

# FREETHINKER

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## A MATTER OF FREEDOM

PRISONER—You stand at the bar of public prejudice charged with the following social offences.

1. You are young.
2. You are brash.
3. You are uninhibited.
4. You are a rebel.
5. You are an innovator.
6. You enjoy yourself unashamedly.
7. You make us envious.
8. You are you.

The last offence is by far the most serious, since the others all originate from this one. You are you, and it is that offence to which we most passionately object.

The respectable members of the jury have convicted you, I am glad to say. And I being the judge will sentence you—with considerable pleasure, I might add. I do not get much pleasure these days, but hurting you will please me wonderfully. You do what I dare not and enjoy what I cannot and are what I am not. So I loathe you.

There was a girl naked, we have heard. Oh yes, I heard it. The sound of those words, girl, naked, throbbed in my

ears, heated my blood, quickened my pulse. I heard it—girl, naked. And I saw it. Yes, I could see it so vividly. Girl. Naked. I could see her. I could see her. I could see her so clearly I could feel her. I was feeling the scene so sharply I was beginning to feel I was young. Beginning to feel I could do what then I had not dared to, was unable to do what now I could see. Then, when I was young, there was no girl—no naked girl. But now I could hear it, could see it and feel it, and was beginning to forget that I was what I am.

Till all of a sudden it stopped. And I heard the police officer giving his evidence and I saw the police officer standing there. I heard him and saw him and regretfully knew that I was the judge and this was the court and I would never be free again.

And then I saw you. And I saw you as I had not seen you when you first came into court. Then you were just another case to be heard. Now you are what I cannot be but wish I were and I loathe you.

I loathe you so much I dare not say. But you will feel my loathing just as you felt her. You will feel it just as sharply but you will feel it longer. It will worm into your stomach and eat into your bones. Because I am going to put you where you will no longer be free to be free.

I am free. But I am not free to be free. I am imprisoned by respectability and convention, by conformity and habit. You are free of all this. But I will put you, for as long as the Law of the Land allows, where that freedom will be of no avail to you. You will then be imprisoned like me. I free but not free to be free. You free but not free to be free. You free but imprisoned by the Law which is Me. I free but imprisoned by Myself.

You will then know how it feels to be like a clipped bird. Always wanting to get off the ground, to fly in the sky, to soar through the air. And not to be able to. Just not to be able to. Just to lift up your eyes and see the free ones flying high in the sky. Just to dream and to know that it is just a dream. Just to know—and to feel, to painfully feel, the tragic misery of such sheer hellish and impotent desire.

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Harry Lamont

## Speaking Personally

AT the outset I want to make it clear I have no personal animosity against members of the royal family. They may be very charming. It is the system I oppose.

In my view the monarchy is obsolescent. Its *raison d'être* has long since disappeared.

The first king was the biggest and bravest warrior, chosen to lead his men in battle, a purely temporary appointment. But gradually the position became permanent, the King lived in luxurious idleness, dissipation and frivolity, far from the battle zone. The propaganda machine started and maintained the fiction that he was a wholly superior and admirable person, and anyone criticizing him could be put to death in various diabolic ways. The threat of an action for lese-majesty terrified people into abject obedience.

The King surrounded himself with courtiers who flattered him for all they were worth. Taxes were levied to keep parasites in the land of Cockaigne.

Occasionally kings behaved so badly there arose much murmuring and incipient opposition in the realm. One monarch had his head chopped off and others had to promise to behave reasonably.

Some of them were disgusting blackguards, like Henry VIII who murdered his wives when he tired of them. A royalist father complained because I told a form of senior boys that Henry VIII was one of the worst blackguards who ever disgraced the throne of England, but I refused to apologize or withdraw. I proved my point from reputable history books. In England Parliament gradually took control, but we still perpetuated the fiction that the monarch governed. Every law begins with: "Be it enacted by the King's (or Queen's) most excellent majesty".

Nowadays the monarch has practically no say in matters of government. But he or she is still adulated as quasi-divine. I remember at the last coronation the announcer made his smarmy voice tremble as if he were under the stress of intense emotion. I found the performance nauseating.

James I (a homosexual) formulated what he called the Divine Right of Kings. According to this theory kings are chosen by God, and are therefore not responsible to man—a very convenient code for monarchs. It didn't last long.

The greatest French king, Louis XIV called *le roi soleil* (the Sun King), was such a glutton he had plates of food placed at his bedside, so that he could guzzle in the night, and no lady-in-waiting was safe from his attentions. He sired innumerable bastards.

Many years ago my mother and I were on top of a bus passing Buckingham Palace. My mother exclaimed: "Isn't it wonderful?" My reply astounded her for she was very conventional and old-fashioned. I remarked that I hoped to live to see it turned into flats for the workers. I may add that I am not a Communist and have never voted, but it seems to me wrong that thousands should live in slums in appalling squalor, while a few live in a vast palace, waited on hand and foot by numerous flunkies.

One of my objections to hereditary privilege is that a blockhead can become king if he is the king's eldest son.

## WHY I AM A REPUBLICAN

We can even have a raving lunatic like George III on the throne.

When I taught in the north of England the King and Queen came on a visit. School children had to line the route. Poverty-stricken wretches came out of their slum hovels to cheer. My Headmaster, who knew my views, asked me if I would stand at the side of the road with my form. "Yes, as long as you don't expect me to wave a penny flag", I replied.

Many people boost royalty as an antidote to Communism, but there are plenty of republics strongly anti-Communist.

It is often assumed that monarchs have a very strenuous time. Of course they are not free agents and have to conform to protocol, but they never do any real work. Their hardest job is smiling at the cheering rabble.

The fulsome adulation of royalty in the popular newspapers is fantastic and grotesque. I have just noticed this item in the *Daily Sketch*: "Prince Charles, aged 18, passed his driving test first bash yesterday. He went through the 45-minute exam at Isleworth, Middlesex, in a special car, with a special examiner, over a special route. Apart from that it was quite normal".

In my opinion monarchs at best have now become merely decorative, at worst an intolerable incubus on long-suffering taxpayers. It seems to me wholly undesirable to take a very ordinary man or woman, stick a crown on his or her head, and sing a lot of absurd twaddle about God sending him or her victorious, happy and glorious.

Any criticism of royalty in this country, is frowned on by conventional respectable people, because they have been taught from the cradle that the King or Queen is sacrosanct.

In Hyde Park a speaker was expatiating about the fine time a certain duke enjoys.

"Wouldn't you do the same if you had a chance?" yelled a raucous heckler.

"Yes, if you were fool enough to let me," retorted the orator.

The last monarch to throw down the gauntlet to Parliament was Edward VIII and he got the order of the boot. I lived in Paris at the time, and my landlady said to me that the King of England was enjoying high jinks on the Riviera. I was indignant, for the English newspapers had been asked not to mention the King's amorous antics. But Madam Dubois produced some French and American journals that gave prominence to the King's frolics with Mrs Simpson

One of our popular newspapers suggested forming a party of King's Men, which could easily have led to civil war.

A royal family usually has a large number of relatives who have to be supported by public funds. When a commoner has been selected by the Establishment to marry a princess, he is made a lord and the mob grovel to him. Nowadays monarchs tend to become a sort of tribal fetish for morons to adore.

In Uganda I saw Africans prostrate themselves in the dust when the Kabaka returned from exile. A friend of mine said: "Aren't they idiotic?"—"No worse than the blockheads who stand with their nappers between the rails of a palace and gape all night when a royal birth is expected", I replied.

It is amusing to reflect that the Kabaka has since been driven from the throne and was lucky to escape with his life.

When a king lay at death's door, many years ago, a friend of mine seemed to be terribly upset. He asked me if I didn't feel great grief. I replied: "I feel sorry for anyone who is seriously ill, but reserve my deepest sympathy for the labourer or artisan who may have a wife and children in dire penury. Sometimes they don't know where the next meal is coming from".

When a President or Chancellor is Head of State, he has usually reached his eminent position on merit, but the system of hereditary preferment puts numskulls into high office.

Sir William Blackstone (*Commentaries on the Laws of England*) wrote: "That the King can do no wrong is a necessary and fundamental principle of the English constitution". That is why some of them were such unprincipled scoundrels.

In my judgment the English monarch is now merely a figurehead for decorative purposes. So far we have not had an unsuccessful war since 1066, but if and when we are defeated in a modern war, it is likely that royalty with all its trappings, flim-flam, palaces, and army of sychophants will be swept to the limbo of historical curiosities.

Nowadays royalty merely encourages snobbery. Social climbers sell their souls to wangle invitations to a royal garden party, and swoon with joy if they are favoured by a few words from the monarch or some petty princeling.

Royalty is really run by the Establishment. When a king or queen reads a speech he or she merely says what has been drafted by the Cabinet.

I remember when we discussed Edward VII (a bit of a lad in Paris), I sat in a drawing room and listened to a chorus of extravagant praise of the King. Someone said to me: "Don't you think he's wonderful, Mr Lanmont?" I replied: "No I don't, and in any case I'm a republican". Talk about the guardsman who dropped his rifle! All stared at me in horror. They obviously regarded me as capable of murder, rape, wholesale larceny and indecent exposure.

When I was a teacher and confessed to a headmaster that I was a republican, he whispered: "Keep it dark, for God's sake. If it leaked out I'd have to sack you and I don't want to do that".

A friend of mine is always telling me what a strenuous time the Queen has. She has certain duties to perform, but has a multitude of servants and never dirties her hands. She is paid £475,000 per annum, tax free, which is far more than any person has a right to expect. Just think how many houses for the homeless could be built with that money! Recently Princess Margaret was granted £47,000 for decorating her house, a sum I regard as grossly excessive. A French writer said he'd like to see the last king strangled with the guts of the last priest. That is an extreme view. I would merely like to see parasites, lay and ecclesiastic, abolished.

## NEW THINKING FROM SCOTTISH CHURCHES

Jean Straker

*Sex as Gift*, by Ian M. Fraser. A Personal Account of Work Undertaken for the Committee of Scottish Churches' House, Dunblane. (SCM Press, 1967, 5/-)

TO a freethinker anything emanating from the mouths of Scottish churchmen has generally evoked feelings of despair and unbridgable division. Talk of inter-denominational dialogue has caused sceptics to raise eyebrows and religious runaways to say that such dialogue is impossible.

But dialogue has started, and this little book is an extraordinary report of a consultation which was set up under the patronage of the Scottish Churches Council, which is jointly owned by nine Scottish denominations: the Baptist Union of Scotland, the Churches of Christ, the Church of Scotland, the Congregational Union of Scotland, the Episcopal Church in Scotland, the Methodist Church in Scotland, the Religious Society of Friends, the Salvation Army, and the United Free Church of Scotland. It is written by the Council's General Secretary, the Rev. Ian M. Fraser, who also acted as Warden for the Consultation.

The Committee which planned the Consultation had advised:

"We do not want this to be older people talking about how younger people should behave. We want it to be a conversation between older people and adolescents, in which the adults do a lot of careful listening.

Youth organisations were each invited to nominate one person each, aged around 17 or 18, articulate and communicative. The rôle of the youth organisations was con-

sidered, there was examination of the churches' teaching, a look at the kind of material used in school curricula in association with the Association of Directors of Education, and contact was maintained with Dr Kershaw, the MOH in Colchester, who was Chairman of the Schofield Report's steering committee.

There was throughout the dialogue a continuing core of professional people from fields of venereology, obstetrics, psychology, sociology, education, probation, police, television, and youth organisations, along with representatives of the Youth and Morals Committees of the participating churches, the Marriage Guidance Council, the Alliance and the Parent-Teachers' Association.

At certain points there were surveys to provide check-ups: a small sample from the Girls' Training Corps usefully put a query against a basic assumption; a questionnaire compiled by Dr John Hignet, a sociologist from Glasgow University was answered by seventy young people from the Scottish Association of Youth Clubs; seven hundred pupils in a comprehensive school, aged 12 to 17, supplied statistics; there were two surveys of unmarried mothers; the Schofield Report was studied for two and a half days with Dr Kershaw. On checking, it was found that although the report was based on investigation in England, it had direct relevance to the Scottish situation.

"Accordingly, somewhat surprised, we find ourselves in print."

And somewhat surprised, too, the freethinker must be with what has been printed:

"Too often in matters of sexuality the Church has pretended to a work it has not done and a place it does not occupy. Statements and resolutions have too rarely been backed up by that mature judgment which is the fruit of thorough study."

An example of the type of study will illuminate. Under the chapter heading 'Having It', Ian Fraser writes:

"We made some progress by considering the word 'fuck'."

There was no evasion here, and opposing views were defined:

"It was simply a descriptive word, commonly in use among the common people; a word which represented a human act in a quite unloaded way."

The word was thoroughly acceptable; timidity in its use was basically class prejudice. We would simply have to get over an inhibiting squeamishness, a bias against it traceable to educational influences and class background.

The opposite view held that the word was so completely inadequate for anything which matters. To inject into it any person to person quality would need all kinds of endearments. But one thing was common to these two views:

"Whatever content the word 'fuck' is capable or not capable of bearing, anything which is more than animal copulation or mere physical linking must get across the idea of a relationship being established, of which the sex act is at least some expression and confirmation."

So much for words, but semantics are not knowledge. In the section devoted to 'The Armour' we read:

"Knowledge of physical facts is wanting. Strange as it may seem, the venereologist and the obstetrician testified that sexually experienced young people who come into their care are often substantially ignorant of the physical facts."

There was a myth that 'keeping it for marriage' brings with it a risk to fertility, health or adequate parenthood.

"There is no shred of evidence to support it. It needs to be shown up for the eyewash it is."

And then:

"Basic information about physical parts and functions should be given as a right, to those whose lives it affects. In a survey of sexual attitudes and habits in certain colleges in the USA, the source of knowledge which was said to give most help was pornographic photographs. People wanted to know what happened and how it happened. Knowledge of differences of male and female make-up must also be provided."

Apart from the use of the word 'pornography' to describe visual information which has nothing to do with 'prostitution'—a use which the church moralist has always been eager to pronounce—it seems that the Scottish Churches, at least, come now into conflict with the magistrates and judges who continue to describe such photography as indecent or obscene. The conspiracy to deny knowledge to those whose lives it affects, entrenched in criminal law loses even the support of the kirk to defend it. In a footnote, Ian Fraser adds:

"A book like Hubert Selby jr.'s *Last Exit to Brooklyn* (Calder and Boyars) horribly and movingly portrays the net of sexual squalor in which a present and rising generation alike may be involved, unless the web of circumstances is broken to free them."

In searching for a code of sexual ethics—a matter which was returned to in succeeding consultations—the idea of a systematic collection of 'dos' and 'don'ts' became less and less convincing; no such code existed: when

"the Christian way of handling sexual matters was put to the test, it was found that there was nothing solid behind it."

The freethinker will not need me to reveal that words like 'God' and 'Christ' also find their way into the report here and there, but as I do not know what they mean, I can only comment that if you read between the lines, you'll find that there's quite a bit of freethought going on in the dialogues, and, doubtless, sermons in the Scottish churches—a fact which secular and humanist organisations should note.

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## Flashback

### FASHIONABLE INTELLIGENCE AND COURT NEWS

His Real Original All Serene Highness the Prince of Wales sucked his thumb yesterday morning.

Lady Timpwitch has ordered a Honolulu poodle.

Sir Arthur Helps, ABC, etc., has had the Order of Brown conferred upon him.

Lord Lawmaker succeeded in mutilating and killing 174 doves last week.

The Earl of Grouseland has evicted a hundred common people from his estate, and has subscribed a guinea towards the purchase of a hassock for his parish church.

The Marquis of Johnswood has hired a fresh mistress, and has requested Her Majesty to permit him to retire from Court attendance for a few weeks.

Admiral Fitzroy continues to perform his noble duties.

A photograph has been taken of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales.

The Clerk of the Closet has invented a deliciously perfumed disinfectant.  
(*The International Herald*—August 10th, 1872)

## THE LAW OF GOD: II

A. C. Thompson

THE STORY of the giving of the Ten Commandments is told in Exodus 20. The previous chapter 19 narrates that in the third month after escaping from slavery in Egypt, the children of Israel came to the wilderness of Sinai, a desert, and camped by a mount. Their leader Moses, apparently uninvited and with no reason to believe God would meet him there, "went up to God" (19, 3). The God Yhwh called him and gave him a message for the people, demanding obedience, which Moses transmitted. Moses ascended the mount a second time (8) and Yhwh ordered the people to "sanctify themselves" by washing their clothes, and to "set bounds to the people" round the mount to prevent them from going up, or even touching the mount, man or beast, under penalty of death (10-13). The people washed their clothes (14), but where two million people obtained water for all this laundering in what has just been called a wilderness and desert, and is elsewhere described as a 'waste-howling wilderness where no water is' and where the people constantly wail for water to drink, is not revealed. The 'bounds' could not have been a mere line or boundary, for Moses later reported to Yhwh that the people "cannot" come up (23), and it also restrained cattle; hence it must have been a firm wall or fence, to keep any curious from coming up to see what was going on. After this precaution for secrecy was finished, a smoky fire was seen atop the mount, a trumpet sounded, and Moses climbed up a third time (20). As soon as Moses reached the top, Yhwh ordered Moses, now eighty years old (Deut. 34, 7), down again to warn everyone else to stay away, and to have the priests sanctify themselves (Ex. 19, 21-22). Moses tried to explain that the wall was already built (23) but Yhwh ordered "Away, get thee down" (24). At that time there were no priests, the first priests being Aaron and his sons (Ex. 28). Obediently, Moses went down the mountain to the people (25).

Now, it is while Moses is down, off the mount, that chapter 20 begins, "And God spake all these words, saying" the Ten Commandments. Moses was not atop the mount with Yhwh when the Ten Commandments were given: Yhwh was up there quite alone, speaking to nobody, and Moses was down with the people, talking to them (20, 20). Nobody heard Yhwh above the thunder and the noise of the trumpet that they 'saw' (18) for they all fled away, and besought Moses to explain things (19); and Moses went back up for further advice (Ex. 20, 22 to Ex. 23, 33, four chapters).

Now why should anyone write a story so awkwardly, having Yhwh preaching atop the mountain while Moses and the people were below? Obviously someone made an insertion of these chapters into an already written story. The original writing could not have been a bound book such as we have today; it was a long roll written in columns, or a long strip folded in pleats, or separate sheets tied together. One wishing to insert something could do so only between the bottom of one column and the top of the next, and it would be difficult to find a column that ended in a way such that the new matter would fit coherently. That these chapters are not in keeping with the rest is apparent by reading on. The original story appears to continue on from Ex. 24, 12, where there is another illogicality in which God invites Moses to come up to him in the mount, when Moses is already up there. All the rest of the Book of Exodus is concerned with plans for building a tabernacle, ark, table, candlesticks, mercy seat and whatnot

for ceremonials; this was the original story, that Yhwh established religious ritual; some moralist evidently believed that there should be some ethical rules as well as religious rites, and patched in some laws regarding human relationships. These are the only such moral laws anywhere in the Old Testament; they are reviewed in Deuteronomy. The next book, Leviticus, is on sacrifices, rituals, duties of priests, etc.

The writing of the words of Yhwh, by Moses, is related in 24, 4. This was a book (7). It was a different book from the book of Exodus, which obviously also contains these words. Could Moses write a book? Surely, if the Hebrews had just spent over 400 years as slaves, without education, in Egypt, then if they knew any writing at all, it would be Egyptian hieroglyphics; do the negroes in America know the African languages of their ancestors brought over as slaves 300 years ago? But competent archaeologists (eg. James H. Breasted) declare that at the reputed time of Moses (ca. 1500 BC), the Jews had no writing at all, not even hieroglyphics, and that writing developed among them some 500 years later, and centuries still later they were abandoning clay tablets for Egyptian papyrus. The Hebrew alphabet was adapted from the Phoenician, brought by Aramaean merchants, and the Phoenician alphabet scarcely extends back to the reputed time of Moses.

When Yhwh invited Moses up the mount for a further visit (24, 12), he promised, "and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law and commandments which I have written, that thou mayest teach them", as if he had not already given a law and Moses had not already taught it (24, 7). What is this new promise? It is not a promise of the law just related in Ex. 20-23, for when Moses later appears for this conference, Yhwh keeps him there forty days (18) dictating to him plans for constructing a tabernacle, sanctuary, ark and other religious ceremonial articles. One may well wonder here at the great God who created the entire universe in six days, now spending forty days specifying this gaudy, ritualistic paraphernalia. One may well wonder at this righteous God, who recently enacted "thou shalt not steal", specifying materials which could only have been stolen (25, 2-7; 35, 4-29), things which escaped slaves would not have, unless they had stolen them all from their former masters, and which they would not find in the wilderness. Archaeological exploration reveals that the ancient Egyptians had gold articles, and the only way the Israelites could have the gold which Yhwh demanded for his ceremonial objects (25, 18) was to have stolen it before leaving Egypt. One may well wonder also at this omniscient and omnipotent God who made heaven and earth and all that in them is, teaching nothing whatever about science, or natural laws, or human relationships, or moral principle, or international relations, or peace, or child care, or education, or research, or discovery, or logical thought, or prevention, treatment and cure of disease, or any of the practical or fine arts, or any component of civilisation or progress, or humanity or culture of any sort. What he teaches instead is to kill a bullock and to smear its blood on the altar with a finger, and to kill two rams and to put the blood of one on the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and of his sons, and on their thumbs, and on their right big toes, and to sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about (29, 10-20 ff).

Yhwh kept on instructing Moses in this savage ritualism from chapter 25 to the end of 31, at the end of which (18)

he gave to Moses two tables of testimony, tables of stone, 'written with the finger of God'. Now what was written on these stones? We are taught in school and in popular religious literature that it was the Ten Commandments; but there is no reason for this belief. If you asked someone not so taught, someone from Mars, to read Exodus and to say what was on the stones, he would say, obviously some sketch or plans or specifications of the religious objects that Yhwh ordered Moses to have made; and this is what he promised in 24, 12. The tables of stone have nothing to do with ten commandments given in Chapter 20 in a bit which is not coherent with the rest of the narrative, at the beginning of which Moses was down when he should have been up, and at the end of which he was up when he should have been down. True, 34, 28 does end, 'and he wrote upon the tables (second ones, made after breaking the first) the words of the covenant, the ten commandments', but these words hanging on the end of the verse are surely an addition made by some later zealot, for the law given in Ex. 20 was nowhere else called 'ten commandments' nor ever totalled as ten, nor indeed were there ten, for Yhwh gave on that occasion not ten commandments but four whole chapters. The name, 'Ten Commandments' is a more recent designation for that portion of the law, and these words in 34, 28 are another deliberate insertion. Angry, reckless Moses, breaking the first two tables over the golden-calf incident (32, 1-19), destroyed the most valuable archaeological treasure that ever existed—stones 'written by the finger of God'. The Code of Hammurabi, an ancient cuneiform law, of 2350 BC, 900 years older than the law of Moses, is today in the Louvre Museum in Paris, where all may go to see it; but these tables which were the work of God were destroyed before anybody saw them except Moses. Thus is divine revelation.

We can know what was written on the broken stones, for Yhwh told Moses to hew two new stones, on which Yhwh would write the words that were in the first tables (34, 1). Hence, we can know what was on the first stones by seeing what appears on the second ones. Yhwh did not keep his promise to write, but instead ordered Moses to write what he dictated (34, 27). What he dictated extends from 34, 10 to 34, 26. All this is not at all the Ten Commandments given in Ex. 20. Therefore, no stones contained the Ten Commandments.

In Exodus 35, Moses begins the making of the paraphernalia. To 35, 20 he reports to the people what Yhwh told him on the mount (and this does not include any Ten Commandments). From 35, 20 to 29, they collect the needed materials. To the end of the chapter (35), workmen are engaged. The work goes on from Chapter 36 to 40, and this brings us to the end of Exodus.

Now, what happened to the book? In 25, 16, Yhwh commands Moses, "thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee". This 'testimony' could not be Moses' book, for Yhwh obviously referred to what he intended to tell Moses on the next trip up the mount—the construction plans. It could refer to the two stones, but not to the book. After the construction was finished, Moses put the 'testimony' into the ark (40, 20), an ornate wooden box. In the last speech of Moses before his death, he several times refers to a 'book of the law' (Deut. 29, 20, 21, 27). In 31, 9, Moses 'wrote this law' but it is not clear whether this passage refers to the continuation of his previous writing or to a new edition, and he delivered it to the priests and Levites; and in 31, 24-26, when he finished the book, he commanded the Levites to put it inside the ark. In 31, 10-13, he ordained that the book be read publicly

every seven years. When the ark was moved across Jordan into the promised land (Josh. 3), there is no mention of a book. Joshua, the successor of Moses, built an altar (Josh. 8, 30-35) 'as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron' (Josh. 8, 31, and Ex. 20, 25), and on this very rough surface, Joshua wrote a copy of the law of Moses (32) and afterwards he read all the words of the law 'according to all that is written in the book of the law' (34), omitting not a single word (35).

This is the last mention in the Bible of a law of Moses, or of a book, for the next 800 years, until Josiah's priest, Hilkiah, claimed that he found 'a book of the law' in the temple. But how could a book repose in the ark and be completely unknown to anybody? There was no book in the ark. When the ark was captured by the Philistines (1 Sam. 5), and sent back on a cart to Beth-shemesh, Yhwh slew 50,070 Jewish men because they looked into it; but with all this looking, and all this dying and mourning, nobody saw any book. When Solomon built the great temple, in which the book was later alleged to be found, the priests brought in the ark (1 Kings 8, 3, 4; 2 Chron. 5, 4-7) and 'there was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel' (2 Kings 8, 9, 21; 2 Chron. 5, 10; 2 Chron. 6, 11). Evidently, the stones contained the 'covenant'; there was no 'book of the law'. The Bible says not another word about a law of Moses, or a book, until the alleged finding of the book in the temple.

The most reasonable conclusion is that the 'Divine Law of God' and the Ten Commandments are a fraud. What actually happened can be pieced together. It is agreed by virtually all Bible scholars that the first six books were all written centuries after the death of Moses, during the reign of the kings. When first written, it was not divided and numbered in chapters and verses; this was done by later editors. At first, it did not contain Ex. 20, 1 to Ex. 24, 11; these chapters were inserted later, as were Josh. 8, 30-35, and bits about writing an already-written book in Deuteronomy. King Josiah, or his priests, desired to make reform laws; and in order to give them greater authority, he fathered them on their tribal god Yhwh with a story that Yhwh gave them, in mystery and secrecy, to their legendary hero, Moses, atop a mountain during the flight from slavery in Egypt which was their folk-lore. That the law did not exist at any time before Josiah is proved by the facts that the Bible does not mention such a law and nobody knew about it, not even Yhwh himself. There is at this date no way at all of proving that the story in Exodus of the giving of the law is true. To believe in it, one must simply take it on faith. Surely, in the light of modern geological knowledge, one can no longer accept the fable of the origin of the world told in the previous book. But there is, on the other hand, much evidence, internal evidence from the Bible itself, that the stories are myths and the assertions of divine intervention in human affairs are fraudulent.

Above all else, those three words, 'the ten commandments', hung on the end of 34, 28, clearly display the tampering which the Bible has suffered, for these words are obviously added and are obviously false since what Moses just wrote was the words of 34, 10-26, which are not the Ten Commandments.

(To be continued)

## HOME SWEET HOME?

Isobel Grahame

*(The true story of how a new house was handed over to the purchasers and what they had to face.)*

A LOCAL AUTHORITY assisted a housing scheme for owner occupiers by making old allotment land available at a very reasonable price on the understanding that the developer would give first refusal to local nominees for whom 100 per cent mortgage loans would be available where necessary.

There were only two days more to wait until the first young couple would get their keys. This great event had already been postponed three times because of unforeseen delays, so of course everything on their side from getting time off from a nearby factory to briefing removers and giving notice to the landlady had been postponed three times as well.

The anxious gap was filled with much speculation as to whether the living/dining room would really look a little larger when accumulated filth left by each invading trade to be spread, trodden, smeared and ground in by the following ones was eventually removed. How the electric immersion heater would be doing its stuff by the time they arrived; the almost-new-secondhand electric cooker (a deliriously unexpected bargain) would be connected up and they would have their very own supper at home; how pretty the made-over curtains with their new linings would look when the loose putty, smudged paint, splashed emulsion, red-lead, orange peel, stale food, tea stains and handfuls of cut nails had been cleared from the glass and sills.

A tribe of friends and relatives waited at the ready to stain the upstairs floorboards and follow up with polish on them and the ground floor composition tiles—plain black for economy except for the kitchen where a few extra pounds from a gardening job had been splurged on pale blue. Of course the bathroom and loo would have to be lino tiled later on as one of the 1,001 other 'do-it-themselves' jobs, and there would have to be a shed—everybody has to have a shed because nobody ever designs a house with anywhere to keep garden tools, bicycles, prams, sacks of this and that and a drum of paraffin for when the power fails. (I wish all architects could take a holiday in rural Norway and see how well they do it.)

\* \* \* \*

Sick with excitement and clutching the wonderful key, they led us towards the house which stood in a morass of packed sodden subsoil clay littered with everything builders throw behind them for lack of anywhere else to throw it. The topsoil—all the lovely loam built up by generations of allotment holders—had been bulldozed into a heap and then used to fill in a hole which would be under one of the roads when the third phase of the estate was reached, so the whole weary process of cultivation and tillage would have to be gone through all over again.

Before the key could be put in the lock we all had to stumble over the rock hard remains left by some mucky tyke who'd knocked up a couple of shovels of cement on the front-door step and never bothered to use it up or wash down. It was obvious from outside that the windows hadn't been touched either inside or out, and the under sides of the exterior sills were just raw wood—where all the drips collect there wasn't so much as a lick of priming.

When the door was opened our hearts sank, for the cleaners had done no more than put a coarse broom over the floors and the black tiles were almost invisible under what must have been pints of spilt paint, emulsion and

varnish. The still wet stair treads were marked by three sets of nailed boots and the consequent footmarks and nail scores tracked in and out of every room and away through the front door, back door and garden door. In so small a house the treads were narrow so it must have been quite difficult to walk up and down with both feet on the painted part each time.

Natural wood finish on all interior doors was a mass of spattered paint, emulsion and a frothy compound used to finish the ceilings, and the painter—evidently wishing the quality of his work to be preserved for posterity—had varnished over the lot. The bullnosed hearth tile, broken when *Eire* and *Tyneside* had come to blows, had been replaced without cutting back the old cement, so it stood up a quarter of an inch above the rest. The electrician had forgotten the immersion heater and lagging jacket, the cooker was not connected up until 8 p.m. next day, and happy starlings were in possession of the loft through a missing brick in the gable end.

Upstairs was chaos too. Inches deep in broken brick, crushed plaster, everything which could be spilt or splashed including some black oily substance, sawdust, shavings, tea-leaves and more stale food. In spite of the fact that the WC flush worked properly the pan was stinking full, and the new whiteness of the bath was disfigured where the 'cleaners' had attempted to scrape paint off with an old knife.

During the process of cleaning up we discovered two floor boards not nailed down, the stair hand-rail split and dangerous, ill-fitting loose panes of glass in several windows, and the merest skim of thinned down paint of which any amateur would be thoroughly ashamed.

Black mastic adhesive had been more or less wiped off the kitchen tiles where it showed, but on the black ones the layer must have walked and rolled in it. Evidently he had not had a broom handy and laid the tiles on top of brick and plaster crumbs, making further economies by using damaged tiles as well. For good measure a lump of concrete had been left trapped under the door and incised a deep arc. Altogether 38 tiles had to be replaced, and three interior doors.

On the plans each little bedroom had a built-in 'wardrobe' because they were too small for much furniture, but these turned out to be only recesses in the walls with doors across, so they had to be hastily fitted with rails and shelves before they could be of any use at all. Likewise 'working surfaces' had been indicated all round the kitchen but only one small one turned out to be a reality and it was explained that the plans were meant to show what you could do with the space if you wanted to!

During the next and following weeks—even longer than our worst dreams envisaged—erring tradesmen returned again and again to tread their foul droppings, scratch the floor with hob nails and kick the long-suffering stairs until the once radiant little housewife was near to tears. Many of the omissions were repaired by the owner to avoid the mess and damage inevitable if the experts had been allowed to complete their work.

Finally, while the owner was busy re-tiling the front step which had been chipped beyond repair in getting the concrete off, the external painter arrived to do the under-sides of the sills. He said grumpily: "I should have thought a young fellow like you could have done this for yourself".

"I could," replied the purchaser, "and done it a darned

# FREETHINKER

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER  
office at least ten days before the date of publication.

National Secular Society. Details of membership and inquiries  
regarding bequests and secular funeral services may be obtained  
from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High Street, London,  
S.E.1. Telephone HOP 2717. Cheques, etc., should be made  
payable to the NSS.

Humanist Holidays, Art Holiday, Burton Galleries, Wirral  
Cheshire, 29th July to 12th August. Small Youth Camp near  
Yeovil, Somerset. Details of both from Mrs M. Mepham,  
29 Fairview Road, Sutton, Surrey.

Humanist Letter Network (International) and Humanist Postal  
Book Service. For information or catalogue send 6d stamp to  
Kit Mouat, Mercers, Cuckfield, Sussex.

### OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and  
evening: Messrs. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

Manchester Branch NSS, Platt Fields, Sunday afternoon, 3 p.m.;  
Car Park, Victoria Street, Sunday evenings, 8 p.m.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays,  
1 p.m.: Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday,  
1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

### INDOOR

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square,  
London, WC1), Sunday, July 16th, 11 a.m.: H. J. BLACKHAM,  
"Is Virtue Out of Date?"

West Ham Branch NSS (Wanstead and Woodford Community  
Centre, Wanstead Green, London, E11): Meetings at 8 p.m.  
on the fourth Thursday of every month.

sight better, but I happen to have paid Messrs X to pay  
*you* to do it".

The man looked utterly incredulous at such an eccentric  
train of reasoning.

\* \* \* \*

Since participating in the events related above, I had  
the following reported to me by the young owner. Like  
everyone else he wanted small quantities of certain build-  
ing materials—sand, ballast, a brick or two, etc, in the  
course of making his home habitable, and asked the site  
foreman if he could buy them from the company. To his  
amazement he was told to take whatever he wanted "be-  
cause everyone else does and this is taken into account in  
the price of your house and you'd be out of pocket like  
if you didn't do it too".

"You mean I must steal these things to get my money's  
worth?"

"That's it Mate, that's how it's done these days"

## LETTERS

### Making babies welcome

HARRY LAMONT touches on abortion in his article on June 2nd  
and he says that "No woman should be compelled to bear an un-  
wanted child". But surely all children should be "wanted" inside  
and outside marriage.

To make abortion legal is only playing into the hands of the  
wrong people. What we should do, indeed must do, is to make all  
children welcome. Those in marriage desired by the parents and  
those outside desired by Society as a whole. If, for one reason or  
another, parents cannot rear them, then they must be adopted by  
Society, preferably by other, perhaps smaller, families adopting  
them as one of their own.

This is nothing new. Primitive societies have been doing this  
from time immemorial. Children born before marriage welcomed  
into the tribe on the same footing as other children and no stigma  
attached to the parents or children. V. T. BOWEN.

### George Griffith

I AM attempting to do a survey of the life and works of the  
Victorian writer and freethinker, George Cheiwynd Griffith-Jones,  
later George Griffith, who also wrote under the name 'Lara'. I  
have reason to believe that the *Secular Review* published his  
portrait during the middle '80's, and that he was active in Bolton  
at that period.

Any information of his work, character, and early life would  
be especially welcome, and access to his writings of that time,  
deeply appreciated (the British Museum has an article "The Dying  
Faith" plus a small volume of poems only). P. R. COUSSEE,  
7 Roseleigh Avenue, London, N.7.

### Which is which?

IN Dr Ronald Goldman's article of May 12th entitled "Human  
Development", there appeared the following highly intellectual  
statement, "A newly-born child has been defined as 'an organism  
with a great deal of noise at one end and no sense of responsibility  
at the other'". All America awaits the knowledge as to which end  
is which. CLIFFORD H. KNOWLTON (California, USA).

### Military dictatorship

I DO not think that as *freethinkers* we should protest at the mili-  
tary dictatorship in Greece as Mr Blood suggests in his letter  
(FREETHINKER, 26th May). If we start protesting at the politics  
of foreign countries, where do we stop? Mr Blood mentions a few  
other cases. He makes no reference to Nigeria, Portugal and cer-  
tain other countries, and the most significant absence is that he  
makes no reference to the communist dictatorships in the USSR  
and its satellite countries to which I object as much as to the  
military coup in Greece. He says "a parallel situation existed in  
1933 when Hitler seized power", but in 1933, Hitler became  
Führer by the almost unanimous support of the German electorate!  
J. W. NIXON (Geneva).