s.; C. F. Simpson, £2 2s.; J. Bleckley, M.A., and A. C. Williams, 10s.; R. E. Cronin, 10s.; A. Beale, 7s. 6d.; A. X., 5s.; T. Borland, £1; H. Harvey, £1; E. Payne, 5s.; P. Trower, 5s.; A. E. Fabray, 2s. 6d.; W. W. Pearce (2nd sub.), £1; J. Ralston, 10s.; F. Barwick, 7s. 6d.; Rachael and Gilbert Blue, £1, F. A. Marshall, 5s.; E. Johnson, 2s. Total, £479 2s. 7d.

*Corrections*—H. Harvey acknowledged £1 should have been £2; E. Johnson £2 should have been £2 2s. Omissions included in above list.

The above represent sums received up to and including November 21. We shall be obliged if errors either in names or amounts are pointed out.

CHAPMAN COHEN

## Sugar Plums

To-day (November 26) Mr. Cohen will speak in the Central Hall, Bath Street, Glasgow. The larger hall usually occupied by the Branch on the occasion of Mr. Cohen's visit is taken for war purposes, and we advise those who wish to secure a seat be on hand in good time. The chair will be taken at 3 o'clock. That will enable visitors from a distance to get home in good time. They will also have the help of the moon. And we are learning to appreciate the moon. We should not be surprised to find some of our clergy discovering that God had the war in mind when he made the moon shine on a dark night, when it is most needed. In that case we admire his kindness in lighting home visitors to a Freethought meeting.

Next Sunday (December 3) Mr. Cohen will deliver an address to the Leicester Jewish Literary and Dramatic Society. His subject will be "The Foundations of Religion." The lecture will be delivered in the evening. Time and place will be announced next week.

In spite of several counter-attractions there was a "full house" at Manchester, on Sunday last, to listen to Mr. Cohen's address. The interest of the audience was marked, and the chair was well-filled by Mr. Atkinson, who we are informed has been, and is doing good work in and round Manchester. We fancy there was also a good sale of literature.

A recent biography of Mr. C. F. G. Masterman, shows that as usual politicians and parsons do not fail because

of their faults. He was apparently far too frank to be successful. His widow possesses some of her husband's frankness in this tribute of hers. She alludes to the bitterness of a "failure"; meeting "splendid successes" with less than half the intelligence of men like Masterman; A. J. Balfour asking, "By the way what is a Trade Union?"; Winston Churchill talking about "the heart of every Band of Hope in this country sinking within them" (when the Local Option Bill was lost); and Lloyd George confessing that the myths of the Christian religion were "the story I know best." Masterman wore a golden cross (or was it a crucifix?) but he was shocked beyond words at the Monastic ideal. Hearing that a friend of his was going to spend her last years in an Anglican Nunnery he exclaimed: It is all wrong

unless God is a devil who rejoices in human suffering. He may be. There's no evidence to show He isn't.

Here is an excerpt from a letter sent us by Mr. Lynden, of Plymouth, which we think will be of interest to our readers:—

I was a nonentity at school and missed much that a disciplined education might have given me. And then in 1916 on the Island of Lemnos, Greece, I was given a much-worn copy of the *Freethinker*. It not only was a turning point in my life, but gradually gave me the confidence that comes when we feel we have something we can defend successfully against all comers. The leading article made an early appeal as something I had been looking for, a weekly lesson in logical, crystal-clear thinking. A quality of never varying soundness that seemed always to have a basis as—"The Science of the Sciences." It made up for me as nothing else could what I had missed in early training.

When I was much younger I was a hero-worshipper, and then I learnt that if one put people on a pedestal it is our fault if they fall off.

But the nearest approach to my old weakness of hero-worship is when I think of our President, Chapman Cohen. I miss the talks I used to have with the late Mr. Basterbrook. Later I hope to do a bit more propaganda work, I have always carried the platform (which I made) and taken the chair for Mr. G. Whitehead and others, but my present hours of employment make this impossible.

## Clear Thinking about War

THERE is a very special obligation upon Freethinkers to think clearly about War in general and, of course, this war in particular. For if free-thought aspires to the leadership of opinion (as it does) it can hardly escape dealing with a subject which so desperately affects mankind's life and happiness as warfare. Religion certainly will not leave the subject of war alone. Indeed, in war, belligerents appeal to religion more urgently than to any other motive.

Nor is religion slow to answer. No doubt she gives innumerable and conflicting answers ranging from the straightforward Pacifist "Thou shalt not kill," to "This is a Holy Crusade—kill and you shall go to Heaven." Still the point is: she answers. Free-thought must answer, too, even if she cannot speak with a united voice.

What answer is Freethought to give? Surely Free-thought cannot lag behind the most enlightened opinion of the age. That enlightened opinion condemns war, as too costly a way of settling national disputes both in blood and wealth, as too uncivilized in its methods and incidence, as a relic of barbarity in the present stage of civilization. (Even the educated professional soldier inwardly deplores the warfare, by which and through which, he exists!) Is it not clear that a Freethinker must condemn war as a general proposition? He can hardly lag behind the magnificently clear thinking of Moses when he pro-



mulgated "Thou shalt not kill"—an absolutely perfect example of what a law ought to be: brief, plain, beyond doubt; easily understood by the most elementary intelligence, and absolutely incapable of being falsified by commentary including pretended ambiguity. (Moses, by the way, broke his own law!)

So far so good: Freethinkers are opposed to war in general. But many, perhaps most, English people are opposed to war in general. And immediately a particular war starts much of this opposition fades away into excuses for justifying the particular war. For instance in the present war you hear on every hand reasons, more or less cogent, which are given in abundance: "The Nazis are aggressors—Austria, Bohemia, Poland." "You can't trust Hitler's word—we must overthrow the German gang now in power." "England is not safe unless we beat them." "They oppress the Jews and their own people: freedom is endangered by tolerating them." "We fight for freedom, justice, the rule of law and for civilization," and so on *ad infinitum*. M. Daladier demands "guarantee" before peace: Mr. Chamberlain demands "action not words."

Superficially all these things sound reasonable and right enough. But when you reflect that they may mean the death and wounding of a million English folk, great misery and loss to other millions and no less death, injury and suffering to ten million Europeans—one is forced to say perhaps the alleged justifications are not cogent enough.

Aggression was before, and will be after, Hitler. "As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be world without end," as the Doxology says. The Kaiser was, Hitler is, and Stalin (or someone else) both are and will be. Remember 1914 and 1918 too. By all means let us be in favour of overthrowing the German Dictator—but reflect that only the German people can do that. As to our national safety: wars generally begotten of silly fears and the balance-of-power doctrine in Europe are out-of-date. As to Jewish oppression it is remarkable how the Jewish people manage to flourish and to defeat their oppressors without recourse to arms and modern Englishmen might well emulate their wisdom. For M. Daladier's demand for "guarantees" and Mr. Chamberlain's "action not words" before peace: Sensible folk will ask politicians to speak definite, and not indefinite half-meaningless, words. Are countless men to die for unspecified "guarantees", and vague "action" of an unstated kind?

No, indeed. Oswald Mosley's clever sneer that Germany committed three aggressions and got a war while Russia did five and got a Trade Pact, and therefore Germany must do two more, and we shall give her a Trade Pact answers the case of "war against aggression." The "destruction of Hitlerism" will bring us no more forward than the "destruction of Kaiserism" did. You have got to remove the complex causes of the trouble. (That was not done by defeat and a victor's peace in 1918, so why repeat that prescription?). Better call the Conference now before the bloodshed and attack the root-causes in the only way it can be done by human talk and not gun-talk. For sooner or later talks there will have to be.

Do not let us shut our eyes to the fact that when we have "liquidated" the German question by victory in battle (if you will have it so!) that there is a Russian question and a Japanese question, and an Italian question to be answered. More seeds of future mass-slaughters! Instead of the threatened present (and future) massacres hadn't we better tackle the real work of abolishing (or limiting) warfare either by means of negotiating settlements of present differences or progressive Disarmament, or a Federation of European States, or the sharing-out of territories and

raw materials or whatever other means human ingenuity can devise?

There is, at the moment of writing, a breathing-space. In it we observe Pollitt the Communist, Mosley the Fascist, Lloyd George the ex-War-Minister, De Valera the Irish Statesman, H. G. Wells and Bernard Shaw the intellectuals all standing for Conference. (We observe that, in this land of Free Thought and Free Speech, none of them is allowed to put his case to the nation on the radio, and we must wonder why, if the Government case for War is so good as the Press and the B.B.C. tells us). We observe that neither "democratic Britain," nor "totalitarian Germany" will allow its people to vote on the issue of Peace or War. We observe both the British and the German Governments hesitating in the strangest way to employ the full force of their destructive powers against "the enemy." And if the case for this War be so overwhelming as to require all the death and destruction it may entail, one cannot help wondering why all these remarkable phenomena exist?

Can it be, after all, that this Anglo-Franco-German War, like the last one, for which a grateful country gave us one of our war-medals marked "The Great War for Civilization" is not what it seems at the time? (The last was a War-to-end-War, you recall. You may also recall what such Freethinkers as Voltaire and Anatole France said about warfare in general, and how applicable their words are to the present day.)

C. G. L. DU CANN

## Letters to a Christian Friend

(19) THE CHRISTIAN SPIRIT

MY DEAR CHARLES,

The parties to any discussion are lucky if they find that the common terms they both use mean the same things to both of them! How many discussions get off the rails and all het up simply because the disputants, while using the same terms, are using them, unbeknown to each other, with entirely different meanings, and entirely different ideas of their content.

A and B may both finish up regarding the other fellow in exasperation or amused contempt, as the blanketty blankest fool imaginable who denies the evidence of his own eyes, whereas both A and B may have been developing perfectly sound and logical arguments according to the different content they give to the same term. What needs clarifying is not their reasoning and conclusions, but the premises from which they start.

Usually, however, it is so obvious to A (or B) that what *he* means by a term is what the term does mean, and therefore what B (or A) means by it, that it never occurs to him that for B (or A) the term may mean almost the opposite. And even where the terms do convey broadly the same content to both sides, we are all so much inclined to endow words and phrases with subtle secondary shades of meaning derived from our personal thought and experience, that the confusion may be only the more because the principal difference is less.

All discussions would thus stand a better chance of getting somewhere if they began with definitions by the parties of the terms to be used, or if terms used on the one side were challenged from the other side at the outset, but how few discussions do begin that way—and how few get anywhere! Especially is this the case with such controversial and complicated issues as religion and sociology.



Sweeping statements are made about "the Christian ethic," "the Christian spirit," "the humanitarian spirit," and so on. What do these terms mean? Ask any six people what "the Christian spirit" is, and you would probably get six different replies. What do *you* mean by "the Christian spirit"? Probably, almost certainly, not what I mean.

To get any real understanding of Christianity, especially in its relation to social affairs, we ought to get a thorough insight into the real nature of the "Christian spirit." And, again, our best understanding of the "Christian spirit," as of the teachings of Jesus which we have been considering, can be obtained not by setting down what we consider the "Christian spirit" *should* be in relation to the modern world, nor by trying to pick our way through the confusion of current definitions; but by going back to primitive sources and letting it reveal itself in its origins and development.

That Jesus (contrary to many modern claims) was no social reformer, nor taught any social revolt or reconstruction, should not be a matter of surprise to anyone at all conversant with the Gospels and their background. For the spirit taught by Jesus was a spirit that looks inward rather than outward, that is concerned with the rights and responsibilities of the individual "soul" and its relationship to God rather than with the individual as a member of human society and his relationship to other members. It is in this inward-turning tendency that the chief significance of the "Christian spirit" lies, since it is the "inner life" which absorbs and modifies the emotion and enthusiasm that otherwise would find a different expression in relation to the outer world of men and affairs.

Jesus, as we have seen, accepted the social and economic fabric of his time without condemnation of its shortcomings and hardships (except in the case of individual abuses), and without suggestions for its improvement; teaching instead that suffering and poverty in the things of this world should be cheerfully borne because they would thus bring abundant compensation in the more important spiritual things of the next world.

This spiritual and moral stress on the inner life of the individual was the foundation, then, for the Christian life and spirit, and adequately explains the absence of social teachings or enthusiasm. So, too, we find that the early Christians "did not agitate against social evils, or reform the world, or rebel or conspire. . . . But these early Christians lived a hidden life, in and for another world." To that, in my last letter, I would add another quotation from Lord Stamp (*Christianity and Economics*):—

If we look at apostolic teachings, following Christ as a legitimate extension of His teaching, the situation is not materially changed. The teachings concerning the moral dangers of wealth, the faithfulness of servants and "keeping their place," the compensation of non-material rewards for inequalities here, are even more explicitly in support of the *status quo*, the proper discharge of what is implicit in the current relationship. The virtues of personal charity and hospitality are greatly emphasized, and the support of the Church is enjoined in great detail. The powers that be must be respected (1 Peter ii. 13-14; Rom. xiii. 7). There is no divine mission of social discontent, but rather an encouragement not to insist on rights (1 Cor. vi. 1).

The essentially inward and non-social nature of the Christian spirit is shown again by L. T. Hobhouse, quoted by Stamp as having pointed out that the Christian life, being inward, and independent of outward circumstances, tended rather to make a virtue of its power to thrive on an external society alien to its

aims, than to put as its first object the outward transformation of that society. It did not even, for a long time, strive to make society humanitarian. The early Church was not concerned "with the humanitarian view that institutions and even moral laws involving great suffering to men and women must be wrong. The law of God was in essentials known and must be accepted, come what might. Man was made for no other happiness here on earth but the happiness of accepting that law and of taking with contentment that lot which it would allow him. Thus it would be quite unhistorical to criticize the work of the Churches as if they had meant to recreate society on the lines of modern humanitarianism. Modern Christians may, and many do, regard this humanitarianism as the natural development of Christ's teaching, but in the early formative days no such development was in sight."

There is a very simple reason why "in the early formative days no such (humanitarian) development was in sight"—not that the early Christians had not had time to get going (after all, they were the nearest to Christ and the most faithful to his spirit and teachings), but simply that the humanitarian outlook was alien to the Christian spirit, which was loyally preoccupied with its inward life. Despite the belated claims of modern Christians, humanitarianism as we know it to-day is definitely not "the natural development of Christ's teaching." If the teachings of Christ and the beliefs of his followers had remained true to their "natural development," there never would have been any "modern humanitarianism" among Christians.

It is amusing, too, to see how defence of the Churches from a Christian aspect only adds to the burden of criticism from a humanitarian (or humanist) point of view. "It would be quite unhistorical," we are told in the above quotation, "to criticize the work of the Churches as if they had meant to recreate society on the lines of modern humanitarianism." It is wrong to say that the Churches failed, because they never tried or even intended to do anything of the kind—which, in the humanist's view, is the most devastating criticism the Churches have to face!

Again, on the question of slavery, on which he has to admit that "the sad history of Christian doctrine in this respect has given the secularist one of his most powerful arguments against religion," Lord Stamp agrees that "when it was challenged on moral or humanitarian or Christian grounds, the appeal to Scripture was shown either not to condemn it, or was held positively to justify it." John Wesley's noble pamphlet of 1774, "relies upon a careful historic survey of origins; a graphic and moving account of cruelty and degradation in slave trading; answers to the economic excuses; and an 'appeal' to merchants and planters. But the claim upon the text of Scripture is quite absent. . . . Nevertheless," Stamp adds (note the "nevertheless"! ), "I should come to much the same judgment on the abolition of slavery in the United States as I have done on the abolition of the slave trade for Britain—a triumph of humanitarian sentiment the direct product of the Christian ethic over textual authority and over economic cupidity, but aided by the removal of a relative economic necessity." You see, although it is the humanitarian spirit that achieves these social triumphs, and although the humanitarian spirit is the "direct product of the Christian ethic" (or the "natural development of Christ's teaching"), Christ's teachings and the Christian ethic and scripture have to be ignored altogether, or definitely opposed in order that the humanitarian spirit can produce the goods!

Small wonder, however, that such confusion of thought should arise when Christian apologists try to



consecrate an impossible marriage of convenience between such incompatible elements as the "Christian spirit" and the "humanitarian spirit." Of that incompatibility, more in my next. Best wishes to Mary and the boys.

Affectionately,

R. H. S. STANDEAST

## Sermons in Stones: from English Cathedrals

In these troublous times, when all occupations other than the killing of other peoples, or the destruction of other countries, are suspended, I have turned to the history of our English Cathedrals as a welcome change from topical news of slaughters from the various fronts, embellished by the lively imaginations of correspondents or officials at the so-styled Ministry of Information. From all this emerges the self-evident fact, that the God of the Germans is warring vigorously against the God of the Democracies.

Considered as sermons in stones, our cathedrals are silently eloquent, especially when their histories are written by clergymen. Even in the days when the Church was wealthier than it is to-day (and it is hardly bankrupt now), or when money purchased far more—which, in practice, amounts to much the same thing—the Cathedral accounts bristle with examples of cadging, or even swindling, carried to a fine art, that is, speaking secularly; ecclesiastically, all this is lumped under the respectable title of "offerings," even if partly enforced by what is known as "passing round the hat."

I have a series of small books, Bell's Cathedral Series, each dealing with a single Cathedral, and written, for the main part, by clergymen. The number of the cats which these gentlemen can let out of bags is amusing and instructive. I take the following from "Wimborne Minster," by the Rev. Thomas Perkins, M.A., Rector of Turnworth in Dorset, written in 1899. Speaking of the (comparative) poverty of Wimborne Minster, he says: "There was no saintly shrine, there were no wonder-working relics to attract pilgrims, and gather the offerings of the faithful and enrich the church in the way in which the shrine of St. Cuthbert enriched Durham, that of the murdered Archbishop enriched Canterbury, and that of the murdered King enriched Gloucester."

Now, even allowing for the widest difference between secular and ecclesiastical parlance, this reads like the glorification of cadging, and of a swindling character at that. The "faithful" are, obviously those powerful in belief and correspondingly weak in the intellect. Also it is to be noted that sanctity and money are interchangeable terms in church history, and there is a strong suggestion of the advice given by a merchant to his son; "Get money, my boy; get it honestly if you can—but get it." The solicitation of "offerings" appears to have been fettered by no such conditions.

Another striking occurrence in these Cathedral records is the unfailing regularity with which the great towers fell, as at Hereford and Ely, and certain churches were allowed to become ruinous when they lost their riches. A church without "offerings" appears to have been like the man without money, something of a general nuisance. With the falling towers, however strong the faith may have been, however powerful the prayers, the foundations must have been rotten, and Gravity has always been mightier than God since the days of Joshua. Perhaps God, in His

wisdom, may have made the occasion of the fall of the central tower at Ely to send Alan of Walsingham, to turn the disaster to advantage by replacing the tower with the present mighty octagon, one of the wonders of the world.

"Faith," said the schoolboy, "is the capacity for believing that which we know to be untrue." In this sense, the Church has little faith. Promise it money or other gift, and see how soon the Ecclesiastical Commissioners are on your track to implement the gift, on the principle that cash in hand is worth all the faith in the world. Does any thinking man doubt that, but for this practice, carried to its logical extreme, the Church would have been snuffed out and forgotten long ago? The "offerings of the faithful" made our Cathedrals possible, and the same has paid for all the restorations and upkeep ever since, to say nothing of the salaries of "incumbents," and all the other paraphernalia. Why is worship always linked up with parade, from the ju-ju of the savage upwards—or downwards?

Because the Cathedral attracts more than the Little Bethel, at any rate, it pays bigger dividends in the form of the offerings of the faithful. It is salesmanship and showmanship combined, and the Church technique of selling nothing for something leaves even the best of book salesmen far behind. But then, look at the methods which the Church has not only adopted, but sanctified. Outright brutal persecution (the modern equivalent is social ostracism) wonder-working coupled with cadging (the two are always allied) in a manner so blatant and crude that even a village fair conjuror would be ashamed to be linked up with such practices. Nor is this the Church in its naughty youth. What are prayers for peace other than charlatanry of the crudest kind? The clergyman who prays with the utmost fervency sees to it that he gets his full quota of sandbags for the vicarage—and his stipend, even to "Easter offerings." Like the Almighty with the sparrow nothing is too small.

With all this lying and deceit practised by the Church throughout the ages, and, presumably with the endorsement of the Almighty (this depending strictly on nationality, or course), one wonders how far this went to bolster up the frightfulness of war. From archbishops to curates alike the cry goes up to Heaven, not for Peace but for Victory. The early "conversion" methods of the English Church, for example, the Marian persecutions, have a nasty savour of Hitler about them. When the clergy allege that in these details the Church has "reformed" is not this only in deference to the policeman and the magistrate? The ancient idea that it is easier to club a man than to argue with him still persists, social ostracism replacing the faggot, in these days, only because the law has learned by force of public opinion, to respect, somewhat, the rights of the individual.

Meanwhile we have the spectacle of the God of the Allies and the God of the Germans (distinctly not the same individual) warring together, with the inevitable result as history has always shown, that the Almighty is on the side of the Biggest Battalions. Nor is this all. To round off the Trinity (that magic word), there is the Wobbling God of those of the "neutrals" who are so obviously sitting on the fence, waiting to see which way the cat jumps before they get down. There is even a fourth; the God of Brute Force, and he usually wins, in this world which religions have been trying so hard, and with such financial success, to improve for fifteen hundred years, and failing so miserably. If the way of the transgressor be hard (which is exceedingly doubtful these days) the way of the faithful is even harder. So much more faith—and less enquiry—is demanded. Yet religion is so



practical. Even the Salvation Army, which indulges in a greater acreage of prayer, per individual, than any other body, does not pray for that £150,000 it wants just now; it advertises for it in the daily press. No word is said of the God of Mammon; just hand over the cash, and the road to Heaven will be macadamised for you.

HERBERT CESCINSKY

## Correspondence

### THE "OXFORD" SHAKESPEARE

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—Eighteen years ago a country newspaper published my case for King James the First, of pious memory, as the real author of the works ascribed to Master William Shakespeare. The Editor survived.

Now "Minnermus," and H. Irving "protest too much, methinks," at one of your contributors carrying the jest a bit further—with a mere Earl. However, I fully endorse their views in spite of having spoilt Mr. Cutner's "fun."

Of course, it was sheer presumption on the part of a country bumpkin to take the laurel from courtiers, yet my observations on life have revealed that *People know far more of Courts than Courts know of People*.

Analogically, Mr. Cutner should maintain that only the refined minds of the late Czar's court could have given being to twenty-two years of success in the Art of Government by the *People* of Russia. Will Mr. Cutner's "spiritual" valuation in "the tragic days through which we are passing" (to quote his own words) rise to such logic?

I trust that his patrician "soul" will not be tainted by the suggestion.

A. G. DUNN

### CHRIST AND CHRISTIAN

SIR,—Mr. Du Cann says there are Christians who believe Christ to be a "mere man," but Unitarians and Modernists do not treat him as such. They regard him as a Unique Being, the one and only perfect man, and the one and only teacher of perfect ethics; in short as something more than man. Their intellect may shy at his divinity, and protect itself by a verbal repudiation of his Godhead, but until they admit faults in his character and teaching such as are found in "mere men," I think you will be justified in sticking to your definition of a Christian.

J. A. DAVIES

### THE FAIRCHILD FAMILY

SIR,—In the interests of accuracy may I point out that that example of Victorian sanctimoniousness, the fictitious Mr. Fairchild of the *Fairchild Family*, did not—as your contributor, Mr. Palmer, states—take his children to witness an execution—he took them to see the mouldering body of a murderer hanging in chains on a gibbet. This was in addition to having whipped the children on the hands "till they smarted again," deprived them of their breakfast and prayed for them. "Mr. Fairchild" thought the murderer had probably gone to hell, and he was taking no risks over his own children.

WILLIAM A. BREND

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