

# THE FREETHINKER

Founded 1881

Editor: CHAPMAN COHEN

Vol. LXIV.—No. 14

Sunday, April 2, 1944

Price Threepence

## VIEWS AND OPINIONS

(Continued from page 114.)

### Faith and Force

THERE are two kinds of truth in operation. One is just plain, simple truth. It has no trimmings of any kind and we may define it as an accurate relation between ideas and things, irrespective of the nature of the things in question and whether they be physical or psychological.

The other kind of truth is what is known as "religious" truth. Far from it being simple or of one kind, it takes numerous forms and is often very complex. It differs from geographical and climatic truth, with education and chronology. That a statement might be true in religion but false in science, or vice versa, was a few centuries ago an accepted classification; and many a man escaped imprisonment, or worse, by adopting this curious plan.

The opposite of truth and lying has varied forms without substantially differing in kind. Broadly, it may be defined as an intention to mislead or deceive; and in the art of deception no institution has had so lengthy a practice as the Roman Catholic Church. I do not say other organisations would not have equalled the Church, but no other institution has had the same opportunities, or has taken such elaborate care against exposure. It has used fear and trust, affection and hatred, kindness and cruelty, ignorance and knowledge: all to the single end of the aggrandisement of the Church.

Following last week's notes, I have now to deal with one of the most striking examples of religious truth that one could picture. I call it a striking example because it is such a blatant example of lying for the greater glory of God.

There appears to have been some rather awkward questions asked or charges made by men in the Forces, and in the pamphlet issued as a "Catholic Magazine for the Forces" there is an attempted correction of what it calls "misunderstanding concerning the Church." The explanation is worthy of the B.B.C. in one of its best efforts so far as falsity goes, and it has the true Jesuitic method of phrasing.

Jesuitism has a very bad sound to modern ears, and we must bear in mind that Mr. Lawson (S.J.) is a mouth-piece of that body. He well illustrates its chief characteristics. As an apology for persecution, he says the Church had to protect itself against attack, and he cites the example of the Donatists (fourth century). They, he says, attacked the Church. They "broke up Catholic meetings and wrecked Catholic churches. Sometimes they went as far as murder. They were a grave danger to the Church." But the Donatists were a "Christian" sect, the Roman Church was another, and each of them did what they could forcibly to suppress the other. Each black-guarded the other, each misrepresented the other, and

each, when they could, killed the other. This was a common feature of nearly all the Christian bodies; and the first glimpse we get of the Christian Churches is not a body of simple, pure-minded men, but a group of fanatics, each trying to suppress the other by force and each lying with true Christian vigour about the other. The gentle, loving, meek Christian cheerfully carrying his heavy cross is pure myth. Of course, each did have a heavy cross, but each took care it should be carried by his opponents when at all possible. The Church, says Mr. Lawson, "never thought that a man's conscience could be changed by physical force." Evidently the Inquisition is a myth. He also says it "was the general opinion in the Church that heretics should not be put to death for heresy." There may be a play upon words here, for "heresy" may stand for a slight difference in doctrine that may not call down the extreme penalty of burning to death; but it is certain that heresy was considered a serious crime and might lead to imprisonment for an indefinite period, as well as forfeiture of one's belongings. On the other hand, when we remember that the great St. Aquinas—who has been very much boomed during the past few years—advised that heretics should be put to death after being twice warned, and also that St. Augustine believed that the Church, in putting men to death for heresy, was doing its duty in the interests of he who was executed and those who might in good time learn the moral of the execution, we must assume that torture and burning were really acts of benevolence. The gentle kindness of a really good Christian will find expression.

### From Whence Intolerance?

To digress for a moment without being quite irrelevant. Where did the Christians get this belief that it was their duty to suppress, or murder, those who either did not believe in their God or who had back-slided to the extent of not continuing to believe in him? It was certainly not derived from the pagan world around Christians. Rome, Greece, Egypt, each had a plentiful supply of gods and one more or less would hardly have attracted attention. Rome in particular was extremely hospitable to any fresh gods that came along. They were placed in the national Pantheon, and they who cared to worship them could do so. Rome really gave the Christians an object-lesson in hospitality so far as gods were concerned. There was, indeed, a saying current in the later days of pagan Rome that two priests could not pass each other without grinning. Our modern preachers have greater control over their facial muscles. They hardly wink.

Yet, curiously enough, it was this liberality of the pagan world—where the mere existence of another god was cheerfully ceded—which brought the Inquisition into existence. Nothing like it existed in the ancient world; for when the Christians had passed the stage where their love for each other could be expressed in street fights, and looked round

for a legalising of punishment for heresy, there was no such machinery at hand. No part of Roman law had such a terrible decree as "Thou shalt have no other God but me." Indeed, Renan pointed out many years ago that in the whole of Roman jurisprudence there was no law against a man adopting as many gods as he pleased, or ignoring them altogether if he felt so inclined.

Of course, custom and sense demanded that when coming into a strange country the local gods must be treated with at least outward respect. But the Christian, moving in a world where gods and goddesses were quite common, declared that all gods but his own were false. He did not question their existence for a moment. The Church followed the teaching of St. Paul: that the so-called gods of the pagans were really devils; and Christian preachers for many, many centuries exhausted their vocabulary in "slanging" Satan and all his angels. But perhaps the greatest insult thrown at Satan by Christian preachers was when they depicted him taking a colossal amount of trouble to capture a Christian soul. There are some kinds of fish that really are not worth the catching.

### Religion and Culture

We are getting along very leisurely in this attempt to test—and expose—the character of this Jesuit who acts as spiritual guide for a section of Roman Catholics in our armed Forces, and it is as well to do it as thoroughly as conditions permit. Here, for instance, is a very bold—perhaps an unconscious—stress by Mr. Lawson on a rather important date in European history. He says:—

"In the twelfth century there was a most alarming epidemic of heresy throughout Europe. Much of it had been . . . kept under by the vigour of Catholic life. The strongest of these heresies were anti-Christian and had its roots in paganism."

I take this passage by itself for a moment and emphasise the date for two reasons. One is that there was actually nothing in either the Greek or Roman culture which provided machinery for a systematic and violent suppression of heresy. The offence was one that did not enter into the mind of Roman or Greek; certainly not in any such form as would serve the purpose of the Christian Church. The second reason is that the date marks the fact that the Church was beginning to feel the influence of the revival of learning and science which came into Christian Europe mainly through the channels of the development of science and philosophy under Mohammedan rule. It is, of course, impossible to say that the revival of Greek and Roman culture might never have taken place without the impulse from the Mohammedan world, but it is certain that it would not have happened as early as it did under effective Christian control. The culture that was filtering into Christian countries was a heavy blow to the deeply imbedded intolerance that shows itself in the Old and in the New Testament, and which runs through the whole of Christendom.

In saying this, I am pleased to note that so unimpeachable authority as Dr. H. C. Lea points out that the revival of learning—really the re-birth of European civilisation—received "a powerful impulse from the schools of Toledo, whither adventurous scholars flocked as to the fountain where they could take long draughts of Arabic and Grecian and Jewish lore. . . . The works of

Aristotle and Ptolemy, of Abubekr, Avicenna and Alfarabi, and finally those of the Averrhoes, were rendered into Latin, and were copied with incredible zeal in all the lands of Christendom. . . . Even more menacing to the Church was the revival of the civil law . . . it came by the middle of the twelfth century to be studied in all centres of learning . . . and men found to their surprise that there was a system of jurisprudence of wonderful symmetry and subtle adjustment of right, immeasurably superior to the clumsy and confused canon law and the barbarous feudal customs, while drawing its authority from immutable justice as represented by the sovereign, and not from canon or decretal, from Pope or council, or even from Holy Writ" ("History of the Inquisition in the Middle Ages," pp. 58-9-60).

I have taken up space here in preference to marshalling a few facts that would have been sufficient to prove the falsity of Mr. Lawson's thesis, which is presented in the form he adopts for the obvious reason that he expected his readers to swallow his distortion of facts without question. My desire is that the reader may see the kind of background which forced the Church to make its dealing with heresy a full legal force. Growing great on the declining remnants of Roman and Greek culture, the Church appeared to hold the European world under the kind of rule that Hitler aimed at for the German people. But the eleventh and twelfth centuries brought a new enemy into the field. The development of civilisation under Mohammedan rule kept the impetus of the scientific side of the ancient civilisations in being. More than that, it developed them; and the advances made, plus the influence of the Crusades, the occupancy of a part of Spain by the Moors brought the more cultured Arabs and Jews into touch with the better type of Christians. (In passing, I may note that it would be worth investigating how far Christian anti-Semitism derived from this latter fact. No one appears to have noted this. It may be that the medieval Jews suffered at the hands of Christians more for their virtues than their vices.) What the Church had to face was this new menace, and it required a new legal, or semi-legal, machine that would check the heresy that was greater and more deadly than anything the Church had to face since it came to power on the ruins of the ancient world.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be continued)

### THE STORY OF A LATIN STATE

RURAL life predominates in nearly all the Latin Republics of South America, but Argentina is a very notable exception. There immense urban centres have appeared, and its capital city—Buenos Aires housed 3,114,000 inhabitants out of a total population of the country of 13,000,000 in 1938. An extensive territory, Argentina embraces over a million square miles, and its exports of wheat, maize, wool, hides and other commodities attain very high values in normal years.

The Republic was tardy in its development. The early Spanish colonists, bent as they were on the quest for treasure, paid it little attention, but utilised its pastures for breeding domestic animals. As Professor James, the geographer, observes in his "Latin America" (Cassell, 1941): "But when modern Argentina"

was born in 1853, and when the first railroad was built in 1857, the first steps were taken in that series of changes which established the hinterland of Buenos Aires as one of the chief grain and meat producing regions of the world and the leading region of all Latin America in terms of commercial activity."

The Argentine has been favoured by a genial climate and fertile soil, its low labour costs and easy access to the ocean. But devoid of an industrial, apart from an agricultural population, Argentina was precariously dependent on foreign markets and, in a period of international chaos such as the present, her export trade is paralysed, and uncertainty and insecurity prevail.

In a domain of such magnitude which includes immense areas of Humid Pampa in the east, with Dry Pampa towards the west; the bleak land of Patagonia in the south; an extensive plain in the north; while in the west the Andes chain of mountains extends from the arid north to the intensely glaciated highlands of Patagonia, much diversity of soil and climate is encountered.

It seems singular that in a country so diversified geographically that, in less than a century, an urban area embracing Buenos Aires should include so large a percentage of its population. Indeed, as an urban centre, this city is second only to Paris among the Latin cities of the world. Moreover, Buenos Aires is the centre of the Humid Pampa, which contains 68 per cent. of the people and 82 per cent. of Argentina's productive capacity.

Unlike most other peoples of Latin America, nearly 98 per cent. of the Argentines are of European descent; 2 per cent. only are certified as of mixed origin, while the Indians number some 30,000 only and the negro element is nearly non-existent.

Other centres such as Tucuman and Mendoza are important. Mendoza is in the vicinity of the Vineyard Oasis and Tucuman is the centre of an extensive sugar industry, but the variations in the yields of the plantations and the fluctuations in the prices of sugar have seriously incomed the cultivators. "Prosperity and optimism," states Dr. James, "have been replaced by perplexity as elsewhere in a world of narrowly partitioned trade barriers."

The decline in the price of grapes so seriously handicapped the growers that, in 1934, the Government tried to relieve the depressed market by purchasing 350,000 tons of the fruit. Just before the outbreak of the Second World War many vineyards were grubbed and their soil devoted to the production of apples, apricots, peaches etc., and fine Argentine pears had just arrived in Covent Garden with every prospect of public appreciation when the war began.

Inclement Patagonia is very sparsely populated and much of its land is utilised for sheep raising. Its small coast ports serve for the shipment of wool, but their only active season succeeds the annual sheep-shearing. From the ports the wool is conveyed by coasting steamers to the great wool depot in Buenos Aires.

The Humid Pampas receives sufficient rainfall for the growth of trees, but many parts of Argentina would remain unproductive without irrigation. This aridity and the crying need for agricultural settlement is still an unsolved problem. For although the Argentine has been so largely populated by European immigrants, a considerable number of these have proved birds of passage.

The first European immigrants introduced into the country were families of Germans and Swiss, who came in 1856. From this modest beginning the tide rapidly rose. "The population of the country," writes Dr. James, "which had been 1,200,000 in 1852, increased to 2,500,000 in 1880, and of these 173,000 were people born in Europe." In the following decades there were many fluctuations, for in periods of economic distress large numbers of immigrants returned to Europe. Nevertheless, it is evident that: "During the 73 years between 1858 and 1930 the total immigration amounted to 6,300,000 people."

The successive migrations caused a pronounced change in the racial percentages of the Argentine people. It is authoritatively

stated that: "Between 1857 and 1924, of those who remained in the country, 1,300,000 were Italians and 1,025,000 Spaniards. Represented also in the stream of immigration by substantial numbers were French, Germans, Austrians, Russians, British and Swiss. Since 1930 there has been a marked increase in the number of people from Eastern Europe, especially Poles."

So materially dependent on foreign markets for the disposal of their products are the Argentines that their main activities are concentrated upon their export trade. The Civil War in North America, which occurred just after the overthrow of the dictatorship of Rosas in Argentina, provided that country with an unexampled opportunity for establishing commercial relations with Europe, especially Great Britain. As American exports were suspended during the Confederate War, Argentina was enabled to supply England with meat and wheat while receiving coal and manufactured articles in return. British investments in Argentina, and their expanding commercial connections linked the Latin Republic firmly with our island.

With the first World War, however, a previously approaching change set in when Argentina, instead of exporting foodstuffs and raw materials and importing manufactured goods in exchange, commenced the consumption of much of her home products and began an industrial career.

When North American and European sources of supply were severed in 1914-18, Argentina like other communities was constrained to manufacture the articles she needed. Factories were erected, machinery was installed and tariffs were adopted to safeguard her infant industries. As Dr. James notes: "Argentine factories now produce foodstuffs, textiles, paper, cement, glass, boots and shoes, furniture, rubber goods, beverages and many other things in common use. The repetition of this same development in many parts of the world has had a serious effect on the function and prosperity of the urban centres of Europe and North America, and the character of international commerce has been greatly changed."

Social standing in Argentina, so long associated with landed estate, is now passing to the owners of capital and urban industrial undertakings. In 1933, 43 per cent. of the population were gainfully employed in industry, 22.6 per cent. only were engaged in stock-raising and agriculture. Also 12 per cent. were concerned in commerce and 3 per cent. with transportation. Indeed, a new Argentina had appeared.

Great Britain and the United States are Argentina's best customers, but her commercial relations are increasing with other lands. Foreign trade remains absolutely indispensable to Argentina's prosperity and must be so, perhaps to a greater degree, as her people become more and more concentrated in urban areas. The world depression certainly shook Argentina, and in the five years following 1928 her exports declined enormously in volume and value. Yet, Argentina was one of the earliest States to recover from its disastrous effects.

The second World War confronts Argentina with serious difficulties. The shortage of shipping facilities for import and export has largely precluded trade, and unemployment increases. The economic problems that embarrass the Western World as a whole, if unsolved, threaten the stability of Argentina. Unless the channels of international trade are reopened, Argentina's future will assume an even more depressing character than that country has ever experienced in the worst periods of the past.

T. F. PALMER.

**"THE HISTORICAL JESUS AND THE MYTHICAL CHRIST."** By GERALD MASSEY. With Preface by Chapman Cohen. Price 6d.; postage 1d.

**"WHAT IS RELIGION?"** By R. G. INGERSOLL. Price 2d.; postage 1d.

## ACID DROPS

IT is not everyone who carries in his name a characteristic of his occupation. The fortunate person is Archbishop Cantwell, U.S.A. And he does really live up to his name. For instance, he talks at length on the evils of "scepticism calling itself enlightenment," which attracts "Freethinkers with their narrow and degrading dogmas of materialism and coarse naturalism." Strange that the U.S.A., so far in the front in many directions, should have so strong a muster of servants of God who are mentally in the same stage of existence that belongs to unexplored South American territory. He is the type of man who would please C. S. Lewis—he cants well.

But the Archbishop can not merely cant well, he can lie with equal efficiency, for in the "Universe" he is credited with saying: "There are no Atheists among the gallant men who fly our planes." We would not dare to question the truthfulness of an Archbishop, particularly a Roman Catholic one. We can only say that the Atheist flying men whom we thought we knew personally are just dreams, and those who send money to have "The Freethinker" are illusions. For Catholic Archbishops never, never lie.

We are not likely to have a day of prayer before the opening of the "second front." Perhaps this time, taught by past experience, the Churches will wait to see which way the wind blows. If it turns out well, then there will be a day of thanksgiving and praise will be given to God—via the clergy. If it turns out very bad, then there may be a day of penitence, and we shall own to God that we deserve all that happens to us, with a hint that he might let us off lightly. No good Christian would dream of standing up to his God. Like the camel, he takes his burden kneeling.

But in Ireland God is not letting off so lightly, and the faithful Catholics are being exhorted by their priests to pray for the preservation of Rome. One priest, Bishop Browne, shudders to think what will happen "if harm comes to the sacred person of the Pope." Such a terrible thing affects even us, and our spiritual vision, unused as it is, can give some idea of what will happen. If the Pope is wounded the explanation will be that he bore the cross of those who are not hurt. And if he were killed it would be because God has taken him to heaven as a mark of his affection for a faithful servant.

Probendary Sanders, of St. Paul's Cathedral, appears to be a rather artful "cove." Some members of the Forces have been inquiring how they stand with regard to Bible miracles—sun and moon standing still, an iron axe-head floating on the water, etc. So Mr. Sanders replies that all these things happened, "though probably not in the form in which they have come down to us." That is, the sun stood still, although its apparent movement continued. The axe-head floated, but it was probably of wood, etc., so the things happened but "not as described." All things considered, we could believe in the Bible miracles ourselves so long as they are explained as never having happened. But we wonder what would happen if Mr. Sanders received his yearly salary in something that no one would accept as real money? Would he be satisfied by being told what is real money, but no one nowadays will recognise it as such?

The "Universe" has reminded the world that so far as Catholics are concerned, what is right or wrong must be decided by the Church, and cites the well-known passage from the Catechism:—

"The Church cannot err in what she teaches as to faith and morals, for she is our infallible guide in both."

That seems, of course, decisive—to a Roman Catholic. But to level-headed men and women it is decisive against the Roman Church having an exclusive control over future citizens. An infallible and unimpeachable authority is one of the most dangerous things that can exist in any community. It carries

with it the implied right to prevent, if possible, any but one form of instruction to be given to the rising generation, and that also carries the right of suppression. And everywhere the Roman Church practises suppression so far as it can.

But we must be just, even to Roman Catholicism, and point out that while the non-Catholic Churches profess greater liberality than does Catholicism, they are working along the same lines. They do not proclaim the sanctified intolerance and suppression of opponents; in action, it suppresses so far as circumstances permit. If we may paraphrase a few lines of "Macbeth," there is tyranny in the creed, and all the professions of Christian liberty cannot remove that fact. A really united Protestantism would behave as does the older Church. It is as intolerant as circumstances permit.

Dean Inge writes in the "Evening Standard" that "Christianity preaches subjection and confers liberty." Well, we know it preaches subjection, but we have yet to discover where and when it confers liberty. The paradox is not worthy of the Dean.

The decay of first-class brains within the Church is well shown by the Churches accepting Mr. C. S. Lewis as a competent thinker. Here is a sample of his quality. Speaking in Southwark Cathedral on the resurrection of Jesus, he says Christians find it difficult to understand why people found it hard to believe, and answers his own question quite satisfactorily—to himself. He explains that what rose from the tomb was Man, not a ghost, and Jesus went to "prepare a place for you," that is, "create an environment for His own new glorified manhood and ours." There it is, nicely done up in a small packet. Mr. Lewis evidently believes that when he says a thing three times it is true. The friend to whom we are indebted for the report of the speech of Mr. Lewis remarked that he could not really believe such nonsense. But we think Mr. Lewis does, and that gives a sample of the quality of Mr. Lewis—and the level of Christian thinking in general.

At Leytonstone, a Congregational preacher appears to be following the B.B.C. Brains Trust by answering questions, and is true to his guide in its foolishness and selection. Thus, one inquiry was: "Why did God not stop the war?" The answer is that "God made a moral universe in which evil acts had evil consequences." But suppose he had made a universe when only those who are guilty suffer, would we have been the worse off for it? For after all we do, some of us, try to prevent these evil things, and the punishment falls upon the good and the bad alike. And what harm have children done that they should suffer? Still, the answer is worthy of the B.B.C. Brains Trust; it has all its foolishness, humbug and inconsequential conclusions.

Truth will out, and often it "outs" in the most unexpected places. Thus, a special article in a recent issue of the "Times" cites a German writer as saying that "The age of the persecutions of Christians, or the mediæval war of religion, seems to have become a crude reality again." It is remarkable that not only a contemporary German writer should write thus, but that generally when a writer, "German or other," wishes to cite an example of brutal slaughter and persecution it naturally cites the period when the Christian Churches were in full swing. European manhood was at its lowest when the Christian Church was strongest. And our Government is doing its damndest to give the Churches greater power over the rising generation.

"Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings," etc., is well illustrated by the Rev. Leslie Weatherhead in the "Sunday Graphic." He says that he was not argued into prayer, and no one can argue him out of it. We agree that this is a good, sound, religious attitude. You must believe in prayer before you practise it, and if you believe it before you practise you are likely to hang on to it afterwards—that is, if you are proof against reasoning. Mr. Weatherhead appears to us to be a fine example of the quality of prayer. You must believe in it beforehand, and the more you are criticised the harder you must pray. Isn't there some old saying about a fool and his folly?

## "THE FREETHINKER"

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### TO CORRESPONDENTS

Owing to the absence of the Editor, answers to correspondents are held over till next week.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2-3, Farnival Street, London, E.C.4, and not to the Editor.

THE FREETHINKER will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad): One year, 17s.; half-year, 8s. 6d.; three months, 4s. 4d.

### SUGAR PLUMS

SUNDAY, March 26, was not the 50th anniversary of Chapman Cohen's first appearance on the Freethought platform, but it did mark the 50th anniversary of his first visit to Bradford, and the Bradford Branch of the N.S.S. had resolved to make the most of it. There was a good and appreciative audience in a good hall, and a good gathering of the old guard. There was music before the lecture, and the musician, Mr. Fawthrop, officiated 50 years ago. On the platform was the President of the Branch, Mr. Hayhurst (the secretary), Mr. Baldie, Mr. and Mrs. Corina (senior), both of whom have been in the movement for over 40 years, and Messrs. Searl Sutcliffe, Farmer, Mrs. Corina (Junior), and Mr. F. J. Corina, who took the chair with efficiency and dignity.

The surprise of the meeting was when Miss G. Turner presented Mrs. Chapman Cohen with a beautiful bunch of flowers, and Mr. Harry Searle, one of the old guard, on behalf of the Branch, presented Mr. Cohen with a handsome brief case. We were glad to learn that the Branch is making good headway, and with the efficient committee it possesses, that development should continue. Circumstances have compelled attention to the possibilities of a real advance in our intellectual and social life, and a genuine advance is bound to make for an advance of Freethought.

We were pleased to see in a recent issue of the "News Chronicle" some very useful notes by Frederick Lawes on the B.B.C. Brains Trust. Our readers will not have less pleasure in the notes, because they will recognise them as embodying what we have been saying for years concerning the dishonest methods of the Brains Trust. Mr. Lawes opens with:—

"I think the Brains Trust should be quietly buried. It has now established finally the appalling ignorance of the eminent on any subject outside their special range of knowledge. It has long since ceased to be a forum for the free expression of opinion, and the joke is over. It is becoming educationally harmful."

We have said the same thing over and over again, but one is naturally pleased to see one's opinions echoed by another— with or without acknowledgment.

Mr. Lawes says the Brains Trust has long since ceased to be a forum for the expression of opinion. It never was that, and an attempt to express an unorthodox opinion was promptly sat on by the chairman, whose duty it was to see that the sheep present did not suddenly manifest the courage of a goat. No really unorthodox opinions on any subject were ever allowed by the chairman. Questions were carefully scrutinised by a committee. The B.B.C. run no risks where undesirable expressions of opinion were likely to occur. One cannot compliment the B.B.C. on the originality of its method. It is one of the oldest tricks in the political and religious world. Keep the people busy with things that do not matter and you will prevent their taking interest in "dangerous" ideas. The aim of the B.B.C. has always been to keep the people mentally busy, without leading them to opinions that might prove "dangerous." The ancient Roman plan was expressed in "Give the people bread and the circus." It was the same plan.

Mr. Lawes says that no one can be blamed for talking nonsense in "a parlour game of snap answers." Perhaps not, but that is not an adequate justification for men who have won some respect in the mind of the public to permit themselves to be held up to public ridicule. And in the B.B.C. circuses is the appalling want of knowledge concerning the very commonplace questions they have been asked to consider. We have no hesitation in saying that a much better show would be made by a snap body of men over the bar of a decent "pub." There may not be the same amount of cribbed sayings by well-known writers (the absence of the names of lesser-known great writers is very noticeable) but there would be more commonsense displayed. Such questions as "How does one set about writing a book?" "How do flies walk on the ceiling?" "How does one get into Parliament?" "Do old maids or married women live the longer?" "Why do some people like music while others do not?" and so on have no public interest at all; while with regard to others, we suggest to the writers that if they could get hold of "The Children's Encyclopædia," issued by Harmsworths many years ago, they will find most of their questions much better answered. In any case, they will read better stuff than these muzzled members supply them with.

Finally, there is the foolish boast that the people round the table do not know what questions would be asked. That is a good explanation why the answers are not of better quality than they are, but it is a very foolish thing to boast about. Because, so far as the questions are genuine, the people asking them are not concerned with what this or that member of the Trust knows without looking up books, but whether the question admits of a good answer. As to that, the questions should be known beforehand, and the answer then given could undergo discussion. A lawyer has to look up his law books when preparing for a case; a doctor looks up his medical books—when the patient has departed. There is no disgrace in looking up what help is advisable; it is only in schools that we have general knowledge examinations, but men of standing should object to being made the figure of fun, as they are, to merit the Trust of the B.B.C. It is really a poor advertisement of British culture when prominent men cannot do better with questions than they do, and the B.B.C. shows—in proportion—that about 75 per cent. of the British public are either so very ignorant of things they should know, or are interested in foolish questions that should be put in the wastepaper basket. But perhaps the committee that selects the questions take care they are of the "right" sort. But we agree that it is time the Brains Trust was buried, and we suggest that on its tombstone there should be the inscription "With apologies from the B.B.C. for bringing the Brains Trust to life."

Will members of the West London Branch of the N.S.S. note that the annual meeting of the branch will be held on Sunday, April 2, in the N.S.S. Offices, 2/3, Farnival Street, Holborn, at 4-30 p.m. Members are asked to make a special effort to be present. This announcement is rather late in making its appearance, but as it affects Londoners only it should be in good time.

Mr. J. T. Brighton continues to do some excellent work on Tyne-side, and he also, in addition, gives numerous lectures over a very wide area, engages in a number of discussions with Christian ministers, and often gives his Freethought message to Christian organisations. Both of these speak very highly of his tact and judgment in carrying on his work. His latest discussion was one with the Rev. H. Mobbs, of the Houghton Presbyterian Church. The subject was: "Is the Christian Faith Reasonable and Reliable?" and, judging from a two-column report in the "Durham Chronicle," he conducted his case well, and with his usual wit and good humour. We congratulate him on his effort, and express the regret that we have not more of his calibre in many parts of the country.

Mr. J. V. Shortt, late of Liverpool, would be pleased to contact any Freethinkers in the vicinity of his new address at Kimberley House, 69, Long Lane, Ashton, Preston.

## THE SABBATH QUESTION

## V.

WHATEVER qualities the Puritans in England and elsewhere show over their Catholic Christian brothers, there is no doubt that it is to them that we owe the Christian Sunday in England and America. On the Continent, in spite of rigorous laws, the people on the whole felt that if they attended Mass and duly went to church once on Sunday, their part in keeping the Faith was honoured, and the Church was willing to allow a little relaxation all round. But in England, the Puritans transferred all the rigours of Jewish Sabbatarianism to Sunday, with some additional penalties, and transformed what might have been a normal day of rest into a day which became notorious for gloom and misery.

The Pilgrim Fathers, in their anxiety to preserve their own liberty of worship without restraint from a ruling Church, took over Sabbatarianism in its worst form, and transported it to their new land. So evil was the result, that there is plenty of justification for Ingersoll's well-known jibe, that the Pilgrim Fathers landed on Plymouth Rock, but it would have been better if the Plymouth Rock had landed on the Pilgrim Fathers.

The curious thing is, however, that the great reformers on the whole were by no means convinced that the Lord's Day had to be kept like the Jewish Sabbath. They were shrewd enough to see that nowhere in the Bible is this day abrogated, and if afterwards the Christian Church claimed that Jesus annulled Jewish law as such and instituted a new order, it did not mean the wholesale transference of Jewish customs and ritual to the new religion. In other words, they could see no reason why work should cease on Sunday, and a few bluntly said so. Luther said so because he hated Jews as much as Hitler. Beza and Zwingli both advocated work on Sunday. Calvin refused to have anything to do with "a superstitious observance of days." Bucer considered it an apostasy of Christ if working on Sunday was regarded as sinful. So did Erasmus; while even John Knox, the rock of Scottish Presbyterianism, was exactly of Calvin's opinion. Wherever the Scottish people got their unmitigated Sabbath observance, it was not, therefore, from John Knox.

Many of the later divines in the English Church like Paley and Whateley concurred. They had to—for they were forced to admit, as Paley does, that "the observance of the Sabbath was not one of the articles enjoined by the apostles." And even William Penn said, "To call any day of the week a Christian Sabbath is not Christian but Jewish."

Of course, not all Christians became Sunday observers. There have always been a number who not only look upon the Bible as divine, but are prepared to become martyrs if their beliefs are in any way impugned. The Seventh Day Adventists and Baptists, and other sects, stand solidly for Saturday observance, though they are quite convinced that the Jews are wrong on almost everything else. We must give them credit for sturdily defending their beliefs and refusing to be turned from their primitive Fundamentalism by any fresh knowledge. God said so-and-so in the Bible, and that is good enough for them. What sort of a Saturday world they would like to introduce, I do not know—but I expect that day would have to be kept with all its prohibitions and penalties if they were in power. There would be no difference in anything except the actual day.

And what a day! I remember it very well in the north of England as a small boy, and can imagine nothing more gloomy or pestilent. Our next-door neighbour was a Calvinist, and Sunday for him and his family seemed to me pretty near the hell pictured by Bunyan at his most Presbyterian worst. His son and I were playfellows, but I was only rarely allowed into the house on God's precious day. If the concession was per-

mitted it was a case of God help us if we so much as smiled or even talked above a whisper, when the only perfect way of spending the time outside church was in singing about the most doleful hymns the mind of man ever conceived, accompanied by dreary sounds pumped out of a small organ.

Forty years or more afterwards did not make much difference, for when I paid a visit to the town last year, it had still the same melancholy aspect on Sunday—even the organ was there in the street accompanied by some miserable, woebegone humans wailing out their gratitude to God for being such miserable sinners.

I expect in Scotland it is worse, and it amazes me to find that men and women, presumably intelligent in most other things, have allowed themselves to accept as "gospel" truth the fraud of Sunday. There is not a member of the Lord's Day Observance Society who can produce a single argument from the Bible that Sunday is the Sabbath, and yet that Society can publicly hold a meeting and thank God in prayer because Parliament cannot or dare not alter any of our Sabbatarian laws.

Under King's Regulations our soldiers are forced to go on church parade, and there is hardly a protest in Parliament from any of its members that this is a gross violation of a man's freedom—a freedom, be it remembered, he is fighting and often giving his life for. So strong are these Sabbatarian laws all over the country, that many of their defenders fight tooth and nail against other people being allowed to go to a cinema on the Sunday, or visit a museum or reading room. They are always ready to move heaven and earth that no continental Sunday will ever profane our dear English home-land.

That is, at least, what they would like; but needless to say the public, however much bamboozled about religion in general and the Sabbath Day in particular, are slowly but surely refusing to bow down altogether to the mandarins.

Before the war, the continental Sunday had invaded England's pleasant land—and I think it was not so much any agitation in its favour that did the trick, but a comparatively small mechanical object—to wit, the bicycle.

It was the bicycle which enabled millions of town workers to explore what the era of Industrialism had almost banished from their ken—the countryside; and the day on which this could be done best was Sunday. The bicycle was fairly cheap, easy to ride, and whatever was the state of the towns, our young people could leave it behind them, get out into the fine, fresh air, and enjoy a health-giving activity away from the diminishing bands of miserable sinners whining round an old organ, or listening to the amazingly puerile "sermons" which bewhiskered old women of both sexes confidently considered were necessary for God's happiness.

Following the bicycle came the motor-car, and the old Christian Sunday received its death blow. No matter what may be said in its defence as God's Day, for the mass of the younger generation Sunday will be a day of rest—not rest in a religious sense, but in the sense of real enjoyment.

After the war, there will be radical changes in government, and particularly in local government, and it is there that Sabbatarianism, Jewish or Christian, will be attacked. Those old people—magistrates, councillors and others—who have never thrown over their childhood's impressions of religion, will be replaced by a younger and more virile, as well as a more instructed type. They will allow those who wish to keep the Sabbath Day holy, to do so; and those who do not, who wish to follow their own inclinations based on a reasonable consideration for the rights of others to keep Sunday as they prefer, must have perfect freedom also to do so. The tyrannous Sabbatarian laws must go; and I am pretty confident that they will, once the world gets back, after the war, to sanity and—what is just as precious—to freedom.

H. CUTNER.

### THE EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN

The emancipation of women owes nothing to organised Christianity. Its true origin has to be sought in the French Revolution, a predominantly anti-Christian movement. Its first advocates were the atheistic Marquis de Condorcet and his disciples Theoigne de Mericourt and Olympe de Gouges. It was a pamphlet by the latter that inspired Mary Wollstonecraft's epoch-making "Vindication of the Rights of Women." Later on the agitation remained mainly in the hands of sceptics; for example, Robert Owen, John Stuart Mill and George Jacob Holyoake. The Christian clergy everywhere and of all sects—though there were a few exceptions—were on the other side; they could not forget their master, Paul. Nor did they confine themselves to protesting against giving women the vote; they also opposed every other variety of enfranchisement, whether legal, social or economic. The English Bishops, roaring in the House of Lords, were solidly against giving their wives and daughters the free use of their own money, their own labour, and their own person.—(From "Treatise on Right and Wrong," by H. L. Mencken, page 41.)

### CORRESPONDENCE

#### THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION.

SIR,—Quite apart from the financial aspects of State-provided or State-aided schools, where attendance is compulsory, the question arises: Should religious dogma and beliefs, about which there is no consensus of opinion, but great differences, among adults in this country, be imparted to children in these schools unless parents claim special exemption for them?

State education should surely be limited to subjects which are historical, or which stand, so to speak, on their own footing. From this point of view it follows that the teaching of religious dogma to the young, as though it were to be accepted as implicitly as the other subjects taught at school, should be ruled out in schools dependent upon, or aided by, public funds and rates. Therefore "dual control" should go.

Churches, State and Free, and religious sects, are thick on the ground in this Protestant country. The prime responsibility for the teaching of religion to the young is their province, and parents can be approached through them.

Roman Catholicism stands on its own arbitrary footing, whether here or in any other part of the world, and its teaching in State-aided schools would not, I imagine, involve control outside its own department.

Some knowledge of the Authorised Version of the Bible and its history should be included in education in this country. If this could be given without teaching the mysteries of Biblical theology, perhaps some unfortunate teachers would not have to pass a test of religious belief.

Otherwise Freethinkers and Rationalists may justly claim that State education, paid for largely by secular votes, should be limited to secular education and include only secular subjects.

There can be little doubt among Freethinkers and Rationalists that the teaching of "comparative religion" is the ideal in religious education when the suitable age comes for this.—Yours,  
MAUD SIMON.

#### FREEDOM AS IT RUNS.

SIR.—The Censorship Department of the New Zealand Government has still not lifted its ban on the entry of my booklet "No Friend of Democracy" into New Zealand. The first seizure of literature took place in November, 1942. Since that date many people of influence, Christians and Rationalists, have forwarded letters of protest. In addition, a public petition has been presented to the New Zealand House of Representatives regretting the ban on "No Friend of Democracy" and calling for a Parliamentary inquiry "into all matters affecting the censorship and the propriety and expediency of the acts of the Censor in regard to civil or religious liberty." There is no sign that these measures have brought about any change in the attitude of the Censorship Department to the entry of "No Friend of Democracy" into New Zealand.

Mr. Walter Nash, the Deputy Prime Minister for New Zealand, is now in this country. This provides a useful opportunity for citizens of influence in this country to make the New Zealand Government aware of the distaste with which they view the said ban on my booklet. I invite you to communicate with Mr. Walter Nash expressing your concern that the entry of "No Friend of Democracy" into New Zealand is being made impossible because of the arbitrary act of a Roman Catholic Censor.

Any such communication to Mr. Nash should be sent c/o The High Commissioner for New Zealand, 415, Strand, London, W.C.2.—Yours, etc.,  
EDITH MOORE.

[We owe an apology to Miss Moore for the delay in publishing her letter. It should have appeared in last week's issue.—EDITOR.]

### SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

#### LONDON—OUTDOOR

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): Sunday, 12 noon, Mr. L. EBURY.

#### LONDON—INDOOR

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C. 1).—Sunday, 11 a.m. PROF. G. W. KEETON, M.A., LL.D.: "New Worlds for Old."

#### COUNTRY—INDOOR

Bradford Branch, N.S.S. (Mechanic's Institute).—Sunday, 6-30 p.m. REV. J. M. THORNTON, B.Sc.: "To Whom Shall We Go?"

Leicester Secular Society (75, Humberstone Gate).—Sunday, 6-30 p.m. Mr. F. J. CORINA: "Does It Make Sense?"

#### COUNTRY—OUTDOOR

Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch, N.S.S. (Bigg Market).—Sunday, 7 p.m. Mr. J. T. BRIGHTON.

### PUBLIC MEETING

ON

### THE FUTURE OF GERMANY

EASTER SUNDAY, April 9th, at 7 p.m.

DENISON HOUSE, 296 VAUXHALL BRIDGE ROAD

Near Victoria Station

SPEAKERS: H. N. Brailsford, J. Burns Hynd, Edith Moore (Great Britain); I. Smets (Belgium); Willi Eichler (Germany); Yves Goeau (France); E. Scherer (Poland).

SOCIALIST VANGUARD GROUP

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## THE EMANCIPATION OF MRS. HELLIER

ABLER pens than mine have described to far more readers than I can ever hope for the maiden days of Mrs. Hellier. They have told how as a typist, poor but proud, she preferred to lose her situation rather than pile coals on the fire of her employer, who in a moment of inadvertence had requested her to do so; how in this extremity her proud and dependent mother, having obtained pecuniary assistance from a rejected admirer, took the future Mrs. Hellier, her "dear Peril," to the Cote d'Azur, where they made the acquaintance of an English captain and a continental prince. Now the captain desired to marry Miss Peril, but feared to shoot Niagara because of the unconventional doings of her mother, and how the prince would have liked to give his future, but not his name, to the same young lady; and finally (for a finally must come at last) how an American millionaire of powerful will but of nebulous antecedents, carried off the recalcitrant damsel under circumstances so compromising that she had no option save to marry him, which she did with the smiling approbation of her dear, dear mother, who at the same time, by capitulating to the insistence of the elderly and benevolent gentleman above mentioned, whose suit she had till then persistently refused, became at last mistress of an Elizabethan mansion and a domain older than the Conquest.

Who that has read the affecting narrative can ever forget the dovelike moaning of the fair Peril over her first disillusionment, that caused by the cruelty of the thin-faced, heartless captain at the instigation of his beloved but haughty mother; or the long resistance opposed by the high-minded maiden to the wooing of the determined millionaire, whom she could not love before she learned that he had founded a home of rest and comfort for decayed cab-horses; who, I repeat, that has read these things can ever forget them; and who that has read and remembered them can have failed to wonder how it went with the youthful bride in her stately palace on the Pacific slope?

It was towards the close of a summer's day that Peril Hellier sat by the long lattice window of her boudoir, gazing dreamily upon the lawn with its blaze of exotics in the neatly-trimmed beds, and the long branching avenues of pines and maples. She was very lovely in the charm of her newly-opened womanhood. The features so pure, yet so piquant, the richly clustering locks, the slim, willowy form, the air of melancholy abandon, mingled with a proud and sensitive reserve; in short, all the adorable traits revealed in the picture drawn by the authors who have consigned her to posterity in immortal prose, were her possession still. But to these was super-added the witchery of womanly experience, the sealed and settled consciousness of one who has passed the Golden Gates and explored the fairest vistas in the Gardens of Hesperides, but has retired weary and unsatisfied, with a soul bruised by the contrast between the ideal and the actual.

Her reverie was interrupted by the entrance of Suzette, her French maid, who came to ask what robe Madame would like to wear that evening. Peril decided in favour of a mosseline de soi over satin of cerulean hue, to be worn with the pearls that had been the envy of two continents. Suzette retired smiling the smile, discreet and troubling, which only a Frenchwoman can give. An hour later Peril, attired in the delicate and aesthetic habiliments of her choice, entered the salon to await the coming guests. Her husband then appeared. His broad, massive jaw snapped suddenly with the peculiar click described by the gifted authors of the previous narrative, and in accents sharp and nasal, he exclaimed, "Great Scott! why have you togged yourself up to-night? Nobody comes but that cursed whippersnapper of a French doctor. If he doesn't take care, I'll let daylight into his spoiled interiors!"

"It was not thus that you spoke to me in the presence of George Hamilton and my dear mother," replied Peril haughtily.

"George Hamilton be jiggered! Your blessed mother, who stole the cash at Monte Carlo made a fool of that red-faced fox-chaser when she enticed him into marrying her."

"Enough!" cried Peril, rising from her seat and proceeding to leave the room with a gesture of offended dignity.

"Go if you like," replied Hellier, snapping his massive jaw with the accustomed emphasis, "but if I catch you and him up to any tricks, I'll give you both an Arkansas pill!"

The dinner was a silent and moody function despite the efforts of Dr. Pascal Rugon, alias Monsieur le Marquis de Belamour, to make it otherwise. After the termination of the dreary ceremony, Hellier abruptly departed for his workroom, and the disguised Marquis, accompanied by the unhappy Peril, went out to take the air in the heavy-scented rose garden. For a few brief moments they remained silent, with a silence more eloquent than the music of fairest words; then, gently encircling the supple waist of Peril with his slender yet sinewy arm, the pseudo-doctor exclaimed: "How long shall we tarry, my beloved? Have I not adored thee with a tender and undying passion since the days when we took those stolen walks on the heights of La Turbie, and under the bosage of Cap Ferrat? Fate, stern and inexorable, doomed us to part, and our idyll rested unknown even to the distinguished historians of your virgin days; but, like a modern Sir Galahad, questing the Holy Grail, I have followed thee to this distant land, and sought to win thee from the grasp of the rude paynim Goth who claims thee as his own. Come, let us fly to the clime where Petrarch sang his Laura and the troubadours chanted their inspired lays. Hie thee with me to the vineyards of Avignon and Tarascon, or the stillet resting places of fair Provence."

A dewy sweetness, soft as the sunshine of April showers, gathered in the eyes of Peril, as with a gracious abandon she flung herself into the arms of her impassioned lover, and yielded to his taste lips untouched save by the polluting kisses of her brutal master. Scarcely had the errant lover drunk the nectar offered by his lady, when a sound mighty as the rush of many waters, or the roaring of great bulls, even Bulls of Basnah, reached his startled ears. He turned, and before him stood his infuriated host, armed with a bowie knife of the newest type.

A Marquis de Belamour may be much that is undesirable, but one thing he is not, and at that trying moment the present Marquis nobly sustained his ancestral traditions. Protecting the fainting form of Peril from the fury of her lord, he coldly demanded the intentions of the latter.

"Stars and stripes!" cried Hellier, snapping his massive jaw in the familiar way, "I guess if you hadn't put a bold face on it I'd have carved your giblets before you could have got a wink in. What do I want, indeed! A divorce, to be sure. Here's Lawyer Tompkins come for a witness with the papers in his pocket, and before very long he'll be busy getting out a licence for me to marry Suzette, and you can do what you like with this here lady!"

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

## THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

It is worth noting that in all the discussions of the Tory-cum-Church Education Bill the rights of the parents are strongly emphasised, and the rights of the child play no part whatever. That is as usual. The Bill is rammed with regard to the rights of parents, and generally the rights of Christian parents. But as a community we should be, first of all, concerned with the rights of the child, for it is the children of this generation that will span the gulf between them and the next. But the powers that be are determined that religion shall be perpetuated. The children are made conveniences to that end.