

# The Freethinker

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Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

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THE forthcoming General Election does not actually promise to be anything very spectacular. The issue is already narrowed down to a single alternative—Tory or Labour. In these days, when "Providence," in Napoleon's famous phrase, "is on the side of the *big* battalions," any other result would be a miracle, "an act of God"! Just as an excited commentator on the B.B.C. during the annual boat race, once bawled out that the ultimate winner would be "either Oxford or Cambridge," so it can safely be predicted that the political winner, and the next Government, will be either Tory or Labour.

The *Freethinker* is not a political paper, at least in the party sense of the word, though, what we may perhaps term, the Secularist and Freethinking Tradition, ever since the stormy days of Paine and Bradlaugh may be included in general terms, in the *radical* tradition of the English people. However, there is, what one might describe as, the Secularist approach to political issues. This is not a *party* approach, unless the Freethinking movement can itself be accurately described as a party. It is, rather, a *philosophical* approach to political issues in general, based on a definite philosophical and sociological outlook, as and when viewed in the light of the philosophy of Secularism, and quite independent of party groupings, there are certain, what are sometimes termed "immediate demands," upon which we assume, all Secularists and Freethinkers, quite independent of their party affiliations, would be agreed. In the precise sense that Secularists unite to further such common ends, one can legitimately talk about political Freethought.

## British and Continental Freethought

As is very quickly evident to anyone who attends an *international* Freethought Congress, or reads the *European* Freethinking Press at all regularly, there is a sharp difference in mental outlook between the attitude currently taken towards politics by, respectively, the Freethinkers of European lands, and that of their Anglo-Saxon colleagues. On the European continent, at any rate in Catholic lands, the Freethought movement can be defined with substantial accuracy as a *political* movement. The unceasing intrigues of *political* Catholicism give our German, French and Italian colleagues no choice in the matter. They are under no illusions as to what would happen to them—and to Freethought, or, indeed, to *any* thought not approved of by the "one True Church," should the endless intrigues of the Vatican finally lead to a new "age of Faith." They have only got to look across the Pyrenees, where the clerical-fascist régime of Franco has made Freethought, not to mention Protestantism, illegal, to see what is in store for them if the Vatican eventually wins on the *political* field! For, if Rome gets its way where *Spain* is to-day, *Europe* will be to-morrow.

In England, as in the other Anglo-Saxon lands, this fundamental state of things does not exist. Here, since the Reformation, England has not represented more than a

pawn in the world strategy of the Vatican. Rome shot its bolt in England, when Fawkes failed to shoot up Parliament on November 5, 1605! Whilst religious persecution was not unknown, even after Rome had departed, the Established Church of England has been relatively easy-going, as and when compared with the Catholic Church across the Channel.

Moreover, it ruled over a divided country. For a short time under the Commonwealth and Cromwell—1649-60—the Free Churches were actually strong enough to seize political power. The lesson was not lost on either the ruling class or the Established Church. Successively, Nonconformity, Catholicism and finally, Secularism, were

so to speak, given the freedom of the city as "second class" citizens. As the close association of the Anglican Church with the Tory Party and with the political reaction gradually relaxed, so, too, first, Nonconformity, then Secularism, also relaxed their formerly close association with political radicalism, which marked them from the days of the "Levellers" to those of Owen and Bradlaugh. To-day, as remarked above, Freethought, as such, is "non-political"; its professed adherents belong to all parties—or to none.

## A Secularist "Pressure Group"

We suggest that the time has now come to change, or, at least, to modify, this state of things. Ours is an age of "pressure-groups," in this respect, whilst Communist "pressure-groups" get most of the publicity, the "hidden hand" of the Vatican is, at least, equally active besides being infinitely more dangerous from the freethinking angle. Communism is a political and economic creed, with which one may, or may not, agree. Whereas Rome, "The Black International," represents a permanent totalitarian dictatorship which exists, and works, for a single end, world power. "What is sauce for the goose, is sauce for the gander." If Catholics, not to mention other sects, can, and do, work overtime in the *political* field, why should not Freethinkers do so also? As we have suggested elsewhere, it is high time to *act* against "Catholic action."

## From Mediæval to Modern

It is one of the most capricious paradoxes of our time, that England, the cradle of both the Industrial Revolution and of the Theory of Evolution, still possesses an essentially mediæval constitution, in which Church and State are officially united, in which a particular form of Christianity is officially recognised as the State-Church, in which the religion of the Monarch is *ex officio* prescribed, and in which the Bishops of the Established Church possess parliamentary representation. Such a state of things, it can be relevantly pointed out, is unknown, except in Spain and in a few similarly backward lands. With this legally privileged position, goes an unwritten but virtually legal, right of the officially recognised Christian religion to, what is, virtually, an official monopoly of the

VIEWS and OPINIONS

## Secularism and the General Election

By F. A. RIDLEY

State-controlled radio, the B.B.C., not to mention such purely mediæval survivals as "The Blasphemy Laws," and a Law on Divorce, which may be accurately defined as a most illogical compromise between modern rationalism and mediæval superstition. We suggest that the abolition of the above state of things can only be carried into effect by *political* action, and that action along such lines is urgently demanded from all active Secularists who regard the Secular State as a desirable ideal.

#### Secular Election Programme

Without trespassing on the specific issues of *party* politics, we suggest a *questionnaire* to all parliamentary candidates on some such lines as these: The disestablishment and disendowment of the Established Churches of England and Scotland, with the resulting right of *all* British citizens, including the Monarch, the Lord Chancellor, and other office holders, to belong to any religious body, or none, instead of, as at present, having to conform to the Estab-

lished Church as a condition of office; equal representation of *all* religious and anti-religious bodies in the House of Lords; equal rights, and time on the State-controlled radio, again, for, impartially, all religious and anti-religious bodies; repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, and modification of the Divorce Laws by eliminating influences which derive from religious sources. We suggest that all Secularists should agree with such a programme of "immediate demands," and should work actively to further them. We suggest, further, that now is the time, and this is the place, to begin and that May 26 might well be the beginning of a new impact of British Secularism on British politics such as it has not displayed since Bradlaugh made the "right to affirm," not only a parliamentary but a *national* issue. It will not be, in fact, until our present mediæval constitution has given way to a modern secular constitution, that one will truly be able to affirm that—at long last!—the Middle Ages have ended in Britain!

## Bertrand Russell Speaks in Rome

(Reprinted by permission of the *Manchester Guardian*)

Rome, April 14.

BERTRAND RUSSELL to-day suggested that a declaration by eminent scientists that war can no longer help any State to realise its policies would be a first step towards establishing peaceful existence.

Lord Russell was addressing a conference held by the Inter-Parliamentary Union on the theme of co-existence. The problem we have to face, he said, is the fact that statesmen still think of war as something which can forward their policies. They have not grasped the fact of the new situation created by the invention of nuclear weapons.

But the scientists know that in another war nobody's purposes will be served. Human beings, if they survive at all, will no longer be civilised or organised, they will be incapable of exercising the arts and sciences, and it will take them centuries to climb back to the level of intelligence and skill at which they will again be capable of destroying themselves.

Lord Russell thought that Mr. Dulles and Mao Tse-tung had not grasped this fact. He was not quite so sure about the Russians. He did not mention British statesmen, but in an interview with an Italian paper yesterday he said the fact that we are all equally responsible for what may happen in case of war was better understood in Britain than in the United States. The problem was appreciated by the scientists in the United States but not by statesmen or by the general public. He thought that the Italian public was alive to this problem.

As a solution he proposed that scientists on both the Communist and the non-Communist side should be induced to support a pronouncement drawn up by scientists, explaining that humanity simply cannot allow war to be made. He thought that the men of science would be ready to do this, because they were all horrified at the uses which were being made of their discoveries, and rightly or wrongly all had bad consciences.

At the same time he suggested that some neutral power should draw up a report by experts on the probable consequences of war, after which both sides should be asked to admit simultaneously to this neutral power, but not to each other, that war could not serve their purposes.

The next step would be an agreement to preserve a status quo until new solutions could be found. This would give humanity time to get used to the idea of coexistence. Once we admit that coexistence is the only alternative to non-

existence we shall begin to feel differently towards the people of the other side. Communists and non-Communists might become as tolerant of each other as Mohammedans and Christians.

Lord Russell warned his audience that this generation must decide whether there shall continue to be human beings or not. As a final solution he advocated the establishment of a world authority with overwhelming armed force which no State could resist.

This speech makes a striking corollary to the Pope's Easter message on the fearful consequences of atomic warfare. Lord Russell is visiting Rome with a group of representatives of the World Association of Parliamentarians for World Government.

### The Cardiff Discussion

New ground in freethought propaganda was broken by Mr. L. Ebury in his visit to Cardiff on April 12.

A member of the N.S.S., Mr. S. Caines, who is warden of the Bute Street Community Centre, Cardiff, is to be congratulated in arranging a discussion between Mr. Ebury and a member of a travelling religious mission, the subject being "Morals and Ethics: their origin and use." There was a full house, the audience being composed of people of various races and creeds. A parson took part in the discussion and there was a small group of Welsh freethinkers present, one of whom, Mr. Paul Varney, sends the following account:

"Mr. Ebury's opponent was a school teacher and a devout member of the American importation known as Jehovah's Witnesses. Needless to say, Mr. Ebury, with figures and facts, science and reason, economics and history, gave the audience something to think about. I learned that his opponent was actually a teacher of biology (*and scripture!*)"

There was quite a lively discussion, N.S.S. members taking part, and at the close of the meeting there was a brisk sale of Chapman Cohen's Pamphlets. There seems to be a likelihood of forming an active secularist group in South Wales, and another visit from Mr. Ebury is hoped for.

Pope Pius XII reminded the world's lawmakers that the Catholic doctrine of eternal hell as the punishment for grave sins committed on earth still stands. The fires of hell are gradually dying out with some of the Protestant churches but not so where infallibility reigns. When Satan's fuel supply is exhausted, church revenues will be a thing of the past.—*Liberal*, April, 1955.

—NEXT WEEK—

EINSTEIN (1879-1955)

By G. H. TAYLOR

# Whom the Devil Hath Joined

By C. G. L. DU CANN

"THOSE whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder" are words from the Anglican marriage-service. They are often quoted by English bishops and priests in loud assertion that "Christian marriage" is indissoluble except by the death of one partner to it.

Not even ecclesiastical hardihood is so void of compassion, however, as to suggest that the marriage-yoke is eternal, and that the married pair will ascend to Heaven or descend to Hell irremediably coupled. But "till death do us part" in some cases is bad enough—and, indeed, much too much of evil.

However, whom hath God joined? Not every married pair, assuredly. Those, who disdaining assistance from God's clergy, prefer to seek the aid of a State registry-official without any invocation of God or vows to each other, are hardly to be regarded as God-joined by a Registrar who may be an atheist, or a heathen idolater, or an indifferentist, like Gallio, who "cared for none of those things." Those married in Church "properly" (as Church-folk would say) by an ordained priest according to the Form for Solemnisation of Holy Matrimony in the rites and ceremonies of the Anglican communion set out in the Prayer-Book, when such a marriage is followed by physical consummation (and even perhaps when not, in spite of the law of the land) are, on Christian principles, decidedly joined by God.

Recent pamphlets officially issued by the Church of England make this standpoint quite clear. It is when a marriage is celebrated in the House of God by a man of God that the twain are God-joined, and not to be sundered by mere mankind.

This sounds all right until you apply it to horrid facts that actually take place. This very week in which I write the whole British Press reports how two women got "married" to each other in church at St. Luke's, Downham, in South-East London, by a clergyman. One, of course, masqueraded as a male, and the innocent cleric was deceived. Subsequently the interesting pair—who were of course sexual perverts known as Lesbians—were convicted in the local magistrate's court of an offence in so doing. Their escapade cost them £25 each.

Perhaps they enjoyed this antic. But to religious folk, this was an atrocious and blasphemous mockery, perfectly horrifying to contemplate. However, "married" they were in the House of God by a man of God; and no doubt their Parson, in perfect good faith, solemnly intoned the words to them: "Those whom God hath joined together . . ."

There is, of course, no more State or Church validity in a marriage of this kind than in no marriage at all. It is null and void *ab initio*. No religious person would say that two Lesbians can be joined by God; rather would it be said that they are joined by the Devil, the father of all fleshly lusts. Then what becomes of the claim that all church-marriages are joined by God?

Palpably they are not—in a whole host of cases other than this one quoted. The bigamous marriage (though many of the Old Testament patriarchs, including David, the man "after God's own heart," were polygamous) is now regarded as un-Christian and irreligious (at least in England for white people). No English clergyman will call a bigamy a God-joined marriage. But what of other marriages based on fraud or mistake: is God or the Devil the instigator of these, and are they to be beyond all human remedy in this life?

The rigorist Church of England dictum is utterly untenable when brought to the severe test of work in practice. It sounds very pretty and persuasive to believers when

uttered with unction, and it flatters the acquiescently-married to think that their union (with all its prosaic or horrid features) is joined by no less an authority than the Deity himself. Though why Omnipotence should stoop to take an interest in such a beggarly business as the coupling of two unimportant human microbes out of countless others, is strange indeed.

But granting the existence of an Omnipotence-and-Omniscience-in-one, as Christian doctrine predicates, is it not blasphemy by religious standards, to suppose a yoking with the syphilitic, the drunken, the imbecile, and the like, whether done in Church by a parson or not, is anything but a damnable and diabolical thing? No wonder John Milton, the great Christian poet, was driven by "the spur of self-concernment" to advocate "Christian Divorce" as "a godly doctrine and discipline"—a piece of English history conveniently forgotten by those arguing for the Christian indissolubility of marriage nowadays.

Any observer, religionist or not, with two eyes in his head, looking at the marriages around him, must agree that there are those whom not God, but the very Devil, has joined. (Could anyone imagine a merciful God joining Antony Trollope's Bishop, or any other unfortunate male, to Mrs. Proudie? One hesitates even to accuse the Devil of that, for there are degrees of cruelty at which fiends themselves might shudder, and which even English divorce-judges might hasten to cure with an expedited *decree nisi*.)

Meanwhile, the case of the remarkable and irresponsible young females of Downham and their performance in the local parish church, remains on record as an answer to the unintelligent quotation of indissoluble Church-marriage. It is to be hoped that in this case, those whom the Devil joined together have put themselves asunder. Like most other married people (whether properly or improperly joined) they are better apart. Nor need they spend fifty or more pounds in divorce-costs to attain their freedom from each other, like other victims of an unpleasant conjugality.

The answer to ecclesiastics fond of uttering the phrase "Whom God hath joined" is surely: "But what of those whom the Devil hath joined?"—for those who accept the existence of God equally accept the existence of the Devil. Many religious folk have given up Hell, the Devil's home, like that Victorian Judicial Committee of the Privy Council which "dismissed Hell with costs." But they have not given up the Devil.

## Has Christianity been tried?

It is often said that the Roman world before Constantine was in a period of rapid decay; that the traditions and vitality of half-suppressed paganism account for many of the aberrations of later times; that the influence of the Church was often rather nominal and superficial than supreme; and that, in judging the ignorance of the Dark Ages, we must make large allowance for the dislocations of society by the barbarians. In all this there is much truth; but when we remember that in the Byzantine Empire the renovating power of theology was tried in a new capital free from pagan traditions, and for more than one thousand years unsubdued by barbarians, and that in the West the Church, for at least seven hundred years after the shocks of the invasions had subsided, exercised a control more absolute than any other moral or intellectual agency has ever attained, it will appear, I think, that the experiment was very sufficiently tried.—W. E. H. Lecky, "The History of European Morals."

## This Believing World

The Editor of "Picture Post" which recently published Group-Captain Cheshire's all-believing account of that Christian fake, the Turin Shroud, as proving the Crucifixion, confidently told his readers that this event was "foretold in detail" by Isaiah seven hundred years before it happened. This excursion into Biblical theology exhibits the same kind of gross ignorance we get in Billy Graham without that gentleman's excuse. There is no mention whatever of the Crucifixion of Christ in detail (or not) in Isaiah—or of Jesus *anywhere* in the Old Testament. We challenge *Picture Post* to produce the evidence.

In "Picture Post" also we often get "talks" on all sorts of subjects by the "Surgeon-Philosopher," Kenneth Walker. He has evidently forgotten that old adage—the shoemaker should stick to his last. In one of his latest articles, Mr. Walker tells us (venturing into Spiritualism) that the "integrity" of D. D. Home "was never impugned during his lifetime." Well, he had to go to law for about £24,000 he had "somehow" got from a Mrs. Lyon, and the court "gave judgment in her favour." Home had to return the money after a scathing condemnation by the judge.

But the real crux is—Who were the people who sat with Home? Was Mrs. Browning, for instance, capable of judging the "phenomena" of Home? Were any of his sitters (except sceptics like Bradlaugh) of any use whatever as "investigators"? When Home sat with Bradlaugh, *nothing* happened. But when it comes to relating the famous "levitation" of Home, believed in without question by all Spiritualists at which Lord Adare, Captain Wynne, and the Master of Lyndsay, were present, Mr. Walker writes: "He is said to have floated out of one window" and in again through another in another room. Why the words "He is said to . . ."? Doesn't Mr. Walker believe the story?

If this wonderful feat of levitation was not true then Home was an arrant fraud. In any case, he did *not* levitate in the "presence" of the three gentlemen named. They were there certainly, but these marvellous investigators sat *with their backs to the two windows* and they did *not* see Home "levitating." Yet Home was quite satisfied to have this idiotic story written about—so long as there were fools enough to believe it.

Writing in one of the newspapers, a "Teacher" severely criticises the "pundits" who were responsible for the 1944 Education Act who "bowed down in a cowardly fashion to a noisy minority, the organised Churches," and points out how difficult it is for a teacher to talk to children a whole term, for example, on such a subject as "Man's Relationship to God"—especially if, as is so often the case, he is an unbeliever. He claims that the proper solution is Secular Education—though, if a parent wanted religious instruction for his child, he ought to get it.

Those of us who favour Secular Education simply insist that if parents want religion taught to their children, they should pay for it themselves, and have it outside school hours. This is the only fair and equitable way to all the religions we are cursed with.

How difficult it is to catch up with a Christian lie! Talk about seven-leagued boots . . .! A gentleman, calling himself Jack Blunt, in *Answers*, tells us for the 1906834th time that "our hospitals, our charities and our schools all

had their beginnings in the striving of Christian men and women to help their fellows." Nobody did any helping before Christ, nobody did any writing or reading or had any schooling before Christianity came, and there were no hospitals! Thus is history taught. And no doubt Jack Blunt is quite sincere—or is he?

The real truth is, of course, something quite different. It was Christianity which killed "learning" all over Europe to such a degree that millions of people could not even write their names only a hundred years ago, and the secular authorities had to force education on to the people. As for hospitals, has Blunt ever heard of Esculapius? Probably not—and if he had, would he have written differently? Probably not.

## Cornish Column

A PREVIEW of the film "Martin Luther" was recently held at Penzance. The issue of the *Cornishman* in which the film advert. appeared also had a letter from a Catholic priest who, with the usual Catholic intolerance, advocated a boycott of the film, and deemed it unfit for children to see. Presumably a film of the Spanish Inquisition, or the torture and death of Giordano Bruno, would be more suitable in our Catholic Father's eyes. The replies that followed, however, left the Priest devoid of argument, and included in these replies was an excellent letter quoting Avro Manhattan's book on *Terror Over Yugoslavia*.

A heavenly misguided missile aimed presumably at these writers showed the inaccuracy of the Almighty; this Thunderbolt struck the roof of a Church and damaged the organ.

I recommend Helston for a quiet holiday resort; for several months now the Church Bells have been out of order, and until the necessary funds arrive they will remain silent. A donation was made towards the repairs by the Helston Flora Day Association for the Festival held annually at Helston on May 8, to honour the Goddess Flora and the welcoming of Spring. The Church apparently have no scruples in accepting donations from a Pagan source!

A minor Billy Graham crusade starts at Helston shortly. A brigade of the Church Army are visiting the town for ten days. As a prelude, pamphlets, circulars and crude sketches of Red Keys have been delivered to every house. The intention, of course, is to bring the people to Christ, in order to convert the converted. Film shows and services are to be held daily.

D. J. CROWLE

## Spinoza—Atheist

Whatever doubt there may have been in the opinion of many concerning Descartes' scepticism, none could exist in reference to Spinoza. The whole Christian Church, not less than the Jewish, pronounced him a heretic of unmitigated character. His face was caricatured, and pains were taken to scatter broadcast throughout the country, pictures representing him with Satanic features, his hand armed with serpents, and with such legends as "Benedict Spinoza, Jew and Atheist," and "Benedict Spinoza, Prince of Atheists, bearing upon his face the marks of reprobation." Even sceptics themselves have united in declaring him an Atheist. Boyle defines Spinozism as "a regular system of Atheism," and Voltaire represents its author as a thin fallow Jew, walking deliberately up to the Divine Being, and saying in a subdued tone, "Pardon me, but between ourselves, I don't think you are in existence!"—Dr. F. J. HURST, *History of Rationalism*.

# THE FREETHINKER

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THE FREETHINKER will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad): One year, £1 4s. (in U.S.A., \$3.50); half-year, 12s.; three months, 6s. Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 41, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1.

## To Correspondents

Correspondents may like to note that when their letters are not printed, or when they are abbreviated, the material in them may still be of use to "This Believing World," or to our spoken propaganda.

Correspondents are requested to write on one side of the paper only and to make their letters as brief as possible.

H. McADAM.—Bradlaugh's Oaths Amendment Act gave everyone the right to affirm in all cases, where an oath is usually required.

HENRY COOKE.—Chapman Cohen debated with Shaw Desmond at the Caxton Hall on October 25, 1929.

S. HOWE.—Scientists do not work on the basis of a revelation from God, or under the guidance of an infallible Church, so where is the parallel with the priesthood?

F. J. MARCHANT.—*The Meaning of Meaning* was published in 1927 at 12s. 6d. Ogden, the co-author, had been greatly influenced by the freethinker Jeremy Bentham.

K. M. JOHNSTON (Miss).—Why say these things are done by "so-called" Christians? Persecution of the Jews is a very old Christian pastime.

F. G. A. RYDER.—We do not "wish to force our opinions on children in state schools." We want children to meet on the ground of a common citizenship, and not be divided by sectarian differences.

## Lecture Notices, Etc.

### OUTDOOR

Blackburn Branch N.S.S. (Market Place).—Every Sunday, 7 p.m.: F. ROTHWELL.

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Broadway Car Park).—Every Sunday evening, 7-30 p.m.: HAROLD DAY.

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Deansgate Blitzed Site).—Every weekday, 1 p.m.: G. A. WOODCOCK.

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead Heath).—Sunday, May 8, noon: L. EBURY and H. ARTHUR.

Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square).—Every Wednesday at 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

West London Branch N.S.S.—Every Sunday at the Marble Arch from 4 p.m.: Messrs. RIDLEY, EBURY and WOOD. *The Freethinker* on sale outside Hyde Park.

### INDOOR

Junior Discussion Group (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Friday, May 6, 7-15 p.m.: A. MORGAN, "The Individual and the Mob."

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, May 8, 11 a.m.: Mrs. A. BLANCO WHITE, "Religious Belief and Ethical Behaviour."

## A Word on the C.C. Fund

By H. CUTNER

THOSE of us who were privileged to know Chapman Cohen or who—like myself—worked with him for many years, will remember his love for *The Freethinker* and all it stands for. It is the oldest Freethought weekly journal in the world, and nobody was prouder to devote his life to it and to the cause of Freethought than Chapman Cohen. But he was never content to follow the old paths. He brought to bear upon religious problems an original point of view based on a wide reading of philosophy and science; and shrewd old G. W. Foote must have seen in him a successor he could well be proud of. He was right.

Week after week for over fifty years, *The Freethinker* was enriched by an article from his pen, until, in a sense, he became an institution. And what he had constantly in mind was not so much Chapman Cohen, but the *idea* of

## The Chapman Cohen Memorial Fund

Previously acknowledged, £832 1s. 4d.: E. I. Hughes, 5s.; W.H.D., 2s. 6d.; A. Hancock, 1s.; A. H. Briancourt, 5s.; L. Hanger, 1s. 6d.; A. Bamford (New Zealand), £1; P. T. Leckie (Canada), 8s. 9d.; Mrs. A. Vallance, £1 8s.; Anon (White Stone Pond), 10s.; Miss D. G. Davies (Cardiff), £1; N. Cluett, 1s.; Anon, 2s. 7d.; Mr. G. Jekyll (South Africa), £5; H. Blewitt, 3s. Total: £842 9s. 8d.

Donations should be sent to "The Chapman Cohen Memorial Fund" and cheques made out accordingly.

Freethought. He wanted people to understand Freethought and to work for it.

He was a champion of all workers in the cause. Without their backing *The Freethinker* could not live—any more than without the private soldier could even the greatest of generals win a battle. Always in Chapman Cohen's mind—and here I can speak with authority—was his pre-occupation for his readers, those unknown fighters for the "best of Causes," to use George Meredith's now famous phrase. And we still want them, never more so than now.

When the 1914-18 war was on his one thought was: *The Freethinker* must not die. So many famous propagandist journals simply disappeared during that terrible holocaust. We are apt to forget how he well kept it going—with the help of his readers, of course.

It is the readers of this journal, the only Freethought journal in the country, who can keep *The Freethinker* alive as a force to be reckoned with. It is *their* journal, it expresses their view. And it really requires very little from most of them. The easiest way, perhaps, is to contribute to the Fund raised to the memory of one of our greatest Freethinkers. We want to treble the circulation of *The Freethinker*, and in that, surely we can all help.

We are not so much concerned with political policies and ideologies as with the dissemination of the fundamental ideas of freedom, tolerance, justice—in a word, of Freethought. To this end, Thomas Paine, Richard Carlile, Robert Taylor, Charles Bradlaugh, George Jacob Holyoake, G. W. Foote, J. M. Robertson, Joseph McCabe, and Chapman Cohen—among many others—devoted their lives. We are continuing their work, but it is only with *your* help—for as Chapman Cohen would have said: *The Freethinker* must never die.

## N.S.S. Executive Committee, 27th April

Present: Mr. Ridley (in the chair), Mrs. Venton, Messrs. Ebury, Griffiths, Hornibrook, Barker, Taylor, Cleaver, Arthur, Johnson and the Secretary.

Six new members were accepted to the Parent, Manchester, Birmingham, West London and Dagenham Branches. Mr. Ebury reported a successful visit to Cardiff where he represented the Society in a discussion on Morals and Ethics at the Bute Town Community Centre. A letter from Mr. Mosley reported good open-air meetings and a lecture given by him to a church discussion group. Mr. Ridley reported on the latest meeting of the Humanist Council, at which further approaches to the B.B.C. were discussed.

Mr. Ridley read a draft of the Executive Committee's Annual Report to be presented to the Conference. This was approved, as were also a draft of the Conference Agenda and the Annual Accounts and Balance Sheet drawn up by the Auditors.

P. VICTOR MORRIS, Secretary.

**ROBERT TAYLOR.** The Devil's Chaplain (1784-1844). By H. Cutner. A detailed account of a remarkable Freethinker and his work. Price 1s. 6d.; postage 2d.

**SOCIALISM AND RELIGION.** By F. A. Ridley. Price 6d.; postage 1½d.

SCIENCE FRONT

# The Evolution of Man

By G. H. TAYLOR

SINCE the war many anthropological finds in South Africa have been added to the volume of evidence for man's evolution. But the evidence from fossils is not the only kind of evidence at the disposal of science, for proof that man is related to the web of animal life, rather than the result of an act of special creation.

A great deal of corroborative evidence comes from comparative anatomy and physiology. Vestigial remains such as the pineal body (described in Starling's *Physiology* as the "vestigial remnant of a primitive dorsal eye"), the body hairs, the appendix, the vestigial tail, etc., are only to be explained in terms of evolution. Many such examples are catalogued in Wiedersheim's *Structure of Man*.

Then there are cases of wholesale degenerate throwbacks, as in atavism. Now according to Christian doctrine man was originally created perfect, in God's image, so that any throwbacks, if Christianity is true, should revert to this original perfection, and not to lower animal types.

Another pointer, recapitulation of ancestry in the embryo, is sometimes challenged because it is far from complete. It is, nevertheless, recognisable, though sketchy. It must be borne in mind, however, that such recapitulation affords no biological advantage, and might therefore be expected to disappear in the course of time.

Another line of argument is pursued in J. B. S. Haldane's *Causes of Evolution*. The mingling of ape and human blood is well known, and Haldane mentions that in another important respect the ape is nearer to man than to the lower monkeys. Most mammals, including monkeys, are able to oxydize uric acid and hence escape gout, while the apes share with man the inability to do this. There are urates in the blood (a urate is a salt of uric acid) which are insoluble. Tailed monkeys oxydize them into a soluble substance, allantoin, which is taken up and melted and then thrown out of the body in the normal functioning. This enables monkeys to keep free from gout, in contrast to the tailless apes and men. Anthropoid apes, again, are nearly as susceptible to typhoid as we are. Such arguments as to relationship join that of the consanguinity of man and ape. Experiments in blood transfusion have shown that there are the same four types of blood in apes as in men.

Blood transfusion shows relationship to be extended to the chemistry of the proteins. After a rabbit has been treated with the blood of, say, a horse, donkey, cow and sheep, then the amount of precipitate which its blood gives with that of the others is a key to the respective closeness of their relationships. The rabbit, however, gives no precipitate when treated with the blood of a hen; the rabbit antibody, that is, is effective with horse, but not with hen, proteins. (See *Blood Immunity and Blood Relationship*, by Prof. Nuttall of Cambridge.) By similar methods man is found to be more like apes than tailed monkeys, more like the latter than like lemurs, and more like these than like the rest of the mammals. The blood serum of Old World Monkeys is more closely related to man's than to that of their fellow monkeys of the New World.

Antibodies are produced equally as well against plant proteins. The chemical plan of life corresponds to the anatomical. Prof. Nuttall has, in this line of research, confirmed by tests on the biochemical reactions of blood man's membership of the Primates. The diameter of the red blood corpuscles has been shown gradually to increase from the lemur to man.

Another convincing relationship test is that apes and monkeys are subject to syphilis inoculation, the virulence of the infection increasing with the nearness of their relationship with man, known on other grounds. The reactions are strongest in the chimpanzee, fairly strong in the orang and weaker in monkeys. (See MacCurdy's *Coming of Man*.)

*Children who Run on All Fours*, another reminiscence of pre-human habits, is the title of a work by Dr. Hrdlicka, who says that up to the age of 18 months numbers of normal, healthy children run on all fours. The anthropoid ape is itself quite childlike in its early stages. In a chimpanzee fœtus of the seventh month the hair is distributed as in a newly born baby's.

As to their respective achievements, J. B. Watson finds that "Having studied both the new-born monkey and the new-born child, we now know that the new-born monkey can do everything the human infant can do and many, many other things besides. At one month of age the infant monkey can perform many acts of skill that the human child cannot do until many years have passed." (*Psychological Care of Infant and Child*.)

Dealing with similarities and differences between men, monkeys and apes, Prof. J. R. Baker has detailed some of the characters shared by the O.W. Monkeys with man, and then, in noting such differences as the possession by many of pouches in their cheeks for storing food, the possession of tails, the absence of the appendix and the narrowness of the breast-bone, reminds us that in each of these particulars the ape resembles man.

In human beings the contraction of the toes under fright is reminiscent of grasping, and the human baby possesses remarkable grasping power with toes and hands. Since the gibbon shows a human-like straightening when suspended from a tree, this may indicate the mechanism by which man came to stand erect.

Similarities of behaviour in such matters as brain development and the physiology of the sense organs are discussed in Prof. Zuckermann's *Functional Affinities of Men, Monkeys and Apes*.

The Christian account of man's origin appears in *Genesis*, though why a book which leads us to suppose a flat earth and so forth should be regarded as trustworthy is not clear. And the claim that man was made in God's image is, if you are a believer, gross blasphemy; reconstructions of what the first men looked like are not very complimentary as a mirror to their Maker!

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## The Devil

We have read the Bible very carefully, and our deliberate opinion is that the Devil is the finest gentleman in it. He never lied or even stooped to deception; never robbed; never played the fool; never cursed like a madman; never made the innocent suffer for the guilty; never destroyed thousands of people by fiery serpents, famine, pestilence and earthquake; never drowned all the world's inhabitants at one fell swoop; never killed seventy thousand Jews because their king took a census, never hardened a ruler's heart in order to plague his people with dreadful calamities; never kept an army of favourite butchers who delighted in murder and outrage; never ordered the wholesale extermination of women and children; never handed over thousands of young virgins to the lust of a brutal soldiery, or accepted thirty-two of them as his own share of the spoil. No, all these things were done by his malignant rival.—G. W. FOOTE.

# The Ethics of Gambling

By REV. JOHN L. BROOM, M.A.

WILLIAM BLAKE likened the gambler to the whore (he disapproved of the latter), and succeeding moralists have, on the whole, been inclined to regard the activities of both with equal distaste. Nor are the two entirely unrelated in fact, the element of chance entering to a considerable extent into the oldest profession, at least from the male point of view.

On this as on so many other social problems, the Christian Church speaks with a divided voice. In general Roman Catholicism regards the punter with a less jaundiced eye than its Protestant rivals. Indeed some Catholic Churches openly organise their own "Bingo" and "Housey-Housey" raffles to assist waning funds, and in Eire, where the State is the Church, the famous Irish Sweepstake is, of course, a national institution, supported by priest and layman alike. All this, the staunch Puritanical Protestant finds very shocking, and yet another proof that any resemblance between the Scarlet Woman and Rome is not purely coincidental. In this country, largely through Church influence, we have the fantastic situation of the Government holding one pious hand aloft in horror at the very idea of officially sponsoring gambling, while with the other eagerly collecting its gigantic whack from the Pools every week. Occasional routine raids by our gallant police on betting shops, the existence of which is winked at for months on end, underlines the farce of this particularly glaring example of British hypocrisy.

A curious feature about the condemnation of gambling is that it is generally directed only against some forms of the practice. Thus we hear from parsons and such Christian social reformers as the late Seebohm Rowntree now and again of the heinous sin which is committed by the many British wage-earners every week, when they fill up their football coupon, or put their bob on the 3-30, or watch with bated breath the fortunes of their chosen greyhound on the track. But when did our moralists speak out with equal vehemence against the stockbrokers and financiers who daily try to augment their incomes (get something for nothing as the saying is) on the money market called the Stock Exchange? Yet such gamblers deal with thousands of pounds every day, while the average stake on the pools is two and sixpence per week. The Church and its followers are also strangely reluctant to pass judgment on the millionaire owners of racehorses (not excluding Her Majesty the Queen) who by supporting and patronising the "sport of Kings" support and patronise also the gambling which is an integral part of it. It looks suspiciously as though an unpleasant form of class distinction were here being exercised—as long as the gambling is done on a sufficiently large scale (as on the Stock Exchange) or by a socially important set it is legitimate, but when indulged in by Tom, Dick or Harry it is a sin.

In truth, it ought frankly to be recognised that the urge to gamble, which means simply the urge to take risks, is ineradicably rooted in every human being. Going out minus a raincoat when the forecast is bad, choosing a book by an unknown author from the library, attending a film "on spec"—all these are familiar examples of gambling which all of us, including those who attack the pools, perform regularly. On a large scale we have the floating of a business enterprise, the decision to enter upon a new type of work, and so on. In the case of the more obvious examples of "risk-taking" the reward, if we are successful, comes in the form of money, in the case of some of the others mentioned, in the form of personal satisfaction. But the former, after all, is only a means to the latter fortunate

state, and there can be no reasonable doubt that many families in straitened circumstances are living fuller and happier lives to-day as the direct result of a lucky or judicious combination of crosses and numbers.

Lastly, to condemn people for getting something for nothing is absurd. We obtain the benefits of the sun, wind and rain without charge, but no-one claims we are demoralised because we do not have to work for them. Moreover, many punters do in fact labour very conscientiously for whatever consolation they may occasionally receive as anyone who has watched the breadwinner poring over the results of previous matches going back to the Garden of Eden can testify.

In conclusion, we may say that moralists, Christian or otherwise, in dealing with the problem of gambling, ought to recognise candidly on the one hand the universal and quite legitimate desire to take chances, and on the other condemn the excesses which result when this desire is abused and exploited as it sometimes is to-day, both by pools promoters and grasping financiers.

## Peron Versus The Church

IN totalitarian countries when Church and State clash over the possession of the bodies and souls under their domination, observers in "democratic" countries usually take the view that the State is increasing its powers, which involves the Church in religious persecution.

While it is true that where there is no agreement between Church and State, or an agreement has been broken, the State has exercised control over the clergy, it is also true that the Church has played a large part in the development of totalitarian States.

The latest struggle between Church and State is taking place in Argentina, and reveals some interesting facets which at first glance appear to have little connection.

In recent months the Peronist Government have been attacking the interference of the clergy in Government affairs, and *La Prensa*, the official newspaper of the Confederation of Labour, has recently proposed a Congressional session to review the 1949 Constitution which "... respected what was considered a tradition and maintained the link between the temporal and spiritual powers. The clergy were given powers which they never had from the oligarchic Government" (obviously given to the Church because it was prepared to co-operate with the State in all its ramifications). In addition to this, priests have been arrested or expelled, restrictions put on religious meetings and the Argentine envoy has been recalled from the Vatican. Further, the Vatican newspaper, *Osservatore Romano*, has suddenly discovered that the Peron Government is totalitarian!

It is difficult to trace the actual beginning of this hostility to the Church in Argentina by the Government, although there has been a noticeable change in policy since the death of Eva Peron. Since the Church has been prepared to co-operate with the Government in the past and there is no apparent conflict of ideologies, we have to look elsewhere for an explanation.

A correspondent writing in the *Manchester Guardian* on "American Investments in Argentina," perhaps gives us a pointer to the material reasons, which are usually behind such conflicts.

He reminds us that ten years ago Washington regarded Argentina with considerable hostility, and went as far as

stopping United States vessels calling at Argentine ports and "under pressure from Washington, Argentina became largely isolated in the Western Hemisphere."

He points to the changing attitude in Washington which has accompanied the large-scale investment, both by private and State investors. He writes:—

"The latest example of this new United States interest in Argentina is a \$60 millions credit recently approved by the Export-Import Bank to finance 60 per cent. of the cost of equipment for a new Argentine steel mill. The balance of the cost will be met by credits granted by the United States suppliers of the equipment in co-operation with the bank. The Argentine Government owns a majority share in the new enterprise, and so the Export-Import Bank credit has been widely regarded, both in the United States and in Argentina, as a financial endorsement by Washington of the Peron régime. . . .

"The need for Argentina to develop her domestic oil resources has provided another and more considerable bait for private United States capital. At present imported oil costs Argentina some \$200 millions a year. President Peron's second Five-Year Plan calls for an annual production of oil of 6,000,000 tons by 1957; but present output is little more than half that amount, and ever-rising consumption—particularly as a result of the mechanisation of agriculture—makes an increase in production imperative. So far, economic nationalism, coupled with a lack of capital and technicians, has prevented the State Oil Monopoly (known as Y.P.F.) from making the most of its chances."

When America began its dollar aid to Spain some of the extreme elements in the Catholic Church who were openly hostile to the Protestant Church were actually removed from their jobs by Vatican order. It was obvious that predominantly Protestant America was not going to put up with severe Catholic hostility while providing much needed aid. So the Church, as it has done on many occasions, adjusted itself to changing conditions.

It is likely that a similar reason lies behind Peron's attitude to the Church: the need to encourage economic investment from America and all it implies which might be resented by some elements within the Church, as well as the fact that Peron will use this opportunity to rid the workers' organisations of increasing Catholic influence. R. M.

—(Freedom, April 23.)

## A Buddhist Critic

A "RATIONALIST" takes strong objection to a paragraph in "This Believing World" in which it was said that Buddhists "grovelled" before a statue of Buddha. He insists that this reveals a "lack of elementary knowledge of the teaching of Buddha."

Now it might well be that Buddha nowhere says that his followers and adorers should grovel before one of his statues any more than Jesus ever said that his worshippers should grovel before a priest or cardinal. But just as most Christians are ready to grovel in church at the slightest provocation, so do Buddhists drop on their knees immediately they see a statue of Buddha.

This was conclusively shown by Mr. Christopher Mayhew, M.P., in his television series on various religions. Here were filmed grave, educated businessmen plainly grovelling in front of "Buddhas," as well as other Buddhists "begging" for their living. This was not some heresy description or what somebody says he saw. It was properly recorded for us on the screen, and it is simply nonsense for any Buddhist to object to our description.

Speaking for myself, I might add that I claim to have at

least as much knowledge of Buddhism as our Rationalist critic; for, as he rightly says in his letter, anyone can find out quite easily what Buddhism stands for. I have read at least a dozen books on this religion and numberless articles; and I see no reason whatever to accept it in any way as a Freethinker. I am opposed to *all* religions, for all of them are packed with incredible stupidities and beliefs.

Buddhists are very fond of telling us that Buddha himself was an Atheist—but the fact remains that nobody knows what he was. Centuries after his death some of his "teachings" were collected and more and more "teachings" have been added until now it is as packed with as much ritual and reverence as Christianity. Buddhism has its priests, bells, and rosaries; like Judaism and Catholicism, it has its services in a more or less dead language; it has its creeds and incense; it has monks and nuns, saints and angels; it has its idols and relics, its shrines and pilgrimages; and, of course, its monasteries and temples. In fact, it is so like Christianity in many ways that like Jesus, Buddhists insist that Buddha was born of a Virgin. In many other ways there are astounding similarities.

Our correspondent tells us that we can find out a good deal about Buddhism from the works of that distinguished English Buddhist, Christmas Humphreys, M.A.—which is quite true; but this means no more than that we can find all about Roman Catholicism from that distinguished English Roman Catholic, John Henry Newman. Mr. Humphreys has a perfect right to believe what he likes just like Newman—but why am I expected to follow either? I can read for myself, and I am in no way attracted to a belief which has made millions of people go into a forest, sit on a bush, and contemplate their navels for months at a stretch.

Our correspondent accompanied his letter with a pamphlet, *A Universal Ethic*, by B. E. N. Jayadena, in which can be found the usual lying and impudent attack on Materialism. We all know the kind of thing—"Materialistic ideology plunges man into the animal state of sensuality. Materialism degrades man to the brute state while Buddhism elevates man into the divine state." And so on. Considering we are always told that Buddhism has no "God," I find it particularly amusing to see how they love to call Buddha "the Lord Buddha," and to talk about the "divine" state. I have no more wish to accept the "divine" state of Buddhism than exactly the same state of Christianity.

It is not surprising that Mr. Jayadena completely confuses Communism and Materialism. His ignorance of both is vast. But I have not the slightest wish to educate him. He has every right to worship as a Buddhist, but he and his disciples should understand when dealing with Freethinkers that we have no use for any religion. And this goes particularly for the mass of Asiatic nonsense that forms the greater part of Buddhism. H.C.

## Correspondence

WAS COHEN A RATIONALIST?

Mr. Ridley asks me to explain the difference between a rationalist and a Rationalist. A rationalist conforms to McCabe's definition (quoted by Mr. Ridley) but a Rationalist goes further in adopting the term as a label for his opinions, and may even join a Rationalist organisation (which Cohen never did).

Mr. Ridley may be a man of liberal views but he is not a Liberal. Mr. Cohen was a man of rationalist views but did not avow himself a Rationalist, and, as Mr. Irving said, he explicitly rejected that label.—Yours, etc., T. WRIGHT.

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