

# The Freethinker

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"THEY WANT TO SEE A GHOST!" And who can blame them? "They," in fact, are children, shown in a photograph in the *Daily Record* for August 7th, crowding round the window of number 23 Mansfield Street, Partick, Glasgow, the house that had become "No. 1 attraction for week-enders". "First came the children", said the *Record*. "Then the teenagers. Hundreds stood outside chanting: 'We want the Ghost'." This may all sound

rather silly, but it is a good deal less so than the behaviour of the former occupants of the house, Mr. and Mrs. Lachlan Hanlon. Having lived in the house for two years, they suddenly left it at four o'clock in the morning of August 6th, after what was described as "a week of terror". The *Record* reported: "They say they felt as though invisible fingers were prodding them. Then came mysterious knocking sounds from the bedroom". Now they have "sworn that they will never return".

## The Hanlons

Mr. Hanlon's father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. George Hanlon spent the night of August 7th in the house in "an attempt to beat the ghost", and they too, most appropriately, heard strange noises and felt funny (though not "ha! ha!") feelings. Writing in the *Glasgow Evening Citizen* (August 8th), Jim Brown summoned his best ghost-story style (it may not be a *good* style, but no doubt it suited the occasion!) telling us that "as Mr. and Mrs. George Hanlon sat out their frightening vigil in the two-roomed flat they heard strange knockings". And: "A chill filled the house despite a roaring fire in the living room". At least it must be said that the 60-years-old couple had courage. Not only did they have to contend with the "supernatural seemings", they had to deal with the more readily identifiable, but hardly less disturbing visitations of the public. Windows were smashed and people tried to crawl into the house at night—not, apparently, afraid of any ghost. Of Mr. Lachlan Hanlon's practice of speaking to reporters through a keyhole of his mother's home, I will say nothing for the moment.

## The "Facts"

For the "facts" of the haunting, apart from the already mentioned "invisible fingers" and "mysterious knockings", I am dependent upon Mr. Brown, and he in turn on Mr. Hanlon senior. Perhaps it would be churlish to criticise Mr. Brown for reporting the father not the son. Keyhole interviews are not, I should think, particularly rewarding or reliable. But he might have spared us his second atmospheric report: "He had a massive fire on while we talked, but it was positively cold". However: Mr. Hanlon told how his son and his family had been driven from the house on Sunday after the coal kept shooting out of the bucket, and mysterious fingers prodded them and slammed doors. One of the children, said Mr. Hanlon, had wakened at night screaming. She said she had seen a huge man standing over her cot. "The pillows in the bed settee next to her cot kept floating away, Mr.

Hanlon told me as we looked at the haunted bedroom".

## Hardly Unique

Obviously no one but a spiritualist could draw any conclusions from that, but it must be said that there is nothing very strange about a little girl seeing "a huge man standing over her cot" at night. There are probably very few little girls who haven't. Fortunately, the majority of parents treat such visions for what they are—hallucinations. Moreover, there are always likely to be high jinks when three children sleep in a room, as was presumably the case in the overcrowded conditions of the Hanlon's two-roomed flat. Pillows, if not exactly "floating", might well be whisked away by a brother

or sister, and it isn't clear whether one of the parents "saw" this or whether it is another story from the girl in the cot. As for the *Record's* reference to "mysterious knocking sounds from the bedroom", if this was while the children were in there it isn't so very surprising. And a slamming door is hardly a unique phenomenon.

But it is really a waste of time trying to explain such vague and infantile allegations. It might be amusing, though, to meet the little girl in the cot, while I should like to bet that Mr. Hanlon junior wouldn't stand up five minutes to a cross-examination without betraying the unreliable basis of his stories. Perhaps he is a nervous type, perhaps he is peculiar; I have no means of knowing, but I can't help thinking of that keyhole! Anyway, he isn't the first person to believe in ghosts and he won't be the last.

## Ghost Story—And Parallel

One of the most famous ghost stories was told in *An Adventure*, by two impeccable academic ladies from Oxford, Miss Moberly and Miss Jourdain. Sixty years ago, on August 10th, 1901, on a visit to Versailles, they allegedly encountered Marie Antoinette and entourage, and their story is still widely believed to be genuine by spiritualists, though it has been utterly exposed. In a fascinating article in *The Guardian* (August 10th) to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the Versailles affair, James Edward Holroyd showed the remarkable parallels between *An Adventure* and *Alice in Wonderland*, not only in general outline, but in detail. Here are two extracts by Mr. Holroyd, the Versailles episodes being summarised first, with Alice's adventures in parentheses:

He told them to go to the right, where a slope led down to a stream crossed by a rustic bridge. ("You've only a few yards to go", he said, 'down the hill and over that little brook and then you'll be a Queen'.") They crossed the bridge and skirting a meadow (the English garden) found themselves in sight of the house which was small and quite different from what Miss Moberly, at any rate, had expected. ("The first thing I've got to do", said Alice as she wandered about the wood . . . 'is to find my way into that lovely garden . . .') As she said this, she suddenly came upon an open space, with a little house in it."

Unaccountably, Miss Jourdain did not see the sketching woman but later remembered having the impression at that point of their being more people in the garden than she could see. ("Are there any more people in the garden besides me?"

— VIEWS and OPINIONS —

## Ghosts in Glasgow

— By COLIN McCALL —



Alice said.") Miss Moberly also recalled that the place, overshadowed by trees, seemed full of unnatural darkness ("It looked much darker than the last wood") and wondered why the woman should have been sitting there so solitarily. ("Why do you sit out there all alone?" said Alice.")

Mr. Holroyd pointed out that Lewis Carroll (the Rev. C. L. Dodgson) had been known to the Misses Moberly and Jourdain at Oxford, and that the two ladies also wrote

## An Unusual Will, 1961

*Lest it should be thought that unusual wills are a thing of the past, we print below, by permission of the Testator, the greater part of the Last Will and Testament of a public man, who must, however, remain anonymous.*

AS LIFE IS UNCERTAIN, I deem it a duty ere I quit this world, to express in writing, for the guidance of friends and relations and/or those who have the final disposal of my remains, my feelings and opinions in reference to Christianity or any other superstition.

I adopt this course, that no mistake or misapprehension may arise through the false reports of those who officiously and obtrusively obtain access to deathbeds of avowed infidels; and who by their annoying importunities labour to extort from an opponent, whose intellect may be worn out and subdued by protracted suffering or accident, some trifling admission that they may blazen forth to the world as a deathbed confession and a triumph of Christianity over infidelity.

In the first place then, I calmly and deliberately declare that I do not believe in the popular notion of the existence of an almighty, all-wise and benevolent God, possessing intelligence and conscious of his own operations, because these attributes involve such a mass of absurdities and contradictions, so much cruelty and injustice on his part, that in my opinion no rational mind can, after disinterested investigation, give credence to the existence of such a being.

In the second place, I believe death to be the end of what is known as *me*, and that I shall never live again in this or another world.

In the third place, I consider priestcraft and superstition the greatest obstacles to human progress, improvement and happiness, and I die with the firm conviction that truth, justice and liberty will never be permanently established till every vestige of priestcraft and superstition is utterly destroyed.

Fourthly, I consider my parents to have been entirely mistaken in the religion they brought me up to believe in. I believe that the only useful religion consists exclusively in the practice of the welfare of mankind and in the mutual exchange of kind actions. In such a religion there is no room for priests; and when he sees them interfering at our births, marriages and deaths, pretending to conduct us safely through this state of being to another and happier world, any disinterested person of the least shrewdness and discernment must perceive that their sole aim is to stultify the minds of the people by their incomprehensible doctrines, that they may the more effectively fleece the poor deluded sheep who listen to their empty babblings and mystifications.

Fifthly, as I have lived since I became an Atheist in 1917, so I die, a determined opponent to their nefarious and plundering system. I wish my friends to direct that my body be handed over to HM Inspector of Anatomy and my remains, if any, destroyed as he may find convenient. I also wish that a representative of the National Secular Society shall make certain that there is no burial ceremony or performance of any sort, and that under no circumstances shall any clergyman or minister of any

their story anonymously. He recalled that they had seen visions before, and that Miss Moberly had seen "phantom towers" as a child. But the really interesting thing is that *Alice in Wonderland* was published as long ago as 1865, 45 years before the Oxford ladies had their own "adventure in wonderland".

If you like your fairy stories unadulterated then, you will say, "Give me *Alice* every time".

faith be permitted to conduct any sort of religious service in connection with the disposal of my remains.

Sixthly, I consider the Bible to be a fetish book of the most disgusting, cruel and abominable kind. It would have been better for the world if it had never been written, and to teach it to children is a crime. We hear a lot these days about "brainwashing", and this is exactly what priests do to children with this book. I am bound to say, for the benefit of my friends in Freemasonry, that at my initiation it came as a great and bitter blow to discover that Masonry is based upon a story from this disgusting book. This discovery made it quite impossible for me to take an active part in the working of the craft, which I might otherwise have done.

In the seventh place, I believe the noblest of all professions to be those of the scientist and the doctor, and I urge all who are sick in mind or body, to seek them, not the priest. The seekers after knowledge, not the purveyors of superstition, must and will in the long run, triumph. To explain the unknown by the known is an intelligible procedure; to explain the known by the unknown is to forsake all intellectual sanity.

All this may come as a shock to some of my friends and relatives, but as I never in thought or deed wilfully injured any human being, I hope I may be forgiven by any whom I may have jostled in this world's scramble.

I believe it to be the duty of every man to leave this world better than he found it, and if I have not had any success in this, I have tried to maintain what appeared to be right. I freely forgive all who have injured me in this life's struggle, including those who brought about two very personal tragedies in 19-- and 19-- respectively, and I die in the hope and consolation that the time is approaching when the spirit of antagonism will give place to fraternal affection and universal co-operation to prompt the happiness of mankind.

*The bequests follow.*

## World Union of Freethinkers

Conference at Beatrice Webb House, near Dorking, Surrey  
September 8th to 10th, 1961

Friday evening, September 8th:

8.30 p.m.: Lady Barbara Wootton, F. A. Ridley, J. Hutton Hynd and J. Cotereau.

Saturday morning, September 9th:

Professor Oliver Lutaud (Sorbonne), "Early Freethinkers in England and France, 1633-1688", and Professor Sargent Florence (Emeritus, Birmingham), "Religious Obstacles in Backward Countries".

Saturday afternoon—free.

Walk for those who so desire.

Saturday evening:

Fenner Brockway, M.P., "The Challenge of Africa".

Sunday morning, September 10th:

Professor Marcel Homès (Brussels), "Plant Physiology and Hunger in the World"; and Professor Jeger (Utrecht)

Sunday afternoon:

Dr. Maurice Burton, "Scientists May Burst Bubbles"; and G. A. Kirk.

A few places left; please write immediately to Colin McCall, National Secular Society, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1.



# From British Guiana

By D. H. WESTMAAS

READERS OF THE FREETHINKER may be interested to know a little about a recent development in this corner of the earth concerning the old and apparently almost universal problem of dual control of schools: the system whereby salaries of teachers and maintenance of school-buildings are paid for from public funds but Church denominations retain control of the appointment, promotion, transfer and discipline of teachers.

About two months ago, and in accordance with her then existing prerogative, Her Majesty the Queen gave her assent to, or rather, in the language of the official release, she was not advised by the Secretary of State for the Colonies "to exercise her power of disallowance" of a Law passed in our Legislature which took over the control of 51 denominational primary schools, all of which had been built from public funds.

This measure was a much milder version of the Bill to abolish dual control entirely which, at the time the Constitution of British Guiana was suspended in October, 1953, was being drafted by the first Minister of Education, Mr. L. F. S. Burnham. After four years of "marking time", the People's Progressive Party again won the 1957 elections, abolition of dual control again being among its stated aims.

The Law became effective on July 1st last, from which date the 51 schools became Government schools and were renamed accordingly.

On August 21st the country goes to the polls again under a Constitution giving almost complete internal self-government, with Independence just around the corner. It is generally expected that the PPP, led by Dr. Jagan, will again win. (By the time you read this the result will be known.) Mr. Burnham, the leader of the opposition People's National Congress, did a *volte face* during the debate on dual control before the Law was passed, and appears to be now committed to its repeal if his party should win.

Needless to say, the Churches, Anglican and Roman Catholic particularly, are very indignant, and the row has spilled over into the field of secondary education. Private secondary schools, some of which are run by the Roman Catholic body, also receive some financial aid from the public purse. This aid is to help them meet teachers' salaries, to improve their buildings (a minimum standard is required) and for science sections, etc. One of the agreed criteria for admission (although, the Principles claim, not the only criterion) to these aided secondary schools is according to the results, in order of merit, obtained by pupils who have sat a Common Entrance Examination. The present Minister of Education, the Hon. Balram Singh Rai (who, incidentally, is a Hindu) charged the Principals of 2 Roman Catholic schools receiving this aid, with discrimination. He cited figures to show that, after following the list according to merit up to a point in selecting pupils, these Principles then departed from the order, and selected pupils very much lower down the list, presumably because they were Roman Catholics. (The figures were challenged as not being strictly accurate). The Minister described this Church as bigoted and intolerant.

And the Rev. John Lord, Moderator of the Presbytery of British Guiana, has since agreed with Mr. Rai that "the official attitude of the Roman Catholic Church is that of bigotry and intolerance". Mr. Rai, a Hindu,

knows it, wrote Mr. Lord (*Daily Chronicle*, 29/6/61), and "How much more do I know it, a Protestant".

Mr. Lord, who challenged the right of Bishop Guilly of the Roman Catholic Church and Archbishop Knight of the Anglican Church to speak on behalf of all Christians, made it clear that he belonged to no party, "least of all the PPP". "I cannot subscribe to their type of Government, but this does not mean that if it is God's will that the Government of our country is placed in their hands that I must oppose them for the sake of opposition".

Whether or not it is God's will that the PPP should win the election, it is likely to be the people's will. For that reason, let me quote from the party's leaflet, "Dual Control". "The Dual Control System", it says, "is discriminatory. Because Church bodies control the schools they will not appoint non-Christians as teachers in the schools. To get an appointment a non-Christian generally has forcibly to give up his religious beliefs and become a Christian. If perchance there is an exceptional case of a non-Christian obtaining appointment, he never gets promotion and can never become a Senior Assistant, Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher, no matter what his qualifications are".

"The Christian Churches not only discriminate against non-Christians", it goes on, "but against Christians too. For example a Methodist cannot get promotions in a Catholic Body, or a Lutheran in an Anglican School, or a Congregationalist in a Canadian Mission School", so "the best qualified teachers do not always get the promotions they deserve and there is consequent frustration, and the education of the children also suffers".

"What does Government take-over of Schools mean?" it asks. "It means appointment, discipline, transfer and promotion of teachers will be taken over completely by Government. In other words the so-called 'take-over' is really little else than a change of management", which will bring an end to discrimination on the grounds of religion and denominational affiliation". The People's Progressive Party has, however, "no intention of abolishing religious instruction in schools".

## Annie Besant and the National Secular Society

By H. CUTNER

MR. R. J. JACKSON is one of the founders of the Buddhist Society in England, and believes (quite sincerely of course) in Buddhism, Hinduism, and in Occultism which, combined in varying degrees, have given us the Theosophy of Mme. Blavatsky. After many years on the NSS platform, Mrs. Besant was bowled over reviewing *The Secret Doctrine*, and the reasons why she went over to Theosophy can be found in her pamphlet—published by the Free-thought Publishing Company in 1889—*Why I Became a Theosophist*. It did not impress anybody but members of the Theosophical Society, and must have made G. W. Foote—who figures largely in it—smile. Though working so long and so loyally with Charles Bradlaugh, she never mentions him—unless I have missed the reference.

Mme. Blavatsky died in 1891, and a few years later appeared Edmund Garrett's *Isis Very Much Unveiled* as articles in the *Westminster Gazette* reprinted later in pamphlet form. So devastating was this exposure of the "Great Mahatma Hoax" (as he called the Theosophical



## This Believing World

A verger who stole a few pounds from the collecting bag at Westminster Abbey has been sacked by its all-Christian "authorities"—a sacking which seems to have disturbed some people. The unlucky man appears to have got hopelessly in debt and his explanation satisfied the magistrate who gave him a "conditional discharge". But the Abbey officials, who never cease when praying to repeat the golden words of Jesus always to give the other cheek if you get lambasted on one, contemptuously refuse here to follow "our Lord". If a man takes or "pinches" your coat you *must* give him your cloak also. But if a man takes anything of *ours*, says the Abbey officials, we give him "his cards"—as Miss Banks-Smith pointed out in the *Daily Express* (August 3rd). But what else did she really expect?

★

Although the death of Dr. Frank Buchman brought the usual crop of flattering obituary notices, there were some people who asked the pertinent question—what did his Oxford Movement, or as he later called it, Moral Re-Armament, ever do except bring him lots and lots of money? Did it ever stop a war, for example? Did it give the death blow to juvenile delinquency? Did it ever bring unbelievers to Christ?

★

Like nearly all religions, however it made tons of money. As Dr. Buchman explained when he was once twitted for his expensive living (best food, best hotels, etc), "Why not, isn't God a millionaire?" He appears to have preferred "God" to "Jesus" for his Moral Re-Armament—otherwise he might have referred to Jesus as the Greatest Millionaire that ever lived.

★

But will Moral Re-Armament survive? Why not? So long as it can depend on plenty of monetary offerings, so long as it can tap the religious sources of wealth, so long will it last as a religion. Mormonism and Christian Science, for instance, have always appealed to people with money to give away, and are both as flourishing as Christianity itself. Moral Re-Armament will only wither away when its funds cease. It can never appeal on "faith" alone.

★

The "Saturday Reflection" of the London "Evening News" is always a joy for an unbeliever, it is so naïve, but never more so when it preaches the "handiwork" of the Creator. It boldly supports the Design Argument, whether of the Universe or of "nature red in tooth and claw". Bugs, malaria, polio, and cancer, all come from the loving creation of God Almighty for we can see "God's truth on every side", we are enthusiastically told. Even in Science we can see this. Indeed, the more we study Science, the more we see "God's truth", and the more we realise "more about God the Creator". But what about Jesus and Mary flying up to Heaven? Are these aerial voyages heartily supported by Science? Does the sacred story add unquestionable proof of a Creator?

★

Trouble over the teenage clubs run by the Wellington College Mission. The Warden is the Rev. B. Walshe, and he declares that the morality at the clubs is "appalling" (*South London Press*, July 28th). It appears that the club rooms have been wrecked, the font in the Mission church has been desecrated, all the windows on the ground floors have been smashed, and a crate of beer has even been drunk in the church. The youngsters of both sexes have been found in "compromising situations", and altogether the Warden is worried about the sex problem at the

Mission. All this shows how well a perfect indoctrination of the teachings of "our Lord" can bring anybody—young and old—to a new and wonderful life. In fact, they will all be "born again".

### ANNIE BESANT AND THE N.S.S.

(Concluded from page 267)

Society's beliefs) that some people thought it would be the end of the Society. But religions have a way of surviving the most deadly of body blows; though, as it happens, the Theosophical Society is these days but a shadow of its former "greatness". It actually is as a force now as dead as mutton.

But Mr. Jackson has challenged me (*THE FREETHINKER*, August 11th) on a question of fact—he thinks it is important though I do not—so here are chapter and verse. At the Hall of Science on August 30th, 1891, before a packed house of NSS members, Mrs. Besant said,

You have known me at this hall for sixteen and a half years. You have never known me tell a lie. ("No never"—and loud cheers.) I tell you since Mme. Blavatsky left I have had letters in the same handwriting as she received. (Sensation.) Unless you think dead persons can write, surely this is a remarkable fact. You are surprised. I do not ask you to believe me; but I tell you it is so. All the evidence I had of the existence of Madame Blavatsky's teachers of the so-called abnormal powers came through her. It is not so now. Unless even sense can at the same time deceive me, unless a person at the same time can be sane and insane, I have exactly the same certainty for the truth of the statements I have made as I know that you are here.

In an interview in the *Pall Mall Gazette* on September 1st, 1893, among many other silly things she said was that she did "not receive the letters through the post". They came in "what some would call a miraculous fashion". They were in fact "precipitated"—obviously from Tibet, from the "Mahatmas" through Mme. Blavatsky.

Mr. Garrett reports everything in detail, and Mr. Jackson should read it for these details. However, the Theosophical Society reprinted a pamphlet entitled, *An Enquiry into Certain Charges . . .* held in London, July, 1894, and here is part of the speech made by Mrs. Besant:—

I do not charge and have not charged Mr. Judge with forgery in the ordinary sense of the term, but with giving a misleading form to messages received psychically from the Master in various ways . . . Personally I hold this method to be illegitimate . . . I believe that Mr. Judge wrote with his own hand, consciously or unconsciously I do not know, in the script adopted as that of the Master . . . I believed that the messages he gave me . . . were messages directly precipitated . . .

When I publicly said that I had received after H. P. Blavatsky's death letters in the writing that H. P. Blavatsky had been accused of forging, I referred to letters given to me by Mr. Judge . . . in the well known script . . . Having been myself mistaken, I in turn misled the public . . .

Now, anyone can be mistaken; and the High Priestess then of Theosophy, Mrs. Besant, as much as anybody. But it was her duty to go to the NSS and say so. She never did, and I believe she never went to "the public" either and said so. It was Mr. Garrett's good fortune to come across that *Enquiry*.

For the rest, Mr. Jackson should go to Mrs. Alice Leighton Cleather's *H. P. Blavatsky, A Great Betrayal* (1922) for the proof that Mrs. Besant told "untruth" after "untruth". I have rarely read anything so utterly destructive. It seemed to be as libellous as possible, yet was (I think) ignored by Mrs. Besant. Mr. Jackson had better have left sleeping dogs lie.

—NEXT WEEK—

MAN OF REASON  
THE LIFE OF THOMAS PAINE  
By H. CUTNER



# THE FREETHINKER

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## Lecture Notices, Etc.

### OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch N.S.S. (The Mound).—Sunday afternoon and evening: Messrs. CRONAN, McRAE and MURRAY.

London (Tower Hill).—Every Thursday, 12—2 p.m.: Messrs. J. W. BARKER and L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch N.S.S.. Thursday lunchtimes, THE FREETHINKER on sale, Piccadilly, near Queen Victoria Statue. (Platt Fields), Sundays, 3 p.m.: Messrs. G. H. MILLS and G. A. WOODCOCK.

Marble Arch N.S.S. (Marble Arch), Sundays, 12 noon: MESSRS. F. A. RIDLEY, D. H. TRIBE, C. H. CLEAVER and G. F. BOND.

Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. L. EBURY, J. W. BARKER, C. E. WOOD, D. H. TRIBE and H. A. TIMMINS.

Merseyside Branch N.S.S. (Pierhead).—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.; Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: Messrs. L. EBURY and A. ARTHUR.

Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square, Nottingham).—Every Friday, 1 p.m., Every Sunday, 6.30 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

Sussex Branch N.S.S. (Peace Statue, opposite Embassy Court, Brighton Front), Sunday, August 27th, 3.15 p.m.: J. W. BARKER, T. CONWAY, F. PEARCE.

## Notes and News

THIRTY-THREE MEMBERS of the Marble Arch Branch of the National Secular Society are visiting the Mermaid Theatre, London, on August 22nd to see Sean O'Casey's irreverent play, *The Bishop's Bonfire*, which we reviewed on August 4th. If the visit is a success, says Branch-Secretary W. J. McIlroy, it is hoped to arrange others. We are sure it will be.

"PERHAPS WE SHALL never know who were the educationists who were guilty of the crass stupidity of decreeing that intimate sex instruction should be given in our schools." As might be guessed, this is a clergyman speaking; the Ven. T. Dilworth-Harrison, Archdeacon of Chesterfield, to be precise. Failing the duty of parents to teach their own children, he would "without any hesitation" far rather have "children discuss these things in their own way—and most of them inevitably do—and retain a sense of shame, than that they should be taught officially often by teachers whose outlook is inevitably that of the world" (*The Guardian*, 7/8/61). "When we read of the rapid increase of girls becoming mothers from the age of 12 upwards", the Archdeacon went on, "when we hear of contraceptives being frequently the property of schoolboys, the country is reaching a lower stage of degradation than has ever been envisaged before".

THIS, OF COURSE, is grossly exaggerated. But we refer the Archdeacon to a London *Evening News* report (9/8/61) of the Southwark Catholic Rescue Society. In the 12 months under review, 559 unmarried mothers made appli-

cation to the Society's Social Welfare Department and "The majority of them were Irish girls working in this country, who had become involved with their own countrymen". We are not sure, but we suspect there is little sex education in the Irish school curriculum. The report also states that 46 of the girls who sought aid were between the ages of 13 and 17 years, and there was also an increase in the number of married women who had conceived illegitimate children. This, we repeat, is a report of the Southwark Catholic Rescue Society.

MRA SUPPORTERS rallied valiantly to the—still half-mast—flag in defence of their lost leader, against a *Glasgow Herald* obituary notice which they variously described as: "a calculated attempt to misinform people", "most inadequate in its evaluation", "smear and venom", "misleading and inaccurate". A Marcus W. Gray of Milngavie, Dumbartonshire, protested "with the utmost vigour against the obviously tendentious inaccuracies", while Beatrice C. Gray of the same address was "saddened to see that you have on your staff a man either so ignorant or so brainwashed" as the writer of the obituary. From Milngavie, too, came W. H. G. Woodford's complaint of "The cynical tone, the twisted half truths, and downright lies which constitute most of your obituary of Dr. Frank Buchman".

THE LETTERS or excerpts of letters appeared in the *Herald* on August 11th, two days after the offending obituary. What of the latter? It referred to "the circles of position, influence, and wealth which were always to have magnetic attraction for Buchmanism"; to its "seemingly inexhaustible cash flow, undisclosed income sources [and] unpaid staff apparently wanting for little on tax-free expenses"; and to Buchman's "association with the Nazi leaders and his personal friendship with Himmler". In his last years, the obituary said, Buchman was "somewhat dwarfed by the swelling size of the movement in which he was the lingering figurehead. But his impress on it could be seen in such assertions as:— 'The man who does not choose Moral Re-Armament for himself chooses Communism for his country.'" "This remarkable piece of inverted McCarthyism," said the *Herald*, "might serve as well as anything to illustrate both the ingenuousness and the danger of the movement, as of its founder". There was no refutation among the letters from the Buchmanites: they must have been too hurt or outraged to reply.

THE RUSSIAN banning of 27 books from the French exhibition in Moscow (British United Press report, August 14th), is wholly to be deplored. And it doesn't show much confidence in dialectical materialism to refuse to allow visitors to read Jean-Paul Sartre's *Critique de la Raison Dialectique*. Among other authors banned are Camus and Malraux.

ON SATURDAY, August 12th, *The Scotsman* reprinted "A Warning to Tourists from its issue of Saturday, August 10th, 1861. "Now that every nook and crvice of the Alps is studded with members of the Alpine Club and of British society in general . . .", it read, "Let them take earnest heed not to die in those hallowed regions. Only the other day a German Protestant guilty of the indiscretion of dying in the Tyrol experienced the greatest possible trouble in getting a decent burial for his earthly remains. The authorities, however, finding it at length impossible to leave him where he was . . . gave orders for a hole to be dug and the heretic to be thrown in". That, presumably, was the end of his troubles.



# Four Philosophers: 4—Kant

By H. GEORGE FARMER

UP TO THE TIME OF KANT, moral philosophy could roughly be divided into two schools, Naturalists and Intuitionists; one explaining morality in terms of subjective feelings and the other regarding it as an objective fact. With the former self-love was the determining factor, whether it was the egotistical naturalism of Hobbes or the sympathetic naturalism of Hume. The latter was to be found in the rational theory of Cudworth, the aesthetic bases of Shaftesbury, and the autonomic postulates of Butler. The real foundation of that system was based on "duty". Although—as we shall see later—Kant was strictly speaking an intuitionist, he differed from both of these schools in regarding self-love and duty as two distinct motives. To Kant, the empiricism of the naturalists in their derivation of morality from self-love and sympathy, did not explain the various facts of consciousness in that respect. On the other hand, the weakness of the metaphysical and theological arguments of the intuitionists was equally patent. Kant therefore planned an idealist system of ethics which he considered to be superior to all empirical or metaphysical theories.

This system was clearly the outcome of his speculative philosophy. To him, every object of sense, however much we think that we know about it, is but mere sense perception, *i.e.* phenomenon; and Kant argues that since all content of experience is comprehended by us as phenomena, there must be a "thing in itself" which has an existence independent of the subjective form as visualised by the senses. This absolute transcendent existence is noumenon. Thus Kant conceived man as both a sensuous and a super-sensuous being, the former being subject to natural causality, and the latter absolutely unconditioned by the world of phenomena. Here Kant was to find an ideal ground-work for his ethical schemes very much like that of Plato, but without his transcendental superstructure. Thus the basis of Kantian ethics is the deduction of all content from form.

Just as phenomena are but our sense impressions of noumena, so all content of morality must have its original in the form of morality. This super-sensuous formal principle is what Kant conceived to be "duty", the "moral law", the "categorical imperative", which is absolutely unconditioned by, and acts without reference to, the content of the sensuous world. Here we have a new currency for the idea of duty which could not fail to be of import. First of all we must understand what is meant by an "imperative". To Kant, an imperative meant the compulsion of the will to action. Therefore an action willed by motive, *i.e.* by sensuous existence, is a "hypothetical imperative", whilst an action willed by the will, *i.e.* by super-sensuous existence, is a "categorical imperative". In this Kant agrees with Plato in urging that moral ideas are not sensuous or subjective, but super-sensuous and objective. Kant's scheme is to keep these two existences—the sensuous and super-sensuous—quite separate and distinct. This led to the recognition of the "absolute good" and the "relative good" in the ethics of Kant. All our actions as beings of the sensuous world, however good they may appear, could only be classed as the relative good. The defect which conditioned that good to the "relative" was its external, sensuous prompting, which meant in the long run "Self". "Most of our actions are indeed correct" says Kant, "but if we examine them more closely we everywhere come upon the dear self which is

always prominent". On the other hand they are allowed to be "good" in so far as they assisted the attainment of the "absolute good". Thus the "good will" only can properly be called "good", because it is the absolute good, which—to Kant—was the only "true morality", since by its disdain of appeal to the senses and its absolute disinterestedness, it makes for a universal principle. Here we see Kant as a utilitarian but without empirical needs, and an intuitionist without making the moral sense a *via media*.

This "categorical imperative", which commanded the will to the "absolute good", is given three rules of action:

- 1 "So act as if the law of thine action were to become by thy will law universal".
- 2 "Regard humanity whether in thine own person or in that of anyone else as an end and never as a means only".
- 3 "Act as a member of a kingdom of ends".

Kant does not tell us how these three forms are related to each other, but apparently they are connected, and may be said to represent "Unity", "Plurality", and "Totality" in his system: 1, That there is but one law to be obeyed; 2, That many are subject to this one law; 3, That although there is one law but many subjects to this one law, there are not many laws but one law. Let us see what Kant means by these forms.

"The Law Universal". Kant's system was, in many respects, in direct opposition to other systems. Broadly speaking, all had made the will a mere power dependent upon demand or precept. With the Eudaemonists it was a desire for happiness; with the Perfection Moralists it was a self-development in which the heteronomy of the will was implied. Kant, however, makes his moral law distinct from demand or precept, and totally unrelated to any empirical volition, and therefore conceived it as autonomous. This seemed to give a sure and safe foundation for a "universal law" since morality, being rid of the interference of motives prompted by demand or precept, and no longer dependent on individual interpretation, was unconditional of person or race, time or place. This moral law—said Kant—is only "good", not simply because it is absolutely unconditioned, but because of its universality. Thus arose the formula: "So act as if the law . . . were to become by thy will law universal", which became the sheet anchor of Kantian ethics, since it assumed the "the actual content of the moral law, making it unconditionally binding on all rational beings".

"Humanity as an End". This formula does not appear to be clearly explained by Kant. The "will" being determined by some end, we must recognise that the will of a rational being must be resolved by an end that is the "absolute good" in itself. It must not be determined by the "relative good", because this, being based on the external law, gives a loophole to obedience to heteronomous forces which destroy universality. The formula seems to insist on the recognition of others as well as self in the moral law.

"The Kingdom of Ends". This merely links up the two preceding forms. A community of rational beings, each subject to his own law of the "absolute good", without reference to the external sensuous world, was conceived on the ground that no individual can refuse to obey a law when he recognises that he is the author of that law, at once autonomous and universal.



How far one can give assent to Kant's theory as stated above is not an easy one to answer. As an abstract principle, which views human personality so nobly and profoundly, lifting man above mere eudaemonistic and utilitarian motives, insisting on "Duty for duty's sake", there can be few to offer dissent. Yet his "whys" and "wherefores" have so many palpable defects that they militate against his system as a whole. Kant's ethical theory, being clearly derived from, or influenced by, his speculative philosophy, appears to have suffered from the contact. It is advisable therefore to glance for a moment at one phase of this latter, for the sake of recognising where the defect in one system passed to another. Kant asks, "How is knowledge possible?" He answers by showing that our perceptive cognition is divided into two factors, "sense" and "understanding"; the former being the faculty through which objects are "given" to us, whilst the latter is the faculty by which they are "thought" or "cognised". Objects make impressions on our capacity for sense-affection and these impressions are then sorted out by the categories of the mind, which reduce them to order and coherence. It is by means of these categories—which are not the product of sensuous intuition but are lying *a priori* in the mind—that one is able to "think" objects, that is, to mould the mere blind impressions of sense perception into orderly and concrete knowledge. Kant argues from this that there is a rationality and universality in nature, and says that if there were not a harmony between objects seen and our mode of cognising them, there would be no knowledge of them at all.

This line of argument does not appear to be strictly logical. His dual division of our perceptive cognition is not an explanation of how we cognise objects, but simply a convenient form of statement of possible stages of our knowledge. Again, when he emphasises the adaptation of phenomena to our faculty of cognition as proof of a harmony, a universality, a rationality between the sense and understanding, between the world and mind, one must ask the question, "What can we know of these phenomena apart from our faculty of cognition?" To know them at all is to know them in terms of this faculty. We cannot get behind our own mental processes, because these latter have to be employed in the attempt. In short, we cannot look at them at one moment, and at nature at another without them.

That it was upon this fundamental principle that Kant saw a *raison d'être* for his ethical postulates, there can be no doubt. If we recognise this—in spite of its inherent defects—I believe that we can more fully appreciate the Kantian doctrine of the "categorical imperative". Although Kant conceived a moral obligation independent of empirical application, free from feelings and desires—an autonomous will—it does not necessarily follow that it was absolutely apart from the world of sense perception as some would have us believe. Sticklers for niceties may trip up Kant in his seeming claim for separateness between the two, and it is fairly clear that his "categorical imperative" was not something quite apart. Like his speculative view of knowledge, Kant made the "categorical imperative" a principle which could only come to consciousness in its application to a concrete empirical content. This we know from the fact that he asserts, 1. That we *can* do what we *ought* to do, which means that we must know what we ought to do. 2. That it is the *motive* and not the *effect* that determines morality. Yet Kant insists that although the "will" could not function apart from empirical content, he considered that it was autonomic, a self-directing force, deciding whether particular desires shall or shall not prevail, as though it were quite indepen-

dent of the various phases of consciousness. Kant was driven into that position out of logical consistency with his speculative views. He was compelled to make the distinction between form and content in his ethics as elsewhere, and it resulted in his identifying the essence of self or personality as a universal rational principle with a formal reason, and to look upon feelings and desires as accidents in self-consciousness. Here Kant is at fault, since the individual *self* must include feelings and desires as constituents. Strip the mind of all feeling and desire, all consciousness of ends and means, and what there is left is not an "autonomic will" ready to decide for or against, but a complete blank!

It has been argued the the "will" is consciousness or awareness, that is, consciousness or awareness of our ability to select or choose. Actually, consciousness tells us nothing of the sort. It can only impart to us the existence of passing states of mind. On the question of choice or selection, mere consciousness cannot help us. The chief factor in conduct (habit) lies outside the region of consciousness. In most cases we act as we have been in the habit of acting, and our present conduct is the sum total of our previous actions and inclinations. Further, the determining causes of conduct lie largely in the region of the unconscious or subconscious, which entirely defeats any thesis that the "will" equates with consciousness.

Can we have deliberation and choice apart from sensuous motives in our actions? Obviously not. Even Kant admits that, since he derives conscience from the conflict between the moral law and sensuous interest, defining it as "the power of self-directed moral judgment", and "the consciousness of an inner tribunal in man". But as James pointed out, both the desire of the sensuous interest and the resistance of the moral law are not two distinct things, but simply two aspects of one fact. This choice or deliberation based on an abstract law does not exist, since we can only understand such terms in relation to desires. Indeed it is worth while noting that even deliberation and choice are not always the mark of a highly developed mind but rather a poorly developed one.

When Kant speaks of the "law universal" and "humanity as an end" we see the impossibility of a purely formal principle, since both imply "content". Indeed it is self evident that a principle which involves "humanity as an end" cannot be *a priori* but *a posteriori*. It is no use falling back on the argument that the "law universal" is only the sum-total of the "categorical imperative", since the very term itself implies "content", as Kant himself would probably admit. He certainly seems to have gone too far in his insistence on motives as the moral criterion instead of results or consequences. Morality is wholly a question of relationships. It is not whether actions spring from a self-determined "will" of whether they are the inevitable consequent of preceding conditions which constitute the moral or immoral, but their influence in forwarding or retarding certain social relations. The rightness or wrongness of any action lies in its consequence, and what a science of morals ought to be really concerned about is, "objectively" the consequence of actions, and "subjectively" the feelings that lead to their performance. In the latter one cannot help admiring Kant for his stern notion of "duty", with its removal from all ideas of reward or punishment, the will of deity, or mere utilitarian considerations: but his formal and *a priori* "categorical imperative"—which at best was only a negative power telling us what *not* to do — well deserved the epigram of Schiller that we only do our duty when we do it with aversion.



## CORRESPONDENCE

## FOUR PHILOSOPHERS

I should like to congratulate you on printing H. George Farmer's articles on Socrates, Plato and Hobbes. They are excellent summaries and Dr. Farmer's erudition is quite obviously remarkable. The second half of THE FREETHINKER during these three weeks and, I am sure, for the fourth, provides an intellectual feast.

M. ROBSON.

You may only be burdening us for only four weeks with Dr. Farmer's "Four Philosophers", but it is three weeks too long for me, and I suspect for many other readers. I have struggled through the first two, but the thought of two more to come is too much for me. Unless they are considerably shorter or less taxing I shall skip them.

N. F. DAVIES

Dr. Farmer did right, after a very able analysis of Plato's philosophy, to draw attention to his harmful influence in connection with the "ultramundane teaching of the Medieval Church" and "subordination of the individual to the whole". Plato was not only a "Christian before Christ", but a Fascist before Hitler and Mussolini.

HAROLD CROWE.

## CRIME, RELIGION AND SOCIETY

In my view Mr. Ridley (18/8/61) exaggerates the economic factor in crime (the lack of millionaire cat-burglars is a puerile illustration). If the relatively high Roman Catholic criminal figures were confined to Britain and, say, America, his argument might stand, but this is not the case. Given an apparently widespread tendency to higher crime statistics among Catholics, we must infer some correlation, and poverty just will not do. Even the Monsignor shattered this by his own analysis of juvenile delinquency in Liverpool: "In one ward was a Catholic school and a non-Catholic school in exactly the same environment. Delinquency in the Catholic school was greater than in the non-Catholic school". The answer, I think, is to be found in Roman Catholic moral teaching which (as Emmett McLoughlin has shown in his *American Culture and Catholic Schools*) differs from what we would regard as normal moral teaching, plus certain social factors like the emphasis on Catholic "separateness" and "distinctiveness".

ROBERT DENT.

While agreeing to the main with Mr. Ridley's interesting article on these subjects, may I point out that the millionaire is a successful cat-burglar, but that his form of burglary, namely, stealing the produce of other people's labour or inventions (the motor car magnates, for instance), is, unfortunately, not regarded as a crime by the rulers who ordain what are crimes and what are not. The stealing of land and labour has never been regarded as a crime: but most millionaires' wealth is founded on those two types of anti-social activity.

C. H. NORMAN.

## DOUGLAS REED AND THE JEWS

Mr. P. G. Murphy (THE FREETHINKER, 4/8/61), says that I do not quote any authority for my opinion. I have always assumed the onus of proof to be upon the people who make assertions, in this case the extermination of 6,000,000 Jews. I am asking them to prove this beyond any shadow of reasonable doubt. To do so I must know the grounds upon which their case is based. Mr. Murphy quite legitimately quotes Sir Hartley Shawcross, who in his closing speech (Nuremberg) says "... Two thirds of the Jews in Europe exterminated, more than 6 million of them on the killer's own figures". I mentioned, that Douglas Reed said he believed the extermination of Lidice, because the Germans themselves published it. Mr. Murphy appears to be satisfied to accept one account and reject another in spite of them having a similar foundation.

My original letter, was a query as to how the figure of 6,000,000 was arrived at. In view of the statement from Lord Russell in *The Scourge of the Swastika*, Mr. Reed could be wrong, but that does not make Sir Hartley or Mr. Murphy right! The American Jewish Committee put the world's Jewish population at 15,749,000 (1939), with a footnote that 1,500,000 were estimated to have been exterminated (Whittakers Almanack, 1946). Four times that figure now being claimed is surely justification for my letter of 7/7/61?

To Mrs. S. Muller, may I say that my impression of Douglas Reed is that he is only anti Jewish, when he thinks the Jews are anti-Gentile and, if he shows bias, it is against Political Zionism.

In conclusion, it is refreshing to find a journal where a subject like this can get an airing, and engage intelligent and polite criticism.

A. GREGORY.

## ETHICAL UNION CONFERENCE

THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE of the Ethical Union will take place at High Leigh, Hoddesden, Herts, on the weekend September 15th-17th, with the theme "Humanist Action". Speakers and subjects will be: Richard Clements: "The Social Role of a Humanist Movement"; Miss D. A. G. Watts: "Voluntary help in the Youth Service"; Dr. Cyril Bibby: "Science in Education"; Paul Cherrington: "The Humanist Parent"; and Jay Blumler: "Is Socialism Relevant Today?" The fee is 65s., or 35s. from tea-time Saturday. Coach 3s. 6d. each way. An outing to Harlow will cost 3s. 6d. Full details and bookings: Mr. L. Burnet. The Ethical Union, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, W.8.

## WANTED

I am looking for a copy of *What Freemasonry Is, What It Has Been and What It Ought To Be*, by Charles Bradlaugh. Can any reader kindly oblige?—JOHN BELLAMY, 14 Elrington Road, London, E.8.

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