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• EDITED *by* CHAPMAN COHEN •

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*Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums,
Letters to the Editor, etc.*

Views and Opinions

More about Taboos

DEALING last week with the meaning and significance of "taboo," I was concerned mainly with correcting a complete misunderstanding of the term by the Rev. Dr. Inge. But there is much more to be said on the subject, and the more that may be said is of significance, not merely to Freethinkers, but to all students of history who would properly appreciate the part played by religion in human society. In spite of his remark that religion has preserved many antiquated absurdities and petrified fossils of thought, Dr. Inge appears to believe that "taboo" has at some time played a valuable part in social history. In this he does not stand alone. Avowedly religious people have used the argument that "taboo" plays a very useful part in society, as a means of commending the value of religion. They argue that our respect for property (the private ownership of anything) respect for life, etc., have their origin in religion. But many will be surprised to find this essentially religious argument stated by no less a person than Mr. Havelock Ellis. The reader will find his opinion expressed in that interesting little volume, *Morals, Manners and Men* (Watts and Co., rs.), from which I need quote only the following:—

Taboos remain as essential in human life as in life generally. . . . We should be in a sad case without them. . . . Human society could not survive their loss. . . . Among savages nearly everywhere it is taboo which binds the members of the clan together and ensures that they shall behave one to another in a decently social manner. . . . Life is livable because we know that wherever we go most of the people we meet will be restrained in their actions towards us by an almost instinctive network of taboos.

There is much more to the same end, and whatever validity there is in such statements is due entirely to taking a piece of "slang" for an exact scientific term. The whole significance of "taboo" as I have already said, lies, as any authority on anthropology

will admit, in its supernatural character. Remove this and we have no more than a prohibition which may or may not coincide with social well-being.

A plea somewhat similar to that of Mr. Havelock Ellis's was put forward by one whom all Freethinkers revere, Sir James Frazer, in a lecture delivered in 1909 on "Psyche's Task." Sir James was far too cautious to take up the position that taboos were responsible for the creation of good habits and practices, or that they positively preserved good things in civilized society. His thesis was that taboos had *strengthened* such things as respect for private property, government, marriage, etc. They were contributory factors. But he had this much in common with the view of Mr. Ellis, they both ignore the pressure of life on religious conceptions, and in many cases the inevitable coincidence of teachings given in the name of religion with the necessities of group life.

* * *

Life and Religion

These opinions might be treated as some of those slips that all writers are liable to make now and again, but for the fact that it is really another form of a defence of religion that is put in a crude shape such as "no morality without religion," and a more sophisticated apology that is expressed in pseudo-scientific language. Scores of the latter type of religious apologies might be cited, but I will take a very plain statement by Mr. and Mrs. Whetham in their "Heredity and Society." After stressing the importance of the need for social co-ordination they say that "no merely rational" rule of life has yet been found that will exert an authoritative control over the mass of mankind, and:—

It needs the tremendous force of supernatural sanction, it needs the sharp antithesis between fleeting temporal advantage and eternal spiritual gain, to bring the individual to acquiesce in conditions which his reason tells him are opposed to his interests on this earth. . . . Anthropology shows us how in primitive peoples sanctions are invoked to enforce all the complicated laws and customs of savage life. . . . Down through the ages we see the promise of some ultimate religious reward or punishment invoked to send the warrior to battle, to bind the members of a tribe or nation into an effective whole, and to hold together the units of a family. . . . Races which have known how to use the means of strength have inevitably supplanted those without them. Thus the religious instinct, in helping those in whom it is hereditary, itself spreads through mankind.

The last sentence is *very* foolish, and is added only to make clear what the writers had in mind.

* * *

Life and the Supernatural

In one form or another this argument, that religion has played a useful part in life, and may still do so, meets us in many directions. And it may be said that

it well illustrates the common fallacy of putting the cart before the horse; it certainly fails to take into consideration the nature of social evolution. It ignores the fact that man springs from a gregarious form of animal life, and that in itself provides him with the "urge" and capacity for social cohesion and co-operation long before he develops the belief in the supernatural and very much longer before he appreciates the nature of social forces. The law of the pack, with all that that law implies, is in operation before man becomes conscious of the need for cohesion. The part played by the taboo comes in long after the gregarious nature of the earliest race of semi-humans is definitely shaped.

But by the time that man reaches the stage at which he is able to form ideas of how things occur the functioning of the supernatural is complete. So far as he looks for a cause of events the explanation is in terms of magic or of the supernatural. When he rubs two pieces of wood in order to get fire, it is not the friction that causes fire, but the mysterious "mana" that inhabits it. When he digs and sows in order to grow food, it is the same power that creates the increase. Whatever he does and whatever happens the same explanation is on hand. There is no greater need to seek for proof of this than to look round at our own society; for just as we have in the body rudimentary and other structures that derive directly from our animal ancestors, so we have our pseudo-civilized folk praying for rain, thanking the gods for recovering from a disease, invoking them to give victory in battle, and expressing the same idea in such language as "God save you," "God bless you," etc.

The supernatural is, therefore, at a very early stage, on the scene in connexion with every event, and with every action, whether the action or the event be good or bad. To say that the supernatural, or the "taboo" has accompanied and enforced many *good* actions is to tell us exactly nothing at all, for it accompanies every action. The reply to the writers I have quoted, when they praise the taboo and the supernatural for the help it has been is to answer in the words of Voltaire that prayer is good in cases of sickness—provided it is accompanied with the proper kind of treatment. We commend our authors—on that point—to the old story of the magic stone that made excellent soup, if after one had boiled the stone 23 minutes one added some vegetables, meat and seasoning.

* * *

Society and Religion

But there is a far more certain check, a much more reliable and more permanent one, on anti-social action than is offered by supernaturalism. And this lies in the very nature of the human group. Imagine a human group wherein the gregarious feeling is so weak that each individual shuns every other individual, or where the sense of right and wrong is so poor that all are equally indifferent as to whether they cause pleasure or pain to their fellows, or where mutual help is steadily dying out, or where no union is shown in the face of an aggression that threatens the life of the group. What would happen to a society in that state? It would obviously disappear. Respect for human life is one of the things that Frazer thinks has been strengthened by the "taboo." But can one conceive a human society in which some respect was not paid to human life? And can one imagine a society continuing in which no such respect existed? Obviously regard for the life of others is an essential condition of human existence. Sir James forgets the nature of human society, and overlooks the imperative nature of the laws of social existence, and Mr. Ellis expands a futile thesis by using a slang term as though it expresses a sound sociological generalization.

No one questions that some "taboos" that is, the idea of a supernatural sanction, have been associated with beneficial things. How could it be otherwise? Where every action is surrounded with an aura of supernaturalism, and no other explanation of anything is given, must it not inevitably follow that the supernatural will give its sanction to some things that are wholesome? One might as reasonably argue that the wearing of black and grey neckties secures good fortune because while wearing a tie of that description good fortune was encountered. It is on that kind of reasoning that all religion lives. The religionist claims comfort from praying, but so does another man from whisky. Thousands of people felt themselves better for being touched by the sacred hand of Charles II., and I am sure there are thousands of people to-day would feel quite "bucked" if George VI. laid his hand on their shoulder. No one disputes that superstition is found in association with good things as well as with bad ones, and in such instances it is not the "taboos" that perpetuates the good thing, it is the other way about. It is the accidental association of the supernatural with good actions or useful things that gives the taboo its authority. The essential question is the relation between the superstition and the things in question.

Apart from this accidental association of "taboos"—real taboos—with actions the influence of the taboo is wholly evil. In the first place the taboo does not inspire to a more correct understanding. It is universally the other way about. A thing that is taboo, must not merely be avoided, its taboocness must not be questioned, nor must its value be in any way denied. Even where the thing subjected to taboo is good there is a very effective bar placed to a better understanding of its nature.

One need only think of such questions as the family, marriage, the relations of different classes of society, the improvement of morals, the nature of the State, and so forth. The greatest obstacle to their understanding and their modification in the light of social needs is the taboo. And when things are wholly bad, there is no greater preventative to their removal. In this direction there is developed an almost unconscious opposition to change that is the greatest difficulty the reformer has to encounter. What has been must always be is an unconscious rule with multitudes. The "Reformer," the "Agitator" become objects of taboo; even to-day there is a certain fear of being called either. They aim at touching something that is established, and the thousands of generations during which such an action was believed to bring down the anger of the gods have left their impress on our lives. The "taboo" is the greatest and one of the most evil of legacies we have inherited from the past, and few have had to fight them more determinedly than the two men I have been criticizing.

It is with a full recognition of what they have done, and how much they have accomplished that I have written this criticism. The pity is all the greater that they should, even inadvertently, supply the enemy with ammunition which they will not be slow to use.

CHAPMAN COHEN

FAIR PLAY FOR SATAN

If Christianity be true the world owes the devil much, the parsons owe him everything. We praise the Lord for having left us in a frightful state of ignorance, and blame the devil for having got us out of it. The nearest the clergy have ever got to giving the devil his due is when they have said that men like Bruno and Bradlaugh, and Voltaire and Darwin were his representatives. And even this compliment they intended as an insult.

My Yesterdays

Not the riches safe and palling, not for us the tame enjoyment,
Pioneers! O Pioneers!—Walt Whitman.

THE death of Jacob Popp, of High Wycombe, is a gentle reminder that the English habit of compromise is not always "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever." In the course of a few years, Popp paid hundreds of fines because of his defiance of the Sunday Closing Act. Prosecuted for breaking the Sabbath, he was fined, but he continued to keep his shop open on Sundays. For weeks, months, years he was served with summonses, and for year after year he went to Court on Mondays to pay the fines. Such a state of affairs was not conducive to a respect for the dignity of the law, nor was it a reminder of the toleration in a country pretending to be in the very van of civilization.

The way of the pioneer is hard, but it has its moments. The fight against Sabbatarianism at Southend-on-Sea was a case in point. Newsagents were prosecuted by the bigots for selling Sunday papers on at sea front, but J. K. Sykes, a local Freethinker, decided to sell direct from his shop in the High Street. The Sabbatarians tried to crush him, and resorted to prosecution. Now, Sykes himself was a public entertainer, and was often away from home. In his absence, his mother, Sarah Sykes, was summoned. On his return, Sykes fought the bigots with skill and determination. He declared in Court that he was the owner of the shop, and not his mother, and that the summons was wrongly directed. Further, he upset the apple-cart by applying for summonses against the local authorities for Sunday offences in opening the pier for payment, for charging for admission to the band-enclosure, and for advertising Sunday concerts. He never got his summonses against the authorities, and the case against himself was dropped. The whole affair was as humorous as the celebrated case, *Bardell versus Pickwick*.

In his spare time Sykes essayed journalism, and he proved himself a skilful writer and a humorist of some merit. Unfortunately for his fame, his talents were used in purely local politics and parochial trivialities. I remember one of the jests: "The camel can exist for a whole week without a drink, which is more than can be said of some of the local councillors." He used to write lengthy paragraphs, every word of which began with the same letter of the alphabet, and he burst into jingling verse at the slightest provocation. At one time he had a shop at Shakespeare Crescent, which he promptly dubbed, "Sykes' Corner," saying it was uncommon to have two poets commemorated in the same thoroughfare. Once when touring Cornwall as an illusionist he gave his landlord a couple of tickets for the show. On his return in the "wee, small hours," the landlord, looking out of the window, refused to let him in, saying that he would not allow anybody to enter his house who had dealings with "Satan." His later years were embarrassed by poverty, and he resorted to devious methods to gain a living. As a journalist, I had to visit a missionary exhibition, where some sample "cannibals" from the South-Seas were supposed to be on show, arrayed in full war paint. The front row was impressive enough, but those behind were too ferocious to be real. As I was passing on, I heard a stage-whisper: "See you later, old-man." It was poor old Sykes, earning six bob a day to keep the wolf away by masquerading as a monster. On another occasion, arrayed as a clown, he was proceeding to a children's party, and travelled by tram. In the vehicle was a highly-respectable member of the local council, and Sykes sat down beside him, and engaged him in conversation. In telling the

tale, Sykes added, "That Councillor had no genius for dialogue."

Whilst in hospital, Sykes caused a sensation by describing himself to the clergyman as a "Chinese Presbyterian." "Alas, poor Yorick!" To be a pioneer is never easy; but to be a pioneer in a petty, provincial town is to imperil your chances of living. If the bigots had had their way, poor Sykes would have died like a poisoned rat in a hole.

One unforgettable day I met Mangasarian of Chicago, U.S.A. Foote rang me up on the telephone and told me to drop tools and meet a great American. At the appointed hour I went to the Queen's Hotel, Westcliff, and was introduced by Foote. It was a glorious day, the sea was blue, and Westcliff looked at its best and bravest. Mangasarian had just completed a European grand tour including Italy, France, all the usual show places, but he smiled approvingly: "Sure, this is a fine place! You fellows know where to live." We talked of Edgar Saltus, and other literary Americans, of Transatlantic Freethought, and of many things. What a scholar he was! He had the culture of the world at his finger-tips, and, although Americans are fine talkers, he made conversation one of the fine arts. Laughingly, he told us: "I have never seen a gangster, although I live in Chicago." Foote tried to get Mangasarian to lecture in London, but, although willing, his travel time-table would not permit. It was our loss, for no man was more at home with

The glory that was Greece,
And the grandeur that was Rome.

J. M. Wheeler was a most lovable little man, and as he and I were both bookworms we had a common bond of sympathy in addition to our devotion to the cause. He haunted the bookstalls and bookshops with complete impartiality, and might be found at any time scrutinizing the oddments on a Caledonian Market barrow, or looking round a West-End bookseller's stock. Whenever he made a "find" he used to rush round to my place of business and compare notes. With his knowledge of literature he could have made a comfortable living by buying and selling books, but he was happier with an old Southwell pamphlet, or report of an early Freethought trial, than with a first edition of a famous author. I once rescued a Whistler etching from a bundle of prints which he had hurriedly searched for a Romney portrait of Thomas Paine.

Wheeler's pockets were nearly always bulging with books, magazines and pamphlets purchased on his daily travels, and he read even at meal-times. His friend, Foote, said: "Joe is so kind-hearted that he cannot bear to see a book out in the rain." He must have bought thousands of books in his time. As he said, jestingly, that his limit was sixpence, it was surprising what he did purchase at a low price. One day he showed me, with glee, a book concerning Oriental praying-machines with the title *Wheels and Wheelers*. For a period he collected odd volumes, hoping to find the others later. When found, they seldom matched, so he gave the quest up. Withal, he was a scholar. Whilst compiling his *Dictionary of Freethinkers*, he spent an enormous amount of time in the British Museum and other libraries. He had collected a mass of material for his proposed *History of Freethought*, but I fear it was dispersed after his death. I tried to trace it but failed, to my extreme regret.

One trifling thing sticks in my mind. Wheeler, always careless of dress, carried a metal watch. It had a tick like an eight-day clock, and when sitting opposite to him, in a pause in conversation, this "tick-tick" was clearly audible. It took about five minutes to wind the watch up, or so it seemed, and he used to

take it out, periodically, and give it a dozen turns to lessen the drudgery of a full performance.

Wheeler came of Democratic stock. His front names proved it, for he was dubbed, Joseph Mazzini Wheeler, by his parents. He was himself fond of using it, for he always wrote his name in full on the fly-leaves of his books. His own prime interest in life was not political, but that of being a truth-seeker. The books and articles he wrote for so many years revealed his insatiable desire for knowledge. His curiosity in all intellectual directions was, to the last, bright and undimmed. Unlike so many scholars, he enjoyed sharing with others the tapping of fresh sources of information.

And still the wonder grew
That one small head could carry all he knew.

MIMNERMUS

The Archipelago of Palm and Pine

THE remarkable island group known as the Philippines is situated in the Oriental Seas. It is composed of several thousand isles and islets. Luzon is as large as England, but 446 only possess areas of one square mile or more. Mindanao, however, embraces 36,290 square miles, while the population of the archipelago was estimated at 13,266,700 in 1936.

Lying within the tropics, with elevations of 3,000 to 4,000 feet, and isolated volcanoes attaining a height of 8,000 to 10,000 feet, the Philippines present a picture of exuberant tropical flora and magnificent scenery. The islands have been compared with the most celebrated tropical regions such as Java, Brazil and Ceylon. The delicate green of the lowland palms and the feathery fronds of the bamboos which fringe the numberless streams contrast vividly with the pine forests decking the upland summits. In the words of Dr. Keane: "Half-concealed in coconut palms lie the towns and villages amid the vivid green of the rice fields and sugar plantations; while the woodlands and gardens are beautiful with the dazzling hues of their blossoms and fruits. From this vegetation the native women seem to have acquired the art of clothing themselves in the brightest colours. For the wealth of colour in which plants, animals, and man himself are arrayed, harmonizes perfectly with the fulness of light poured down by a fierce tropical sun on the bosom of the earth."

Nevertheless, the Philippines are not a sublunary paradise, for capricious Nature spits her venom on just and unjust impartially. The centres of population have long been decimated by Asiatic cholera and other deadly diseases. Swarms of ravenous locusts destroy the crops, leaving famine and misery in their trail. The monsoons overflow the rivers and, even when the floods have receded, there is the constant danger of earth tremors and volcanic disturbances. During these eruptions red-hot cinders rain on the rice and other plantations, while the persistent danger of drowning in the waters of a seismic wave renders life insecure.

In 1521, in an encounter with the natives of Mactan, the great navigator Magellan lost his life. To the isles he discovered he gave the name of St. Lazarus, but later, in 1642, Lopez de Villalobos renamed the archipelago the Islas Filipinas in honour of Philip II of Spain. At the time of the Spanish invasion many of the natives were far superior to savagery. Cereals were widely cultivated, domesticated animals were utilized as food and employed in labour, iron and gold were in use and the natives possessed a phonetic script.

Under Legaspi, the Spanish exploiters took possession of the Philippines in 1671, in which year Manila on the island of Luzon was founded. This nominal conquest seems to have been effected with a modicum of cruelty and bloodshed. Religion was partly responsible for this unusual mildness, as the priests who accompanied the expeditions made easy converts and soon dominated the superstitious and ceremonial loving natives of the coasts.

In the northern districts however the tribes were no more civilized than the wildest African races, while the rapacious Iberians met their match in the so-called Moors in the Sulu Islands and Mindanao. These natives were Moslems and were intrepid navigators and bold pirates. So, for three centuries, the Spaniards strove to subdue these turbulent seafarers without success. In 1731 it was decided that the trouble must be ended, and a Spanish squadron assailed Jolo in complete confidence of an easy victory. But the Sulu sailors withstood their enemies and even captured their colours and in high dudgeon the Spaniards sailed away. Thus the Moslems maintained their independence until 1871, when at long last Spanish rule was completed in the islands.

But down to 1898, when the Philippines passed into American possession Spain exercised little authority over considerable areas of the archipelago and even now some of the islands remain unexplored.

The vagaries of the climate are remarkable. The rainfall is copious, and in Manila the yearly downpour is 99 inches against London's 25, while in Mindanao it amounts to 156 inches and over much of Luzon it is considerably greater. Owing to their geographical position and the mountainous nature of the islands the successive monsoons occasion a deluge. The country is flooded, the roads are submerged and the many marshes are converted into lakes, while nothing save the tree tops remains visible. Such is the condition of the eastern coast lines when the north-eastern monsoon is in full blast. Yet at this period the western region enjoys splendid settled weather, both on land and sea. Thus the agricultural seasons differ in each region, and "when it is seed time on one side of the Sierra, the harvest is being gathered on the other."

Apart from its southern area, the archipelago suffers from terrible typhoons, especially in October, a month of ill omen to the voyagers in the China Sea. These hurricanes occasion widespread destruction, but now that the Manila Observatory is warned of an impending storm, notice is immediately transmitted to Hong Kong. In past years these typhoons have caused enormous damage and countless deaths. In 1856 a storm of this character devastated Manila and the surrounding district. In 1882 fewer lives were lost, but the hurricane was appalling, the velocity of the wind reaching 145 miles per hour. Yet, the earthquakes have proved far more frequent and disastrous than the typhoons. Indeed, the seismographs register a practically ceaseless tremor of the earth, and the houses are so constructed that danger to life and property is diminished. The calamities of the nineteenth century alone constitute a formidable list. But that of 1863 was the most destructive when the Manila Cathedral, packed with affrighted people, collapsed and buried multitudes in its ruins.

The truly indigenous natives are apparently the diminutive Negritos who have since been driven into the more inaccessible regions by the energetic and enterprising Malaysians. The former have been reduced in number to a mere 20,000, and few are those who do not betray admixture with Malay and other alien blood. The pure Negrito is dwarf-like in stature, averaging 4 feet 10 inches only in height, or even less, according to Semper. "Their prognathous and

deeply lined faces," we are assured, "give them an ape-like appearance. The nose is broad and flat, and the nostrils dilated, and the slender build and small size of the body cause the head to appear disproportionately large. They are somewhat timid and gentle by nature, and great affection exists between parents and children. . . . Their intelligence is of a very low type, and according to Montano they are unable to count above five. Such religion as they have would appear to consist of a sort of ancestor worship."

Under Spanish dominion the Malay peoples were classified as *Indios* who, although superficially Catholic, secretly retained their native superstitions; as *Infiéles*; those who obstinately clung to their customary beliefs, and as *Moros*, the Moslem communities in Sulus and Mindanao. Even the Christianized natives resented the heavy taxation imposed, nor did they tamely submit to the tyranny of the friars as the years rolled on. For, during the nineteenth century, advanced opinions penetrated the Philippines and several insurrections occurred, notably that of 1872. In 1896, Dr. José Rizal, an ardent native reformer, suffered death, and the country was gravely disturbed at the time of the Spanish-American War, when the Spanish Fleet was sunk by the warships of the United States.

Since then the Roman Church in the islands has declined in authority. In 1902 an independent Church was established which accepts the teachings of modern science. All alleged revelation is rejected, and miracles are discarded as untenable. According to the *Statesman's Year Book*, the officially-conducted Religious census of 1918, showed that "the independent Filipino Church had 1,417,444 followers, but in the last Church census these numbered 4 million."

Now that the archipelago is administered by America, education is free, secular and co-educational. The entire system is conducted in the English language and, when the present Government relinquishes its rule, the Commonwealth of the Philippines is to assume complete control as the Philippine Republic, the United States' Congress having sanctioned ultimate independence for the Filipinos.

Chinese merchants and retailers constitute a comparatively wealthy and influential section of the population. They appear to have traded in the archipelago for many centuries, and would long since have dominated the islands, but for the despotic methods of the Spaniards. In Manila, in bad past years, several wholesale massacres of the Celestials were organized by the authorities. The last of these occurred in 1819, when, like the Jews in the Christian Middle Ages in Europe, they were charged with the crime of contaminating the wells. "Their numbers," estimates Dr. Guillemard, "were limited to 6,000, but frequently rose to 30,000 or 40,000, only to be reduced by slaughter and exile. In 1603 some 23,000 were killed. Heavy imposts and strict regulations drove them to revolt in 1639 when over 30,000 fell victims."

The Chinese settlers co-operated with the English when they occupied Manila in 1762, but with the British evacuation, an order was given by the Spanish Governor for the wholesale execution of the Chinese, which was very extensively attempted. But despite this sombre series of events the persecuted people have increased in numbers and prosperity, and in 1905 it was estimated that, in addition to those of mixed parentage who dwell in most parts of the archipelago, the pure Chinese totalled 100,000. As a consequence of European, American, Chinese and Japanese cohabitation with the native women, the Philippines contain a mongrel medley of a very remarkable character.

Although the Negritos must be regarded as the true aborigines, some more civilized stock at one period occupied the islands. Many cave burials have

come to light in several different regions, which disclose coffins with well-carved wooden handles, as well as urns in which artificially deformed skulls have been deposited. Decorated pottery and gold ornaments have also been discovered. These sepulchres are reputedly ancient, but whoever their unknown occupants were their decorative styles strongly suggest the exercise of Japanese and Chinese influences in their arts and crafts.

T. F. PALMER

Paul and the Fair Sex

THE Christian Religion owes an enormous debt to Paul. Christian Theology, it has often been pointed out, is Pauline. The Story of the Fall of Man in the Garden of Eden was seized upon by Paul and strung by him into a series of dogmas. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Paul spoke plainly upon matters which the Gospel Jesus forgot to tell us about. Paul set about the business of erecting a theological system. He had evidently as much "authority" as was required or his books would not have been included in God's Revelation to Man (and Woman). True, Paul at times funk'd laying down the law, and told us sometimes he only did his best; but God, when he included Paul's opinions in his volume, gave them his imprimatur. It was for God to know whether Paul was inspired or not, not Paul.

Now Paul was afraid of woman. Probably he had reason to be, for, as *Saul* (in his unregenerate days), he probably did not lack knowledge of women and affairs. Paul knew, in his new sphere, that a woman, paying strict attention to business could make a man's concern with his soul to reach vanishing point. This was a damning characteristic. Many of the Christian Fathers thought of women as Paul did, only more so, and did not mince their words about the hussies. When a man (the image and glory of God) was capable of assessing an hour of dalliance with *Amaryllis* in the shade as of greater value than the state of his eternal soul, then *Amaryllis* must be classed amongst the Seven Dangers of the World. *Amaryllis* had to be anathematized, and this was done whole-heartedly and in not particularly choice terms.

Behind all Paul's beliefs, there was another one, a belief of enormous repercussions. It is not fair to Paul to neglect, or minimise, this belief. He did not think that men and women were going to enjoy a long innings on this earth. The end of the world was not far off. In that belief, nothing mundane was of first importance. The Christian religion was for those who were then alive; not for those alive in 1939. There wasn't going to be any 1939. Jesus had said so, and said it very plainly, for him. Well then, what about sex relations? "Marry," but only if you must, for "It is better to marry than to burn." The whole duty of men and women was to get right with God. The espousal that concerned them was their espousal to Christ.

Paul was no feminist. He believed that the man is not of the woman but the woman of the man; neither was the man created for the woman but the woman for the man. A man in church ought not to cover his head "forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God." "But," he continues, "the woman is the glory of the man." So she must keep her head covered in Church; if she does not, she "dishonoureth her head."

Marriage, what of it? He had looked about had Paul, and what had he found? He that is unmarried careth for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord. But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. The

same unfortunate symptoms he diagnosed in virgins. He found a difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord in order to be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.

The things of the world. What matter the things of the world? "Brethren," he told them, "The time is short." And he drew a corollary from this that those who had wives should "be as though they had none." Probably he sensed that the creation of more babies, just to be "caught up," was going to create also an ethical problem too puzzling even for Omnipotence.

If a man (being one of the brethren) has a daughter and she wishes to wed, he sinneth not if he allows her to do so. But, if he does not so allow, he also does well. In fact he does better. "So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better." For the unfortunate lass is apt to forget the things of the Lord and become house-proud and pay attention to the making of beef-steak puddings. *The things of the world!*

Paul damned marriage with faint praise. Nay, that is an overstatement; he just damned it. Does it surprise anyone to find the Christian Churches standing to-day as the champions of Holy Matrimony—a magnificent institution, the most godlike of all our institutions? It doesn't surprise us at all. The Christian Church takes any position it thinks strategic. If Paul, the inventor of the Christian Religion, has opinions on those matters that are not considered seemly by the growing mind and sentiment of man, Paul must be put in his place—and that place is the Dust Bin. Christianity is for all time, and in order to be for all time, it must be anything—as the occasion arises.

It is rather astonishing that women, with the franchise campaign fresh in their memories, should not see these facts plainly. You will hear them still repeating phrases as to what the Church has done for women. Could any publicist to-day take the view that Paul took of woman in any public print, in any public hall, in any pulpit, and not be received with contempt?

One doesn't forget that Paul spoke from first principles, one of which was the speedy end of the world, and that saves him from the disrespect we give to those who have found out that Jesus, Paul, and the Early Christians were all the victims of a delusion that *time has proved*. We can see that "Take no thought for the morrow" and kindred precepts were born of this belief and were not then the idiocy that time has proved them now to be. Nowadays the attempt to put such precepts forward as part of the divine vision, shirking deliberately a background which renders them at least plausible, can ask for any attitude from us save that of respectful attention.

And women, too, claiming equal rights with men and an independence of thought and action, speak reverently this day of the *New Testament*, which puts them into a position quite free from dignity, and from decency. They frequently hear Paul quoted as saying, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." So spoke Paul, and we can understand there are some men prepared to say "Hear, Hear!" We cannot, however, understand one woman who pretends that this is a pearl of wisdom, garnered from the Greatest Apostle of the World's Greatest Teacher. Better far for her to accept the advice and keep silence than open her mouth to express a silly commendation of such Christian precepts and practices. Better a serf-like silence than a pitiful psittacosis. T. H. ELSTON

Let Him Clean up His own House!

We have just had here (Sydney, N.S.W., Australia) one of those Catholic outpourings regarding divorce so characteristic of that church.

In the present instance, the denouncer was the Rev. P. Walsh, in a sermon at Sydney's principal Catholic edifice—St. Mary's Cathedral. The purport of his remarks was that, in opposing divorce, "the Catholic Church made a lone stand in defence of the purity of the family," and that lust—due, of course, to divorce—was "a fatal agency whose track down the ages was marked with desolation and death." "Lust," presumably the most offensive term he could use, is the word that you would naturally expect a priest to employ—eagerly and lusciously.

The implication of the Rev. Walsh's remarks is perfectly clear.

"Purity of the home" is an exclusively Catholic virtue, because Catholics do not approve of divorce. "Lust" is the lot of all others, for the reason that they do not share the Catholic view with regard to divorce. Could there, to begin with, be a more impudent, baseless assertion?

The conduct of Catholics themselves utterly refutes the Rev. Walsh. Take the figures of any divorce court in Christian-professing countries. These will reveal—and do reveal—that the number of Catholics seeking divorces are just as numerous as those of other religious persuasions—that is, proportionately to the Catholic population in comparison with the adherents of other faiths.

Consequently, the insult by the Rev. Walsh applies—not merely to Protestants—but to Catholics as well.

Need it be said that it is upon the Bible that Father Walsh takes his lofty, moralizing stand? From that source he presumes to get his authority. But will the Bible bear a moment's examination in the sense of its being a model in matrimonial conduct?

There is no necessity to carry this investigation to any great length. For example, what of Solomon, who had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines? Nor was his father David—that is, in point of exemplary morality—any better. True, David is credited with a mere seven or eight wives; but to get one of the women he wanted, did he not resort to the despicable, murderous trick of having her husband placed in the forefront of a battle so that he would be killed? This, too, is the David who is represented to us as a man after God's own heart!

The Rev. Walsh, it is clear, has precious little in the lives of the favoured figures of the Bible upon which to base an indictment of "lust," because of a resort to law by a man or woman to get relief where the other party has violated the marriage contract. Rather is it all the other way about. To compel the two to remain together—the suffering and the guilty—is a conception of justice that could only commend itself to a superstitious, benighted priestly mind.

There is a duty immediately at hand to which the Rev. Walsh might well confine himself. This is to remove, if he can, the odiousness that attaches to—among so many others—David and Solomon. I particularly instance these two because they are reputed to be the direct forbears of Jesus. It is the Bible that the Rev. Walsh professes to expound; it is the teachings and examples in that book that he is expected to enunciate; and it is to induce a mode of life in keeping with the Bible that he has become a member of the priesthood. Let him, then, seek to fulfil his mission—not by inveighing against the alleged present-day impurities of the world—but by showing that his beloved Biblical authorities, if they were alive to-day, would not be the despised and shunned figures of the entire human race.

J. Y. ANDERONEY

Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

Adam was the author of sin, and I wish he had taken out an international copyright on it.—Mark Twain.

Acid Drops

We have little time and small space in which to comment on the message of President Roosevelt to the piratical powers—they were the real ones to whom the message was addressed. If we are not mistaken it will bring about the result of forcing a split between Hitler and Mussolini, lead them to action which will lead to their downfall, or so injure both of the dictators in the eyes of that section of the people that really support them, as to injure their prestige, which is the one thing that spells ruin to a dictator.

In any case the Presidential message seems likely to bring about what many supporters of Hitler in this country were afraid would happen, and to prevent which the disaster of Munich was perpetrated. Either the message will bring the dictators to heel, or they will embark on a course that will carry them to destruction. The change of attitude towards collective action, and also with regard to Russia is, in this connexion, significant. Even the *Express*, *Daily Mail*, the *Observer* and other isolationist papers have come to heel, but without any kind of apology to their dupes. The world has had a very expensive, but necessary, lesson in the inevitability of collective action, and in the complete idiocy of the cry that we "must mind our own business," which as it was preached meant putting ourselves out of business altogether.

We are getting fearful of the future! The British Branch of the German Fascist movement is not going to celebrate the birthday of Hitler in London. (We wonder what the English leaders of the Nazis think of this). The reason given is "the recent persecution and terrorism" of Germans in England. "Many loyal Germans are thinking of leaving London, and German maids say they are ill-treated by their mistresses."

So we are fearful of the future. It will be remembered by many—whether the Government has any official information of it or not—that the process runs, first, ill-treatment of Germans, then an appeal to Berlin for redress, next, a demand from Hitler for help, finally the offending nation is taken within the Reich, with a second final in the shape of a concentration camp or execution, or the trial of prominent politicians for treason, because they have been disloyal to him of the Chaplin moustache. So we advise Mr. Chamberlain that he appease Hitler and his subjects in Britain by at least giving German residents a place in Parliament, say about 250 seats, and offer him also the control of Britain from the Tweed northward. After all, one cannot expect a nation of seventy million Germans to be terrorized and persecuted by such a miserable little crowd as inhabit these islands. We hope that if and when Hitler controls this country it will be remembered in our favour that we spoke up for the rights of Germans.

Hitler is not playing the game with his most devoted followers. One of the chief attractions held out to his men in their onslaught on the Jews was the opportunities it gave for plunder. They cannot all have paid jobs, so plunder is the next best substitute. Now a new valuation of the Jewish property "bought" by the Nazis is to be taken. From all above the original price paid, which was generally a mere "token" payment, seventy per cent will be taken by the Government, and the owners of the property will have to pay the expenses of the valuation. It is not fair, and we are sure that many of Hitler's followers will resent being treated in this way.

One can often get quite a nice display of logical criticism from a Christian preacher—when he is going for the religious opinions of those with whom he disagrees. For example. Referring to the Report on Doctrine and to the opinion expressed that the virgin birth and the bodily resurrection of Jesus are involved in Incarnation, the Rev. R. Gladstone, Vice-Chairman of the Modern Church Council, asks:—

How can the reliability of statements about historic events be based upon a doctrinal necessity? Either the Virgin Birth and the Bodily Resurrection occurred in time and space or they did not. The question can only be solved by historical research and literary criticism.

Exactly! It Jesus Christ was born of a virgin and rose from the dead, these happenings are quite independent of any doctrine. They are as much historic events as the destruction of Pompeii or the Black Plague. And if two such remarkable events did occur—the *only* occasion when such things happened—they must, as Gibbon remarked in a connexion slightly different from this one, have commanded the attention of every civilized people, and have sunk deep into the memories of those round about Jesus. As it is, the so-called historic evidence put forward to prove these events could be put on a sheet of notepaper.

But what of the position of Mr. Gladstone himself? On what logical grounds does he call himself a Christian? After all, there is what one may call an historic Jesus. But the only Jesus Christ known to history is one who was believed to be born of a virgin and who did rise from the dead. It is true that there is no evidence of these events ever happening, but they historically belong to the Christian Church, and without them the Christian Church has no standing in logic, in reason, or in common decency. Christians would say that Christianity is a body of doctrines resting on certain historic events. If Mr. Gladstone no longer believes in the historic events on which Christianity is built, why still call himself a Christian?

General Franco has decreed that twenty-five thousand civil marriages contracted by those living in Republican Spain are invalid. It is not stated whether this decree was issued by the order of Mussolini and Hitler or not. The only sure thing is that Franco will have to act as he is ordered by these two. There seems no reason why Spain should not be declared part of the Italian Empire—that is, no reason so long as Hitler does not object. But which ever way it ends, Spain belongs to the Italian-Japanese-German combination. It should be said that no "official" intimation of this being the case has reached our Government. But the abolition of civil marriages is accomplished.

Mr. E. Johnson is the after-care officer of the Heswell Naval School, and his experience, or lack of it, is very startling. Preaching in St. Nicholas's Church he said he had yet to meet a sailor who was either an Agnostic or an Atheist. Perhaps Mr. Johnson only meets sailors through a telescope, but there does not seem any need for his insulting the intelligence of sailors in general in this way. Anyway we fancy we could enlighten Mr. Johnson very considerably. Of course, he might say that as he was preaching in St. Nicholas's no one expected him to stick to the strict truth.

The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool, Dr. Downey (What a name for a Roman Catholic Archbishop) is disgusted at Roman Catholics marrying Protestants. He says that so long as these offensive mixed marriages continue so long will they be disrupted by religious squabbles. We agree. When a bigoted Protestant marries a bigoted Roman Catholic, trouble is very likely to come. But that is the fault of religion and of men like Dr. Downey. In any case we see no ground whatever for Hitler's desire that Nazis should marry only Nazis. In either case if that is continued for several generations, the intelligence of the family will sink to the level of Nazism. If Dr. Downey has his way he will keep the family properly, and Roman Catholicly, stupid. Dr. Downey knows his game.

What wonderful people are the British Israelites. One of the fraternity, to wit, A. W. Green, of Norbury (evidently Green by name and "green" by nature), sponsors the theory of a British-Israelite author that "the Great Tribulation which is immediately to precede the estab-

lishment of His Kingdom" will take place on April 25-26 next, by "devouring fire," which will make nations fall and men "move out of their holes like worms of the earth."

Mr. R. Ellis Roberts, who is so very Christian and so very credulous, wrote the other day, "How much does not Christian literature, especially Christian hymnology, owe to the devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ?" He might have well added that the enormous wealth of the Christian Church has also come mainly from the same source, and will continue to do so for many a generation yet. The way in which the "Passion" story has been exploited for wealth by the Church proves how well it knows credulity and gullibility in human nature.

It is interesting to find that, in a most exhaustive work on Leonardo da Vinci, one of the greatest "all-round" geniuses of all time, the author, Mme. Vallentin, though trying hard to regard him "as essentially a Protestant before the time," has to admit that his satire "challenged the very basis of the Faith." A reviewer adds that "though he was a great religious painter, and gave the world its most beautiful Madonna, his easily decipherable cryptography, no less than the testimony of his contemporaries, makes it difficult to support his orthodoxy." All of which means that Leonardo was an unbeliever or a Freethinker—a most bitter pill for the pious to swallow when it is considered that no one disputes his place as one of the supreme figures this world has ever produced.

One or two articles in *Religion in Education*, a quarterly Review published by the Student Christian Movement, deserve a little notice. In the first, Dr. A. W. Harrison, discussing the Anglican Free Church recommendations on Religious Education, "rightly emphasizes the growing co-operation of Anglicans and Free Churchmen" on this question of keeping religion at all costs in our schools. There is almost complete unity among all Christian sects on this question. Dr. Harrison warmly recommends the use of agreed syllabuses of religious instruction in both provided and in non-provided schools—in fact he and his like will do almost anything to keep religion in our schools.

Tennessee's House of Representatives recently turned down a proposal to repeal the "Monkey Law," which forbids the teaching of evolution in any of its schools. There is a Society in this country that would like to see the Monkey Law passed by our Parliament, and they have a few friends in the House of Commons. There people might console themselves with a remark made by "Dod Grile" that those who object to having descended from an ape may at least console themselves with the reflection that they have not yet developed far enough to preclude the possibility of a return. One of the members, who voted with the majority, put the religious case well. He said, "I don't want my children to be taught something I don't believe." That is the religious point of view in a nutshell. Curiously, it is this particular point, but with regard to Freethinkers instead of Christians, that Mr. Cohen discusses in his recent pamphlet, *Freethought and the Child*.

The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council granted a Swazi chief leave to appeal against the death sentence passed on him for "procuring murder." The case was one of witchcraft, and the chief pleaded that he had only sought a cure for dreams through the ceremony of placing a rope, specially made, across the graves of those whose "spirits" caused the dreams. Mr. Horace Douglas, K.C., for petitioner, quoted "an authoritative work on primitive superstition" in support of the rope ceremony. Just so: and he might have quoted the Bible, faith-healing, astrology, spiritualism, mascots, saints and relics, among equally absurd superstitions rampant in alleged "civilized" communities at this hour. African natives may have some cannibalistic rites, but none will be found to chew a mealie (maize) and take a sip of Kaffir beer in the belief that they are eating the veritable flesh and blood of a god. So, dear Christians, never smile at "heathen" superstitions.

The B.B.C. will have given many of its listeners a shock when the other day a speaker on "Easter" pointed out the essentially Pagan nature of the occasion. The origin of Easter in "fertility" rites was plainly given. Even the Easter egg was not spared. "Our Lord" was mentioned, but only to show that the supposed date for the death of the mythical Christ was fixed long after the Church had taken over the Pagan symbols and ritual.

The Catholic Church in England is still crying out for money from the State for its schools and for less State-control in their management. It wants the teaching of religion more "effectually" recognized in secondary schools—which means a larger dose of religion—and objects to mere bible lessons. That is declared to be mere secularism. What the Church is after is Roman Catholic schools, controlled by Roman Catholic priests, with Roman Catholic teachers, and kept going with money supplied by the rest of the community. Probe deeply enough and one will usually come across a very "material" interest where the Roman Church is concerned.

At the Slipper Church, Walsingham, they have some relics of the Apostles, a relic of the "True Cross," and the veil of "Our Lady." Those who doubt their genuineness may be reassured on knowing that this is guaranteed by Pope Pius IX., although how the deuce he knew is not stated. But the Pope gave them to Cardinal Wiseman; then Judge Backshaw held them. Now Father Scott James is their custodian. We are a very long way from being civilized, but we do not think the majority of people have the right to throw stones at the Roman Catholics on account of relic worship. When we think of how much a nightshirt in which, say, George V. had wrapped his sacred person, would fetch in open auction, how many of our educated countrymen and countrywomen carry about mascots, and that Westminster Abbey is again opened for continuous prayers for peace, the situations have all the difference that exists between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. By the way, can it be that a continuous service is arranged in Westminster so that God Almighty cannot have the excuse that he was out when a single prayer was issued? Otherwise there seems no reason why a single, combined lengthy prayer might not have done quite as well as a continuous series.

Comes now another "God." Om Mandli is a new cult of celibacy which, according to the British United Press, has roused 5,000 indignant husbands, parents and guardians to revolt against the seduction of young girls from marriage and wives from husbands. Bhai Lekhranj, 44 and handsome, is head of the cult, and tells the women he is God and, as such, has the right to command them in all things. He further informs them that he means to emulate Krishna, the Hindu deity, who had 16,000 women votaries. The government promises to take action against the rogues. But Europe and America can rival Mr. Lekhranj's stunt in plenty.

Fifty Years Ago

Most of our readers will get their *Freethinker* by Good Friday. That is supposed to be the anniversary of the Crucifixion, though the date varies with the moon, and the Christians call it *Good*. Their God dies eighteen hundred and fifty-six years ago, and they celebrate the unfortunate event in the most rollicking manner. Really it is too bad. They might show a little more decency. Why not call it *Bad Friday*? Perhaps that sounds unlucky. Or *Black Friday*? But perhaps that suggests the companion of Robinson Crusoe. Anyhow, Christians might find an alternative to the present method; for it certainly seems unnatural to commemorate the murder of your best friend, or your elder brother, with riotous festivities; while calling the dreadful anniversary *Good Friday* is what Rabelais would have styled *sanglante dérision*.

The Freethinker, April 21, 1889

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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

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Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4 by the first post on Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Sugar Plums

We are always doing what we can to place the *Freethinker* in new hands, often with pleasing results in the shape of letters which bring thanks for the paper, and sometimes with letters of a different kind. When they are intended to be abusive they amuse, and when they are piously pitiful they often entertain. For instance, a devout person who writes from Bromley, and finishes his letter with "yours in the service of the Lord," says, "I have heard about you, of course, but have never actually read you." Now he has read he is glad because he knows "what the devil is doing in the world," and "we shall in future pray for you." Many thanks, but we suggest he buys a dozen copies weekly and then more of his friends might join in the prayers, and so lead to our "conversion." It is worth a trial, and the capture of the editor of the *Freethinker* would be worth quite a number of retired burglars.

Another writes us that he is a Christadelphian and advises us to read *Christendom Astray from the Bible*. The book, he says, will cause us to open our eyes. Much more likely to make us open our mouth, unless we laugh inwardly. Another returns his copy of the paper plentifully lead pencilled, and informs us that if he thought there was no other life he would do all sorts of naughty things. Perhaps he would. He ought to know himself better than we do. But let us hope that he is just a little better than he imagines he is. Most men are so apt to exaggerate either their virtues or their vices.

Another letter reaches us from a Mr. Legget of Glasgow, who solemnly challenges us to debate the existence of God, or some other religious topic, and threatens to send copies of his letter to the editors of certain papers, presumably, to show how frightened we are. But why

should we expose ourself to so mighty an antagonist? We do not know this gentleman, and it would be foolish gratuitously to expose ourself to annihilation, particularly when the end of our term is drawing steadily nearer. So we take shelter behind the *excuse* that we have never gone about accepting or issuing promiscuous challenges. Of course we have taken part in debates with Christians, but in nearly every case the Christian has been quite sure that he has given us a terrible thrashing, and why should we again expose ourself to defeat? Mr. Legget must be merciful in his strength and compassionate to our weakness.

The *Daily Express* is never afraid of insulting the intelligence of its readers. In its issue for April 11, it supplies this gem:—

Every man should have an equal opportunity to serve his country in arms.

Therefore it advocates conscription as the only proper plan. But minus conscription every man has an "equal opportunity" to join any of the fighting forces. It is conscription that takes away the opportunity and substitutes compulsion. We are not now arguing whether conscription is good or bad; we are merely pointing out how safe the *Express* feels when writing in a way that would be repudiated by an up-to-date idiot asylum.

For obvious reasons we suppress the names involved in the following letter, although the recipient is known to us, and we have seen the original. The letter is from Germany, and is dated March 24. It is sent from the writer to a relative:—

From newspapers one gathers how upset England is, but here in Germany we are not afraid. We are happy to be led by such a strong hand, and are convinced that no worldly power can suppress us. Our present power enables us to regain what we have lost without firing a shot. Of course it hits the youth hard. . . It is a pity that your children do not observe the progress of the land of their forefathers. Whole towns are being demolished and reconstructed. . . The artists are being inundated with orders. . . Our minds are happy and full of hope, and we believe as our Fuehrer does, in a lasting peace. If only England would shake off the Jewish domination it need not have any anxiety. Germany has no thought of conquering England, but Germany must not be interfered with in its own affairs.

There is a great deal more to the same effect, mixed up with items of family news. It all reads much like the cries of the British Branch of the Nazi Party, which are received from the same source as the phrases cited above. The picture it draws of Germany happy, contented, devoted to Hitler (who dare not show himself in public without strong armed guards), has all the note of a dictation. And the conclusive evidence of the propagandist purpose of the letter, intended for British consumption, is that the recipient of the letter—resident in this country for many years—recently informed us that he dared not tell his relatives what decent British men and women think of the Hitler terror, because that would be interpreted as disloyalty to Hitler, and would lead to the punishment of his relatives. In Germany, as in Italy, relatives are held as hostages for the good behaviour of their relatives abroad.

Here are some passages from President Roosevelt's speech of April 15:—

Only a few days ago the head of a great nation referred to his country as a "prisoner" in the Mediterranean.

A little later another Chief of State, on learning that a neighbour country had agreed to defend the independence of another neighbour, characterized that agreement as a "threat" and "encirclement."

Yet there are no such things as encircling or threatening or imprisoning any nation by other peaceful nations.

There is no fatality which forces the Old World towards a new catastrophe.

Do we really have to assume that nations can find no better methods of realizing their destinies than those

which were used by the Huns and the Vandals 500 years ago?

Dreams of conquest are ridiculous as they are criminal.

This seems full of "horse-sense." For Italy to complain of being a prisoner reminds one of a man who is serving a "stretch" for burglary, complaining that his confinement prevents him following his usual occupation. And Hitler's complaint of "encirclement," in present circumstances reads as just the kind of grievance that any would-be criminal would find in the existence of a police force. We also note the contrast between the direct and simple language of Mr. Roosevelt with the notice given that we shall "view with grave concern," etc., etc., of our Government at any act of international burglary committed.

Will those intending to be present at the Annual Conference in Bradford at Whit-Sun. and who will require hotel accommodation please communicate their requirements, that is, day of arrival at the hotel and length of stay, to the General Secretary, 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, as soon as possible. There is every promise that Bradford will add another to the list of very successful Conferences held in recent years.

The Annual Report and Balance Sheet of the Edinburgh Branch indicates some very useful work for the period it covers. Sales of literature and the income of the Branch have increased. The strength of our movement nowhere depends upon a large membership, but upon a worthy one, and upon good work, intelligently conceived and accomplished. We think the Edinburgh Branch is well placed in this respect. We note that Mr. Smithies was again elected Secretary, and Mr. Shimming as treasurer.

The West London Branch at its Annual Meeting appointed Mrs. N. B. Buxton as Secretary, and Mr. Horowitz as Treasurer. The Secretary's address is 18 Cambridge Gardens, N.W.6. The West London Branch is holding a Dinner and Dance at Slater's Restaurant on April 22, at 7 p.m. Tickets are 4s., and can be obtained from the Secretary or the *Freethinker* Office.

The *Observer* thinks that many people are reading Thomas Paine. We hope the statement is true, but as a matter of fact, Paine has never been without a host of readers, and his writings, both political and religious, repay reading, even at a distance of nearly a century and a half. Paine was one of those seminal thinkers who will always attract men of intelligence. He was really a man who wrote for more than his own age. His pages will be read whenever and wherever humanitarianism has a hold on the mind. The *Observer* thinks that more people are reading him in the "proper spirit," and adds:—

But there were plenty in his own day who did that, and in unexpected quarters. "Tom Paine is quite in the right," said Pitt to his niece, Lady Hester Stanhope, "but what can I do? If I were to encourage his opinions I should have a bloody revolution!"

We are not so sure about the "bloody revolution," but Paine has worked a revolution, even though it was a gradual one, and he had always readers among the best men of his day. It is one of the pious slanders concerning Paine that he only had followers among the "lower classes." He had them wherever intelligent men gathered, irrespective of class. But, as we have said, elsewhere, he attacked the Christian Church, and that was the unforgivable sin. All the legions of Christian blackguards were let loose on him, and the man who saved the American Revolution, and who worked so hard for reform in this country and in France, was handed down by religious blackguards as a drunkard, and a mere caterer to the ignorant and the vicious.

To be wholly devoted to some intellectual exercise is to have succeeded in life.—Robert Louis Stevenson.

Tom Paine's Message to Our Day

(Continued from page 245)

BEFORE going on to deal with Paine's unpopularity with the people of three great countries, I would like to make it clear that this was not on personal grounds. Although his books and pamphlets sold by scores of thousands, he never took one penny of royalties. And talking of *royalties* it is interesting to learn that King Louis XVI. personally liked Paine the Republican and was extremely pleasant to him. Paine was a most forgiving man and often helped his enemies. It is reported that when Paine was in the Luxembourg Prison in Paris one of his fellow prisoners was released before Paine was. This was a General O'Hara, who had fought against America. When O'Hara was released Paine lent him £300. This sum, which was Paine's total capital at the time, had been hidden by him in the lock of his cell door.

One last testimonial to Paine's character. When Monroe, the American Ambassador in Paris, found, to his horror, that Paine was in prison, he tried to get him out. I will not quote his whole letter to Paine, but in it he wrote: "Of the sense which the President [that is, Washington] has always entertained of your merits, and of his friendly disposition towards you, you are too well assured to require any declaration of it from me." This James Monroe was afterwards to become President of the United States (he was the Monroe who declared the Monroe doctrine), and Washington was, of course, the first President. Another great friend of Paine was Thomas Jefferson, the man who drew up the Declaration of Independence. Another Thomas. No, on the score of personal likeability the gentle, generous, Paine could not have incurred the odium that has almost buried him.

This odium was and is our old enemy the *odium theologicum*, that has had such an unenviable reputation during 2,000 years. How deeply Tom incurred this is well shown by the remark of a latter President of the U.S.A. This was Roosevelt, not our present Franklin Delano, but Theodore (him of the big teeth, rimless glasses, and the teddy bear). He once called Tom Paine "a filthy little Atheist." As Mr. Chapman Cohen has said, this expression deserves to be given a permanent place in history because it manages to express three lies in as many words. Paine was not an Atheist but a confirmed and fervent Theist (he was indeed that best kind of Christian, in my opinion, a Quaker). He was not filthy, and as he was 5ft. 10in. he could hardly be called little. Five feet 8 in. is stated to be the average height for a man in this country at the present day, and in Paine's time the average may well have been an inch or two shorter.

The next point I wish to make is that Paine's unpopularity practically dates from the time when he wrote his attack on the Bible, the book called the *Age of Reason*. Prior to this he had enjoyed a fair measure of praise and had received even substantial material rewards. Of course he was not popular with the British Government, but his new country did *something* (not so much as they could and should) to repay Paine's services to the new nation. Paine was at one time Foreign Secretary to the American Congress. The State of New York voted him a house and a farm of 277 acres at New Rochelle. The Pennsylvania assembly voted him £500, and Congress of the U.S.A. made him a payment of \$3,000. These sums were relatively small, but they were before Paine wrote the *Age of Reason*. After that awful book it is safe to say he would not have received one dime. His earlier book, the *Rights of Man*, was immensely popular in wide circles in England and France, although,

of course, hated and prosecuted by the English Government. So popular was the book in its French translation that no less than three constituencies elected him to the Convention. The French National Assembly conferred on Paine the title of "French citizen," and the President of that Assembly wrote that "France called him to its bosom." On landing at Calais Paine was greeted with a salute of guns from the fort. There is not the slightest doubt that this man, who was to spend the best part of a year in a French gaol, and only just saved his neck from the guillotine, was intensely popular when he landed in France.

Now, why did this "man of the world," this able politician, do something that nearly all politicians avoid as a plague? This at any rate is true of our own country. As far as I can remember only one prominent Member of Parliament has dared in England to be an anti-clerical. He was, of course, Charles Bradlaugh, and, as we all know, the House of Commons for years tried to gather its respectable skirts away from the contamination of his presence.

The answer to our question may be given by Paine himself. You will find this paragraph early in the first part of the *Age of Reason*. (As a matter of fact it is the eighth from the beginning.) "All national institutions of Churches . . . appear to me no other than human inventions set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit." He also says that early on he saw that "a revolution in the system of government would be followed by a revolution in the system of Religion." He dwells on the fact that the spirit of intolerance bred by the persecutions of the Church transfers itself to politics. "The tribunals, styled Revolutionary," says he, speaking of France "supplied the place of an Inquisition, and the Guillotine of the State outdid the fire and faggot of the Church."

Can we looking around the world of our day doubt the truth that Religion, or if you find that too strong a claim, at any rate Organized Religion (the Churches) is the tap root of Reaction? People who have never given much attention to the influence of the Churches in politics and governments may be surprised at such a statement. I do not say it is the only root—for it is not—but I do claim that it is the chief, or tap, root.

Let us consider for a few moments some modern instances of the power wielded by prominent clericals in the interests of reaction. Take first Germany. The priest (Catholic, of course), Bruening prepared the way, with the help of the pious Von Papen, for the dictatorship of Hitler by a dictatorial government. He ruled, if I remember aright, for over a year without parliament. In Austria Monseignor Seipel prepared the way for the pious Dollfuss (the pocket dictator) who by attacking the working-class in Austria so weakened that State that Hitler walked in without opposition. Schuschnigg also is deeply religious.

In Czecho-Slovakia, the Slovak Premier Tiso is a Jesuit and Voloshin, late Premier of Carpathian Ukraine (lately Ruthenia) also is a Catholic priest. Both are hand-in-glove with Hitler. You have heard of the Hlinka Guard in Slovakia (a species of Nazi Brown Shirts or Storm Trooper). Their founder was Father Hlinka, a Catholic priest. Father Mironas, Prime Minister of Lithuania, surrendered the Memeland to Hitler without a struggle. The Lithuanians have since wisely replaced him by a soldier.

BAYARD SIMMONS

(To be concluded)

Nature Notes of a Freethinker

HAUNTING Epsom, if you are not partial to streets, racehorses may be seen—fine, sleek animals, easy movements, thin flanks, arched necks, and, altogether, a fine sight. Two carthorses, heavy, but noble, were coming down the lane, harnessed to a wagon. Over the hedge there was a racehorse grazing, but as soon as it caught sight of two of its kind, it cantered from the middle of the field and followed them along the road on the field side of the hawthorn bushes. As it walked along, this aristocrat of the turf whinnied with pleasure to the two menials who would never win a race for speed; one responded, and the other was quite aware of what was going on. "Snobbery," writes our Editor, in *Essays in Freethinking* is also responsible for the aping of tone and accent and pronunciation which passes for so many as evidence of culture and familiarity with the "upper circles." These horses had only horse-sense. It is a fact that many of our own kind have been educated out of their common-sense—they have found it, apparently, much easier to pretend to be someone else rather than themselves. Away then, to my favourite house of call, where one can find all the Derby winners from 1780 to 1922. Here, where most people talk, and say what they mean, was a man, tall, weather-beaten, with well-cut features, with that free and easy style showing that he was at home in his world. The subject was his wife, and, whether her ears burned or not, I am unable to say. "My old woman," he said, quite leisurely, but loud enough for all to hear, "is as ugly as a crow." "But," he continued, and thumping the table with his fist, "she's a heart as big as this table." One frequenter of this house of call kept me entertained with his talk about Dickens. The immortal writer, so he said, mentions this place as a posting house where horses were changed for the journey to Dorking. It may be so, but, I wish no better or more friendly spirit of the house than that of Dickens.

I had read Cowley in various small extracts from his work, and, some little time ago, I became the proud possessor of an edition dated 1669. Printed by F.M. for Henry Herringman, at the Sign of the Blew Anchor in the Lower Walk of the New Exchange. Considering that it is nearly three hundred years old, it is in good condition, and there is a certain fascination to the booklover in having the original after the "drums and tramlings" of many ages. He has some good drinking songs, and I like the steady beat of his counsel and wisdom—to be at home with one's self. He is neither out of date, nor ahead of our times, nor have we bettered his opening sentence in his *Essay on Liberty*: "The Liberty of a people consists in being governed by Laws which they have made themselves, under whatsoever form it be of Government." Compare this with another writer, with whom we have not yet caught up. "In all cases they [Mr. Burke and his Government] took care to represent Government as a thing made up of mysteries, which only themselves understood; and they hid from the understanding of the nation the only thing that was beneficial to know, namely, 'that government is nothing more than a national association acting on the principles of society.'" So then, the gentle Cowley, melodious minstrel of some vanished age of leisure, anticipates Thomas Paine in 1791. The learned correspondent who supplies copy from Paris for the *Times* writes that a statue is to be erected to "Tom Paine" by the Paris Municipal Council in the Parc Montsouris. We congratulate the Council; Stan. Baldwin, even if he had been asked, could not officiate

There can be no consistence in feelings which are not supported by convictions.—*Comte*.

at the ceremony, as he has gone to America. We've got Herb. Morrison, but he may be too busy at home with Municipal affairs, and Abe Cowley is dead, but alive in his works which hold fast to the verities of existence:—

To-day is ours; what do we fear?
To-day is ours; we have it here.
Let's treat it kindly, that it may
Wish at least with us to stay.
Let's banish Business, banish sorrow;
To the Gods belongs To-morrow.

Good for Abe,—and this all comes with my trying to reach the *Times* level. I had better be myself.

To-day I saw in the grass a small gang of ants attacking a beautiful yellow-green caterpillar. This small creature (no one has ever thanked him for giving our super-god men the idea of tanks) was rescued and thrown among some dandelions. A few days ago, there was a fight on the grass between two starlings. One took the other by the throat, whirled him several times in a circle, and put the conquered on his back on the turf. It has always been a source of wonder to me how some writers on nature (Hudson was not one of them) wax lyrical, and find divinity in the world of insects and birds. Michelet was guilty of this offence, and, it would not be a difficult job to include Fabre.

"Life is an Inn," sang Dryden, and I have pleasure in recommending, in the "Penguin" series, *An Innkeeper's Diary*, by John Fothergill. You will be amused, interested, and also instructed, and, in addition, let into the secret that my copy was bought; it was not sent for review, as, of course, all writers earn fabulous amounts of money in their occupation. I can boast at least, of having earned enough to re-seat two pairs of trousers, but I still hope. The story is one of a man with taste—the Innkeeper—it abounds with good jokes, and, I am only going to give you one sample from bulk. The name of Garvin is well known to all who want to know what to think on a Sunday, but this extract is a good joke, and, if any reader is dissatisfied with my recommendation, I will undertake to eat my fountain-pen. Here is the sample:—

"Garvin dined with his stepson from Marlborough. He said the farmers were protesting against the parsons for having thanksgiving when the only harvest was mud and rotting grain. 'And I'm with them,' he exclaimed. 'I tell the parsons that perhaps God didn't want a harvest and in any case doesn't want to be thanked for nothing. I say—Let God alone.' He sat opposite this beautiful and gifted little boy and harangued and disquisitioned to him as if he were a public meeting." Mr. John Fothergill is happy in having a Deſoe style, and you are therefore never in doubt about his meaning. The book should open the eyes of travellers, and at the same time, be a primer for all who want to make a success of keeping an Inn. The Inn keeping the Inn-keeper will all come in good time—with good taste. Salute to John Fothergill!—and to the shades of that mighty master, the maker of laughter—Rabelais—who was at the author's elbow when he wrote the *Innkeeper's Diary*.

NICHOLAS MERE

P.S.—Seen on Easter Monday, a pair of nuthatches. The male note is sweet and joyful and seems to say that to-morrow can look after itself. He might be seen in the split trunk of a hawthorn tree—probably one hundred years old. The tree is on the left hand side opposite a pond in Richmond Park as you enter Petersham Gate.

Of Sermons

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (1 Cor. i. 21).

"ABSURDITY," says Amiel, "is interwoven with life." And, he might have added, the way to heaven is paved with it.

At Sunday School my teachers thought that long passages of scripture committed to memory would prepare me for life in the next world and teach me how to live in this. To credit my teachers with *thought* is very wrong. Religious people rarely ever think. They are taught to believe just as little dogs are trained to do their tricks. No thinker could be guilty of such a thought.

An illustration of what an application of this thoughtless belief provoked, may prove interesting.

One of the tasks given me—"To learn by heart the entire Shorter Catechism"—was anything but an easy one. To lighten my undertaking—make it more interesting, and easier to memorize—my parents probably acting on the example of the Rev. Zachary Boyd (1585-1653) and his comic Bible, amused me by repeating a parody of the Catechism. A Revised Version of this parody, the work of our village University—the Smithy—once heard was never forgotten. These Recensionists were not acting differently to their fellows—the life of the believer is rarely, if ever, consistent with his belief. Sectarianism, while blinding them to faults in their own belief, opened their eyes wide to faults in the beliefs of others. For the ritual of "The Church of England by Law Established"—Authorized Mockery! Ruskin called it—begotten in a time of ignorance which God winked at, they had neither respect nor reverence, their ridicule of it was superb. Yet they could apply this ridicule to their own creed for which they had both reverence and respect.

The following answers to the first two questions in the Shorter Catechism are traditional. The answer to the third, so completely displaced by the revised one, I have quite forgotten. The revised answer, which would cause anyone "to laugh like parrots at a bagpiper," is, unfortunately, too Rabelaisian for publication.

- (1) What is the chief end of man?
Off with the kettle and on with the pan!
- (2) What do the scriptures principally teach?
Off with the blankets and on with the sheets!
- (3) What is repentance unto life?

Many more like the above might be cited (also some curious parodies of Psalms and Paraphrases, notably that of Psalm i., a very humorous one, but, like so many of the good ones, too Rabelaisian) did publication and space permit.

The spontaneous outburst of a sympathetic soul, be it in praise, or prayer, or sermon, was always eagerly listened to. The intoned supplications—the same printed prayers week after week—made by a human praying-wheel gave rise, even in the very devout, to derisive laughter. As Ruskin puts it:—

And surely our clergy need not be surprised at the daily increasing distrust in the public mind of the efficacy of Prayer, after having so long insisted on their offering supplication *at least* every Sunday morning at eleven o'clock; that the rest of their lives hereafter might be pure and holy, leaving them conscious all the while that they would be similarly required to inform the Lord next week at the same hour, that there is no health in them.

Among the much-rebuked follies and abuses of so-called "Ritualism," none that I have heard of are indeed so dangerously and darkly "Ritual" as this piece of authorized mockery of the most solemn act

of human life, and only entrance of eternal life. (*The Lord's Prayer and the Church*).

Recently I picked up a remarkable volume of sermons, *Printed for the Author, Edinburgh, Anno 1790* :—

- (1) Some thoughts on Mr. Huygen's conjectures concerning the inhabitants of the planets.
- (2) On the Fall of man.
- (3) On a Future state.
- (4) Reflections on Lord Monboddo's Origin and Progress of Language
- (5) Thoughts concerning Negroes.
- (6) On the fear of the Lord.

After eagerly reading these sermons I wondered what the Clergy of to-day were preaching about. So on Sunday evenings I listened-in, whenever possible, to twelve of the respectable clergy, "the obstreperous *sermocinators*," who according to Howell (1593-1666), "Make such an easy impression on the minds of the vulgar," being left out, probably having failed to pass an audition! And after listening intently to these men who had gained the favour of the B.B.C., I came to the same conclusion about them, that Ruskin did, 60 years ago, about preachers then :—

One would think, by the tone of the eagerest preachers nowadays, that they held their blessed office to be that, not of showing men how to do their father's will on earth, but how to get to heaven without doing any of it either here or there. (*Ibid.*)

The 150-year-old sermons mentioned above are, on the contrary, full of thought. Take for instance, "Thoughts on the Fall of Man," which I have just re-read. The preacher tells us that :—

Mankind and the earth are not in the state in which God created them, but in a worse condition.

Certainly God made us to be happy, and if he had not intended happiness for us in a better, he would have made us as happy in this world as our natures are capable of being.

If God created man perfectly, did he intend that he should continue so, or not?

Had he not intended this world to be a state of probation for another, his infinite goodness would have led him to make it much better!

Nothing could be better suited to man's state, and spiritual wants, than the miseries of life, and state of the world in which he lives. . . . This world was intended as a state of trial for another—a nursery for another and eternal world.

The Creator has shown us what he can do, and thereby raised our expectation of something better.

There was no noxious creatures before the Fall, because when God saw the Creatures he had made "Behold all were very good."

The animals fell when man fell. There were no carnivorous animals at the first. And the serpent did not go upon his belly. Had man continued in a state of innocence there would have been no animals of prey.

There were no beasts of prey before the Fall. God tells us, Gen. i. 29-30, that he had appointed the fruit of the tree, the green herb for meat to every beast of the earth, etc.

After the Fall, animals and men started fighting, killing, and eating each other.

War, it would seem, is caused by the shedding of blood. And not until man and beast get back to their original vegetarian state may we hope for peace. Blood cries aloud for blood!

In the Millenium "The wolf shall lie down with the lamb, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox."

Though dead this unknown preacher can be heard speaking, and one can feel him thinking.

I began this article with a quotation from *Le Journal Intime* of Henri Fr  d  rick Amiel. I will conclude it with another. When Amiel was not

revelling in "The Luxury of Grief"! he said some sensible things. The following is one of them :—

November 15, 1876. It is truth alone—scientific, established, proved, and rational truth—which is capable of satisfying nowadays the awakened minds of all classes. We may still say perhaps, "Faith governs the world,"—but the faith of the present is no longer in revelation or in the priest—it is in reason and in science.

GEORGE WALLACE

Correspondence

DR. HAYWARD AND EDUCATION

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—Are you, indeed, of the opinion that, although the human intellect needs guidance and development, the human emotions and sentiments can do very well without anything of the kind? Does the editor really think that a misconception with regard to a physical fact or ignorance of a scientific truth or of a scientific process can be disastrous, but that the mistaking of the bombastic for the elevated and sublime, or of garrulity for exchange of views cannot be disastrous? Does he think that one's ignorance of a rule in arithmetic may impair one's usefulness or lessen one's opportunities, but that ignorance of possible approaches and probable responses in human relations is of no importance? Can the editor deny that, whether we wish it to be so or whether we do not, the fact is that men and women are guided more by their emotions and sentiments (good or bad) than by either their intellect, reason or material interests? If, then, the emotions are so potent an influence in the regulation of men's thoughts and actions and attitude of mind, why should we leave their cultivation to the perpetrators of ancient superstitions and foolish fables? Can life-beauty and the thoughts and concepts that rise above the actual exist only in association with mythical angels, holy spirits and blood and wine? Does the editor despair of bringing the human emotions under the influence of reason and hitching the waggon of human life to stars of brilliant thought? If he does, where is his faith in the power of reason?

All that Dr. Hayward is pleading for is the cultivation of the emotions under the control of reason, and, therefore, the teaching in schools, in regard to attitude of mind and the conduct of life, of principles socially beatific and supported by evidence and experience. These principles, Dr. Hayward claims, can be more completely expressed and explained by means of art and ceremony than by purely academic demonstration. This claim may be contested. The churches do better. They realize its truth. But unfortunately they put it into practice in connexion with obsolete fables and unjustifiable assumptions. Now Mr. Cohen seems to be pleading for the cultivation of reason also, but on the supposition that the emotions and sentiments will take care of themselves if the intellect is attended to. Yes, they will indeed! They are doing so! And with what result? Instead of the worship of Mumbo-Jumbo, "Our Lord," Almighty God or The Blessed Virgin, that of Hitler, Mussolini, the bombing-plane and the cannon's roar. These and other superstitions are what the human emotions lead to if nothing is done on their behalf.

ROBERT HARDING

[We print the above, although we feel that if Mr. Harding had a more adequate appreciation, either of our own position or of modern psychology, his letter would not have been written. It may be news to him, but the fact is that without the element of feeling intellectual perception alone can never move to action. Mr. Harding appears to be under the impression that feeling and intelligence are two separate entities that may or may not run together in harness. The idea that "reason" or "emotion" can be developed separately, or that in cultivating one the other may be completely ignored, is truly absurd. The fault of Dr. Hayward and of Mr. Harding appears to be that of advocating the cultivation of the emotions with a very imperfect intellectual

outlook. In other words, they are both repeating the blunder of the Church with a little different terminology. The fault of the Church is a matter of history. Mr. Harding appears to think that a change of words will bring goodness where evil formerly resulted. The belief in word-magic dies hard.—C.C.]

THE BASQUES

SIR,—While appreciating the sympathetic study of Basque history and folk lore, which appeared in your columns on April 9, may I, as a Basque, suggest that the writer has been inclined more to dwell on legends of the past than accomplished facts of to-day? It is, of course, true that we have many interesting old customs and traditions in our country, but the fact remains that at the time of the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War the Basque country was, in fact, the most developed country, so far as industry, commerce, education and civil life were concerned, in the whole of the Iberian Peninsula. Out of the total possessions of the whole of Spain, the Basque country, according to reliable statistics, controlled and owned, at the outbreak of the Civil War:—

Mineral ore output	...	...	50%
Capital of commercial companies	...	...	60%
Economic banking power	...	...	70%
Profits of the Bank of Spain	...	...	32%
Deposits in Public Savings Banks	...	...	33%
Production of metallurgical coke	...	...	65%
Production of steel billets	...	...	74%
Production of iron "blooms"	...	...	77%
Production of paper industry	...	...	70%
Production of the explosives industry	...	...	68%
Mercantile marine	...	...	53%
Fishing fleets	...	...	30%

These statistics do not include Euzkadi's large heavy engineering and shipbuilding activities, nor the activities of her 14 well-equipped ports, which handle 6,000,000 tons of goods annually. Before the war, Euzkadi exported some 1,500,000 tons of iron ore and produced some 400,000 tons of commercial iron each year.

This, perhaps, explains why it was Germany's first aim, when intervening on behalf of Franco, to subjugate and capture the wealth of the Basque country.

It is also inaccurate to suggest that the Basque language, Euzkera, is dying out in the Basque-Spanish territories. More than half of the rural population can speak no other language, and one of Franco's first edicts was to prohibit its use under severe penalties.

D. DE ASTUY

National Secular Society

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD APRIL 13, 1939

The President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the chair

Also present: Messrs. Clifton, Hornibrook, Elstob, Preece, Seibert, Ebury, Bedborough, Horowitz, Mrs. Grant, Mrs. Quinton, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and accepted. New members were admitted to Birkenhead, Chorley, Birmingham, North London and South London Branches.

The Secretary reported the receipt of a legacy of £400 under the will of the late Mr. J. Forrester of Dundee.

Correspondence from Birmingham, Edinburgh, Gateshead, and in connexion with the Annual Conference were dealt with and instructions given. The Agenda Committee submitted its report. Open-air work for the coming season was further discussed and the Secretary was instructed. Details concerning the Annual Conference were noted. The next meeting of the Executive was fixed for Thursday, May 18, and the proceedings closed.

R. H. ROSETTI,

General Secretary

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4 by the first post on Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

LONDON

INDOOR

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Rt. Hon. Lord Snell, P.C., C.B.E.,—"The British Empire and World Peace."

OUTDOOR

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place): 7.30, Mr. E. C. Saphin—A Lecture.

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

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes, Collins and Mrs N. Buxton. Weather permitting.

COUNTRY

INDOOR

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Central Halls, Bath Street): 3.0, Annual General Meeting. Large attendance of members requested.

MIDDLESBROUGH (Temperance Hall): 7.30, Thursday. Mr. J. T. Brighton will move and Mr. Dalkin will second the Motion: "That Christianity has not Benefited Mankind." To be opposed by local clergy, led by Canon Townley.

TEES SIDE BRANCH N.S.S. Jubilee Hall, Leeds Street): 7.15, A Lecture.

OUTDOOR

CHESTER-LE-STREET: 8.0, Friday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

BLUTH: 7.0, Monday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

BURNLEY MARKET, 7.0, Sunday, Mr J. Clayton.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Mound): 7.0, Mrs. Muriel Whitefield (Glasgow N.S.S.)—"O Jesus."

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

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Eccles Market): 8.0, Friday, Bury Market, 8.0, Saturday. Stevenson Square, 7.0, Sunday. Mr. W. A. Atkinson will speak at these meetings.

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

WORSTHORNE: 7.30, Friday, Mr J. Clayton.

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