

# The Freethinker

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IN THE year 1827 the long list of religious founders was added to by yet another enterprising American named Joseph Smith, who is said to have claimed that he had discovered what he called the divinely inspired Book of Mormon written on gold plates in Egyptian characters. Later on, this was widely challenged as a fraud and the inspiration denounced as nothing more divine than a romance written by a clergyman. A pretended translation was published in America in 1830 and in England in 1831. And since there are always enough credulous fools available to swallow the silliest imposture, Smith was able upon this fabulous foundation to establish the religious sect which has since developed into what we now know as Mormonism. In 1844 Smith seems to have aroused a good deal of antagonism and was assassinated in a mob attack in Illinois. As chief prophet he was succeeded by the celebrated Brigham Young, popularly regarded as the creator of the famous and infamous Abode of Love, the one place surely where love never abode. For it is recorded that this Young rascal had seventeen wives and it is impossible to suppose that much love was lost, let alone found, in such a hen-roost. He was eventually removed by President Buchanan and indicted though not convicted of polygamy, which it is alleged was then an article of the Mormon faith.

**Mormon and Mammon**  
However, on legal, if not on religious grounds, polygamy, one gathers, has now been abandoned. In any case the Abode of Love is scornfully repudiated as ever having had anything to do with Mormonism. Modern Mormons give themselves the grandiose title of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which rather implies some recognition of what their former-day predecessors may have been. Their headquarters is known as the LDS Temple. Critics more sceptical than credulous have been known to declare that LSD would be more to the point. For like all financially thriving Christian sects, these latter-day saints seem to be quite as well equipped with an eye to the main chance as the most commercially shrewd latter-day sinners. Materially, they are as a community said to be extremely prosperous, which probably accounts for much of their proselytising success. Money has always been notoriously talkative and a winning tongue has money. And although Mammon has no need whatever to respect Mormon, Mormon may have every need to respect Mammon, whatever may be affirmed by the thirteen Articles of Faith drawn up by Joseph Smith and issued presumably as the Mormon creed.

**Young Elders**  
If these effusions are anything to go by there is just about as much that is winning in Mormonism strictly as a religion, as there is in Billyism of the Graham variety without the glamour of its well-financed leader. A list of beliefs is set forth on small printed distributory cards, one of which was passed on by two Mormon Elders, certainly with every courtesy and obviously with every

confidence that they would work the trick. In this however, faith did not prevail. The trick has not worked. These Elders appeared so elder that one would guess they had already attained to the mature wisdom so often displayed at the ripe old age of twenty-five or thereabouts. Not that a Mormon Elder who is plainly a youngster is any more absurd than a Catholic celibate Father who is ostensibly a virgin.

Somewhat surprisingly these Articles of Faith were accompanied by a personal note which contained a most unflattering reference to the "tired old message of orthodox Christianity". That naturally led one to expect something engagingly iconoclastic and pro-

gressive. Much less surprisingly the ancient beatitude held: Blessed is he that expecteth nothing for he shall not be disappointed. If what these written Articles themselves embody is not just another tired and tiresome message of orthodox Christianity, then orthodox Christianity is confusion even worse confounded than the least confused Freethinkers have thought.

## The Thirteen Articles

Each Article begins "We believe", just as the episcopal creeds begin "I believe," as though the mere force of assertion is sufficient to guarantee their soundness. One wonders where these committed believers would find themselves if, for once in a way, they could take themselves seriously to task as to why they think they believe what, without much evidence of thinking, they profess. But religious believers always abhor that devastating little "why". They dodge it if they can, for nothing fetches them so quickly off the rails and keeps them off so ignominiously. Articles of Faith are by their very nature comfortingly designed not to be questioned. When they are, they so often turn out to be not so much articles of faith as articles of faithfulness, a difference which many a parson has, to his private dismay, no difficulty in understanding.

With the exception of a single clause there is little, if anything in the first of these Articles to conflict with the traditional Christian creeds. There is probably nothing that would be unacceptable to most of the sects all the way from Rome to the Salvation Army. But that one unorthodox statement: "We also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God" is blasphemous enough to condemn and segregate the whole concern. Moreover, Mormons are as unable as Catholics or Salvationists to show in what way the word of God is anything more than the words of man dressed up in high-flown metaphysical jargon to dazzle the simple and daze the nervous. Fortunately that sort of thing is getting played out. These Mormonisms now sound like something out of Salt Lake City after the salt hath lost its savour.

Apart from that one fanciful heresy, there is nothing beyond recapitulation of orthodox as repetitious as history and as wearisome as repetition. Once again we are confronted with such stale stock-in-trade as the

## VIEWS AND OPINIONS

### Latter-Day Saintliness

By REGINALD UNDERWOOD



Trinity, Original Sin, atonement through Christ and submission to the ordinances of the Gospel, that is the Gospel according to Mormon, alias Joseph Smith. We are plied with tediously unoriginal beliefs in "the Primitive church, apostles, prophets, pastors, evangelists etc."; followed by "the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues etc.". One may be forgiven a satirical smile at that thought-saving and always highly serviceable "etc." So much in a little and so non-committal. The gift of tongues is altogether too much in evidence to be doubted, but to ask for belief in such arbitrary interpretation thereof is asking too much. It is faith's unfair demand for blind compliance. Whose interpretation? On what grounds? As for visions, mental pathology is full of them. As for healing, it strongly suggests one of the visions. As for believing "the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly", it requires no vision to reveal that the correct translation will be that chosen by Joseph Smith, just as what he calls past, present and future revelations of God will be those revelations vouchsafed especially to him.

So far so feeble. But number ten suddenly trumpets forth belief "in the literal gathering of Israel, the restoration of the Ten Tribes, that Zion will be built upon this the American continent, that Christ will reign personally and the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory." This is Old Glory and the shape of things to come with a vengeance. The implication is unmistakable that Mormons are somehow identified with the Ten Tribes and it is their Utah which will be rechristened Zion. What the rest of the world, including the more enlightened and less distended Americans must think of such a bump of Mor'on bumptiousness is indeed something to ponder.

It is amusing to note too, that this Sainly eventuality cavalierly rules out the very exclusive arrangement for the Second Coming made by the Witnesses and their Jehovah. As for what will be the portion of all the wicked old Atheists . . . Once upon a time a dour old local preacher used to revel in haranguing his congregation: "Them there what believes on the Lord Jesus Christ'll be saved. Them there what don't believe on the Lord Jesus Christ'll be—!" Words might fail him but actions speak louder than words. He would simultaneously clamp his lips together, jerk his head downwards, shoot out his arm and snap his fingers. So perhaps we can say that now we know.

The last three of Joseph's articles give unctuous expression to a tolerance that is hard to reconcile with Mormonist missionary zeal, just as their advocacy of subjection to secular rulers and their law would be as easy to square with prior Mormonist principles as it would be to square the circle. How could these saints dutifully submit to such a monster as Hitler, an atheistic Communist like Khrushchev, or a Catholic tyrant like Franco? As for their final claim to be "honest, true, chaste, benevolent and virtuous," what of it? These things are no more the monopoly of latter-day saintliness than they are of Freethought secularness. And Freethinkers do not need the recommended admonition of Paul.

As they stand, these thirteen Articles of Faith amount to nothing more than the most commonplace theism given a spurious distinction by that one exotic addition. They merely provide thereby, material for yet another cult, another miscarriage of culture. And like all such cults their success depends upon human credulity. But unbounded as human credulity still seems, it is hopefully probable that this sort of saintliness will prove to be not so much latter-day as too late in the day. It is one more example of the shape of things to go.

## Doing More Harm Than Good?

By MARGARET McILROY

*Backward Christian Soldiers*, by Diana Dewar, (Hutchinson, 16s.) makes a devastating analysis of religious education as it is given to English children today, both in state primary schools and Sunday schools. Although herself a Christian, Mrs. Dewar states fairly the Humanist case against religious education, and speaks with sympathy of the problems of non-Christian parents and teachers under the present system. She concludes that the methods used are quite ineffective in making Christians, and that the child's religious attitude is almost entirely determined by the attitude of its parents—in agreement, if the relationship with the parents is good; possibly against it, if the relationship is bad.

Protestant religious education is usually given by unqualified and reluctant teachers, and is not taken seriously by most children—because they sense the teacher's lack of conviction, because religious knowledge is not highly regarded as an examination subject, and because the ideas presented are usually beyond the comprehension of children. Agreed syllabuses, Mrs. Dewar considers, are not based on a knowledge of child psychology. Old Testament stories are frequently included as being satisfying to the child's love of adventure stories and capacity for hero worship, but the attitudes they demonstrate, and attribute to God, are not such as to give the child a high moral outlook. Mrs. Dewar distinguishes sharply between the Old and the New Testament views of God; that the Old presents a primitive and vengeful God, terrifying to the child, while the New Testament, Christian picture of God is comforting and elevating. She would presumably agree that the Old Testament God is also to be found in many places in the New, and she would wish to present to children only selected parts even of the New Testament.

"Humanist, atheist or agnostic parents," Mrs. Dewar writes, "who have a close relationship with their children, need not concern themselves too greatly about their children becoming overwhelmed by religious forces outside the home . . . The humanist, as well as the Christian, is shaping the minds of his young children, if unconsciously . . . If the basic premises of religion are quite clearly not being accepted by the parents then they are rejected too by the child, because the inference (intuitively grasped by the infant) is that religion is primitive, on a lower intellectual plane, childlike, childish even."

This view, which Mrs. Dewar supports with facts, is well worth consideration by parents who have to decide whether or not to withdraw children from primary school religious instruction. The evidence suggests that attendance is most unlikely to do our children any harm, whereas withdrawal will certainly cause them embarrassment, and can make an over-sensitive child really unhappy. Withdrawal therefore, does not serve any interest of the child's. Its only point seems to be as a demonstration, and my own view is that if parents wish to demonstrate against school religion they should do it themselves, and not make their children do it for them. (Withdrawal of adolescents at their own request is, of course, entirely different.)

Mrs. Dewar believes that Christians cannot be made in classrooms. "Religious education cannot be divorced from the normal life of the Church," and the child must grow up as part of the worshipping community if religion is to make any impression on him. Sunday schools, she thinks, are gravely mistaken in approaching the child with classroom techniques, and their use of schemes of tests

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# Memories of an Irish Industrial School

By PETER TYRRELL

I HAD EIGHT brothers and one sister. We lived in the village of Cappa, near Ahascragh, Co. Galway. We had just one room and kitchen and four acres of land with several acres of bogland a mile away. There were no windows in the house and I think it was really a stable we occupied when the old house fell down. The room and the kitchen were separated by a wall about four feet high and my older brothers would stand on the table and climb over the wall at bedtime. There was a door in the room leading on to the street, but the lads did not like going out in the dark to go to bed because one of them always saw a ghost!

When I started going to school about 1923 I used to wear my sister's long coat. The first day the teacher told me to take off my coat and hang it at the back of the door and when I removed it, the children all laughed because I had nothing on underneath.

I used to like going to school because the teacher used to give us a sweet most days. She also gave us bread and butter which she brought from her own home. Every day there would be a small brown paper parcel on the window ledge, which was the lunch for my brothers and me. When school was over, we would run helter skelter through the fields on our bare feet. On the way home we would find potatoes and turnips in the fields, which my mother would cook.

Sometimes my father would get employment breaking stones at the side of the road for fifteen shillings a week, but when he was out of work he had no income and we depended entirely on money sent by relatives in Boston, USA. My mother was always writing and asking for money and old clothes. Once my father got a letter from the States and the writer suggested that he should till the land instead of begging and praying!

We had a horse and donkey, goat and kid and a few chickens and ducks but we didn't eat the eggs because mother used to barter them for tea and sugar. When we had gone several days without eating, we would get pains in the stomach and mother would make us lie down on our stomachs until the pain went.

I don't remember any court case prior to our committal to Letterfrack Industrial School, but it was early in the morning towards the end of January, 1925, that the Ballinasloe police came to take me and three of my brothers away. I was then eight years old. We had a good breakfast, which was an event in itself, while the police waited outside, or wandered in the fields. Then we travelled in a police car, an old Ford, to the police station, where we had dinner and tea and, in the late afternoon we were put on the train for Galway.

Letterfrack Industrial School stands in about 150 acres of its own ground. The country round, as far as you can see, is wild, barren and desolate, for there is only about three inches of stony soil in much of Connemara. The roads are very poor and in Letterfrack village there were, in those days only two shops, a public house and a post office. The sea is about a mile west and Kylemore Abbey a mile to the north.

The main buildings of the school are in three sections and attached to resemble the letter Z. The ball alley and terrace complete a square which we called the yard or playground. East of the terrace is the monastery and beyond that the infirmary where we slept the first night. The following morning, after Mass at 7 a.m., we joined the other boys in the yard. It was cold and there was

frost on the ground. We were allowed twenty minutes for play before breakfast, and a few of the older boys played with a handball they had made themselves, and others played tig or marbles while a small group played with a spinning top made from a cotton reel with a nail driven into it.

A crowd of more than twenty older boys gathered round us. Where had we come from? Had we any money? What was our age? It wasn't long before the Christian Brother in charge came to disperse the crowd. He beat the boys on the back and legs with a cane walking stick. My brothers and I were not beaten as new pupils were never beaten on the first day.

At the other end of the yard another Brother was chasing about six small boys and beating them with a leather strap for standing about in groups talking instead of playing. It was forbidden to stand still or lean against the wall. Many of the young children suffered from chilblains and the backs of their hands were a mass of running sores. The cause of this condition was said to be lack of exercise.

There was a small boy about seven years old leaning against the wall, his hands hanging limply in front of his stomach. He was asleep. He had sleeping sickness and the other boys used to pinch and kick him to wake him up. He died about two years later.

The whistle sounded for breakfast and all the boys lined up in what were called "divisions". There were fourteen, or one division for each table. When we reached our respective tables, it was the practice to stand until Grace was said, after which there was a mad rush for the bread and margarine and the big boys got all the food.

However, on my first day, Brother K. went to each table in turn and made sure that every boy had a slice of bread and margarine. Each monitor then went to the kitchen and got a gallon tin of cocoa and filled the small white mugs which were passed along the table to him. Talking during meals was forbidden until the order "talk away" was given.

Breakfast finished, we stood to say Grace and marched in single file across the yard to the lavatory. There were about 12 toilets and we lined up in front of them. Each boy was required to spend three or four minutes sitting down. When the monitor in charge sounded the whistle, we sat down, and when the whistle sounded again, we stood up and dressed. Only the small boys were paraded in this way and the practice was discontinued about a year later.

After the toilet parade, we went to the classroom to remove our boots before going upstairs to the dormitories to make our beds and sweep the floors. We polished the brass water taps and the linoleum, then we went into the yard to exercise or play till the whistle went for school.

My youngest brother and I were put in "Infants" because we had not been to school much at home. Infants did not have desks, but all stood round a blackboard and a marble frame. Our teacher was an ex-pupil from Artane Industrial School and he was only about seventeen years old. He was also the bandmaster.

Brother W. was in charge of our school, that is the first and second Infants' classes. He used a leather strap to beat the pupils on the hands and face. When asked a question, a pupil was required to stand and answer the question without thinking. "Shoot the answer!" was what

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## This Believing World

TV gave us the other evening a beautiful representation of a musical version of the Book of Job with the singers all painfully doing their best to put Job on the map, somehow or anyhow, for our edification. Naturally, they all sang unmercifully, but very reverently, looking as far as possible as if they were suffering pain. The producer had the bright idea that they would cause far more impression if they looked like stained-glass window characters. They did—and very funny they were! Or horrible, whichever you please.

★

Instead of giving us pious proofs that all was well in the Vatican, especially on unity, the uncensored news about the Council appears to be that it can't ensure any unity for itself. Bishops are at loggerheads with bishops, and even Paul Johnson, who reported the proceedings for TV and who is a Catholic himself, appeared to be not a little in despair at what was happening—especially on such a subject as birth control. In truth, the Roman Church is at its wit's end to save its face on the problem.

★

As is very well known the Roman Church is trying a little *rapprochement* with the Jews, but, according to reports which have reached them, the latter now find that the only way they can meet the Vatican is to be swallowed up for good. No unity in fact unless all the Jews accept without demur that Jesus is their Messiah and their Saviour, and the Roman Church was established by Jehovah himself. Were any Jews silly enough to expect anything else?

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The editor of "Psychic News," Mr. Maurice Barbanell, is happily still in dreamland on the question of science and materialism. He maintains (September 19th), that "materialism was blown sky high at Hiroshima." Well, it is at least good to know that materialism was not responsible for Hiroshima! As for the bomb, it had to be made on purely *materialistic* lines before its energy could be released. In other words, Mr. Barbanell was, as usual, talking nonsense on a subject he knows almost nothing about. He should stick to his spirits—though some of us think that here again his knowledge even about them only equals what he knows about science.

★

Incidentally—though we don't care two hoots one way or another—we note his remark that Mrs. Garrett, the medium, is "the world's most tested medium," and has made "the greatest impact on scientists." Who are they? Professor W. McDougall is mentioned, but who else? Has she ever even been tested?

★

And, after all the ballyhoo about dear old Queen Victoria being a convinced Spiritualist, it is at least refreshing to find that Lady Longford, who has just written a new biography of her, was unable to find any confirmation of this, or that John Brown was her medium. Lady Longford is supported by Margaret Lane's review in the *Daily Telegraph*, but surely it is easy to prove otherwise? Why not get one of our famous mediums to summon Victoria to come out of the mighty deep, or at least consent to be materialised, and tell us herself? Surely, with the aid of Hannen Swaffer, that would be dead easy?

★

The "Holy" Shroud of Turin is in the news again with the publication of a book by John Walsh giving the case both for and against it. Naturally, BBC TV made it a subject for discussion, screening some of the reproductions in the book, and bringing in a doctor and a Jesuit priest to give us their opinions. And it should not come as a surprise

that both clearly believed it was a fraud, though obviously they could not say so outright. Even the Roman Church has "doubts," and possibly much more, otherwise it would have stated clearly that it was genuine.

### DOING MORE HARM THAN GOOD?

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and badges may do further harm to children already lacking in self-confidence as a result of their eleven-plus failure. It seems fair to comment that the supposedly Christian values of loving kindness and fellowship are conspicuously absent from most educational establishments above the infant stage.

Mrs. Dewar's solution, based on the New York system, is for children whose parents wish it, to be sent weekly from the schools to the church indicated by the parents where they can be instructed in religion by a minister. Inside the schools, she says, older children should be taught comparative religion, with the aims of showing the good in other religions, and encouraging tolerance. Such a system would be an immense step forward, as it should mean that Christianity would no longer be an official school religion. Non-believing parents could avoid religious instruction for their children without keeping them from any activity of the school community, and it would be a relief to the great majority of teachers including even most Christian teachers. Quite apart from the question of whether religion is good for children, there would be a clear gain to education in removing from the schools a subject which is so frequently badly taught that it is a further centre of inefficiency and muddle in schools. Under this system, moreover, it would be easier to resist demands for more denominational schools.

It will be interesting to see how far the Churches will agree with Mrs. Dewar's proposals. It is noticeable that many Christian parents are dissatisfied at present, and would prefer their children to be taught religion by people who firmly believe in it.

On one point, however, non-believers will hardly agree with Mrs. Dewar, for she wants state grants for the Churches, "so that a truly democratic patronage of religious instruction could be realised, and better qualified teachers employing improved techniques could be afforded by all denominations." But although we should oppose any subsidy to Churches on principle, if such a proposal were accepted by Parliament we might well feel that the exclusion of religion from the state schools was cheap at the price.

Mrs. Dewar nowhere raises what must always be the root of differences of opinion—the objective question as to whether Christianity is true or false. She would like children to learn religion. Those who disbelieve the basic theology of Christianity can never see the teaching of it to children as anything but deplorable. The parents' right to teach the child religious truth as he sees it is absolute—for without this freedom of thought cannot exist at all—but we cannot concede the parent any right to state assistance in impressing his views. However tolerant and reasonable spokesmen on both sides may be, complete agreement remains impossible; but Christianity could not have a better representative than Mrs. Dewar, whose fairness in the presentation of her facts, genuine concern for the welfare of children and desire to safeguard the rights of non-believers stand out all through the book.

### MODERNISATION

The first outward sign of the modernisation movement in the Roman Catholic Church in Italy became visible to-day in Trieste. Priests appeared in public wearing black trousers and coats instead of cassocks.

—Daily Telegraph (14/9/64)



# THE FREETHINKER

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## Lecture Notices, Etc.

### OUTDOOR

- Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.  
 London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.  
 (Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12—2 p.m.: L. EBURY.  
 Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street,) Sunday Evenings  
 Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead).—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 7.30 p.m.  
 North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.  
 Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

### INDOOR

- Birmingham Branch NSS (Midland Institute, Paradise Street), Sunday, October 4th, 6.45 p.m.: RICHARD CLEMENTS. "Do We Need Another Voltaire?"  
 Durham University Union (Palace Green, Durham), Sunday, October 4th, 8.15 p.m.: Debate: DAVID TRIBE and the REV. E. GARTH MOORE, "That Christian Morality is Out of Date."  
 Glasgow Secular Society (Central Halls, 25 Bath Street), Sunday, October 4th, 3 p.m.: HARRY MCSHANE, "Christianity in Retreat."  
 Havering Humanist Society (Harolds Wood Social Centre), Tuesday, October 6th, 8 p.m.: Any Questions?  
 Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, October 4th, 6.30 p.m.: The Curiosities Concert Party.  
 Marble Arch Branch NSS (Carpenter's Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1.), Sunday, October 4th, 7.30 p.m.: F. A. RIDLEY, "The Crisis of Christianity."  
 South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Humanist Centre, Red Lion Sq., London, W.C.1.), Sunday, October 4th, 11 a.m.: Professor T. H. PEAR, "Social Aspects of English and American Speech: A Psychologist's Comments."  
 Tuesday, October 6th, 7.30 p.m.: ERIC BATSON, "Have The English Any Sense of Humour?" (Lecture—Recital).

## Notes and News

PETER TYRRELL was at Letterfrack Industrial School from 1925 to 1933 and then worked in tailoring in Ireland. He came to London in 1936, joined the British Army, and served during the last war until he was taken prisoner by the Germans. He now lives in London and has given us permission to reprint his "Memories of an Irish Industrial School" from the June issue of *Hibernia*.

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 DESPITE THE Governor's ban on political demonstrations during the Maltese independence celebrations, Dom Mintoff's Labour Party made its feelings clear to Prince Philip and the British Commonwealth and Colonial Secretary Mr. Duncan Sandys. Mr. Mintoff, as *The Observer*

said (20/9/64) "wants to let in great gusts of Socialist free-thinking air and views with incredulous, frustrated anger the medieval antics of the Apostolic Church of Malta." Mr. Mintoff and the Church are "locked in mortal combat," *The Observer* went on, and there can be no peaceful co-existence between them unless the Church reforms itself. "But of this there is as yet no sign. The Ecumenical spirit has not touched Malta's shores."

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THE ARCHBISHOP, Michael Gonzi, is now 80 years of age and the man behind him, Father Galea is, *The Observer* said, "like a figure from the Inquisition." He talks of the Socialist International as of anti-Christ and thinks that the Archbishop's condemnation of Mr. Mintoff came too late. "I wanted it sooner," he was reported as saying. "The Church is a mother. She must strike her children in order to teach them." Dr. Borg Olivier's Nationalists also preach "order, discipline and respect for authority." Many of them grew up in the Italian tradition, said *The Observer*; "a few of them admired Mussolini and were interned by the British during the war." But *The Guardian* (21/9/64) thought these professional classes likely— with the support of the Roman Catholic Church—to control Malta's politics for a long time. We wonder. The smell of Malta may be "the smell of incense," to quote a third paper (*Sun*, 17/9/64) but it is a smell people can grow tired of.

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BRIAN INGLIS—writing in *The Guardian* (18/9/64)—could recall no comparable description of the onset of psychosis than that of Morag Coate in her book, *Beyond All Reason* (Constable 21s.). Miss Coate had a striking "mystical" experience, in which her whole being was "filled with light and loveliness, and with an upsurge of deeply moving feeling from within," she was "in a state of the most vivid awareness and illumination," a "cloudless, cerulean blue of the mind, shot through with shafts of exquisite, warm, dazzling sunlight" Miss Coate, believing she had made direct contact with God, pursued the "acquaintanceship." It led her to a succession of mental hospitals and psychiatrists until she was, in Mr. Inglis's words, "fortunate enough to find one with whose help she was able to make her way back to the rational world."

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THE MAGAZINE *Church and State*, organ of Protestant and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State, reported another Roman Catholic "grab," this time in Chicago. Mundelein College has made "arrangements" with the Mayor, Richard J. Daley, and the Chicago City Council to buy for \$100, a site which includes 73 feet of frontage on Lake Michigan and is valued at \$292,000. Apartment builders willing to buy the site at the current market price two years ago were told that the city wouldn't sell at any price. Now, what one Chicago attorney described as "tantamount to a steal of public property by a religious, educational society," has taken place in the usual surreptitious way. "Notice of the donation-sale reached the public only by way of a notice inconspicuously published amid proposals for paving alleys."

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IT HAS BEEN announced that the next International Congress of the World Union of Freethinkers will be held in England from July 23rd to July 27th, 1966. The venue has not yet been decided, though it is expected to be in the London area. The year 1966 will also mark the centenary of the founding of the National Secular Society.



## More Ecclesiastical Sophistry

By GILLIAN HAWTIN

Even Churchmen (though Dean Swift regretted it) have to share common human nature with other men, and live in material surroundings. But by virtue of their religious pretensions it is seemly that their eyes should be fixed steadfastly on the world to come. This dual role is doubtless the reason why they display a distinct capacity, as a professional class, for making the best of both worlds!

The Bishop of Southwark has recently shown (in the *Spectator*, August 7th, 1964) how he cherishes all advantage that the Church of England can wring from Establishment, but is yet hopeful of casting off the irksome (to him) but highly necessary and salutary (from a national viewpoint) oversight of the Parliamentary Commissioners. A similar attitude has now been shown, in a plea for state help towards the upkeep of Church buildings, by the Dean of Gloucester, in the recently published XVIIIth *Annual Report* of the Council for the Care of Churches. Though at first sight his arguments appear reasonable, a little investigation shows that they are as specious as the Bishop's; in short, the Dean wants the best of both worlds — your money, and his control! "Our historic churches are," he says, "far more than the meeting place of a denomination. They are part of the heritage of England and far more people love and revere them than use them for worship [!]. The country as a whole would feel the poorer for their loss; and it would not be unreasonable to ask that the country as a whole should bear some part of their cost."

I am fond of visiting old churches (out of service time!), appreciative of the beauties of Beverley Minster, the rose window of York, the West front of Peterborough, or the nave of Dunfermline. I will purchase a guide (if scholarly) or buy slides or postcards. But when such purchases are made, one obtains material value for one's cash! Even then, it is not too comforting a thought that the smallest margin of profit may aid the Establishment! So I agree with the Dean that the churches are "far more than the meeting place of a denomination." But I differ from him because I believe that they are solely of value as an architectural heritage, and the surviving expression of the aspirations of a world-outlook now dead and exploded. Nonetheless, whatever the Dean says, these places remain the meeting place of a denomination! So if I give help, through state taxes, to restore the roodscreen and the reredos, I must, in present circumstances, help to maintain the continuance of a religion which I consider inimical to all enlightenment, and to progressive legislation. What is establishment for if it is not to keep England Protestant. Yet these Protestant Churches advertise ecumenical pilgrimages to Lourdes! What body in this country blocks divorce law reform, abortion law reform, sides with Catholics on the education question, and recently permitted the vestments of the Mass? There are countries where mosques and cathedrals have become museums. Will the Dean give up Gloucester Cathedral for use as a Museum of the West of England? "If stately homes can be aided while still remaining in private possession," he asks, "is there any reason why stately churches should be excluded?" I answer him: because stately homes are only museums of social and aesthetic history and do not promulgate doctrines based on an unproved supernaturalism. Moreover, if a house be given to the National Trust, it has to be endowed *first*,

and if a house be maintained by the Ministry of Works, it is owned by it, and thus by you and me.

"We do not want to follow the common trend by trying to shuffle off all our responsibilities on to the state," the Dean assures us, but the Church might expect "that some of the weight of the structural repair of the more valuable and costly buildings should be taken from our shoulders, while leaving us the sole responsibility of furnishing the churches for our own use"! Oh so reasonable! So responsible! Let the Agnostics, the Non-conformists, the Jews, pay for the stonework and the roofing, and we'll bear all the burden of controlling our own internal affairs ourselves!

"Visitors from overseas," the Dean continues, "... are frequently amazed to learn they [the churches] are supported entirely by private contributions." No doubt, if the visitors from abroad were conducted round by the Dean and chapter they were given a somewhat one-sided briefing on the history of Church of England finances; had they learned more, from less biased sources, they might have been even more amazed!

The Dean refers to bitter controversies which led in 1868 to the abolition of the compulsory church rate, "by which traditionally the fabrics had been maintained." He seems to have overlooked the fact that the enactments of the time yet included express permission to issue demands for a *voluntary* rate. This would seem to be the very law framed for his purpose, and since he is so convinced of everybody's wish to help, it is surprising he has not ventured to make use of it.

"The trouble at the moment," complains the Dean — giving the game away — "is that we have to spend so much on preserving what we have inherited from the past that we have too little to spare to add our own contribution to what we have to hand on to the future." Half the churches empty and he wants to build more! More white elephants like the empty giant, isolated (literally and figuratively) on Stag Hill, Guildford? The Dean at length speaks truth when he virtually admits what accords with all unprejudiced observation, that existing churches have, normally, such spare congregations that they can no longer — especially in the face of rising maintenance costs — support their structure. Much of this dilemma is due already to a presumptuous expansionist policy of the past. Why doesn't the Dean pray to Almighty God to halt the inflationary spiral?

The Dean concludes: "So long as our Churches are national monuments, we may reasonably expect that all who benefit [sic.] by them should help to preserve them. So far as they are living centres of worship and prayer, the responsibility is ours alone. A church gets the buildings it deserves, for the quality of its faith is reflected in the state of its buildings..." He himself has said it! Would it be naughty to suggest that if the buildings crumble, it may be due to the fact that the beliefs which gave them birth are crumbling too? Has this Canute of Gloucester considered that this generation may stand out in history as the one which finally recognised these buildings had no ideological significance at all for the present and future?



# Memories of an Irish Industrial School

(Concluded from page 315)

Brother W. would say. He would put boys across his knees in the classroom and give them about six blows on the bottom for looking at the clock, scratching, yawning, looking round when the door was opened or writing with the left hand. He would rush down the school to the Infants' class and beat our teacher for not beating us! On one occasion when he beat our teacher for not punishing the children of five to nine, the teacher cried and roared like a sick bullock. I didn't think a man could cry. I was not slapped on the first day.

School was from 9 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. The following subjects were taught: catechism, Irish, English, reading, writing and mathematics, and in the senior classes, geography, scale-drawing, geometry and Irish history as well as the Old Testament. The time allowed for each subject varied greatly from half an hour to several hours, days or even weeks. For example, for three weeks or a month before a catechism examination, the subject all day and every day would be catechism only.

Dinner was at 1 p.m. On Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday it was boiled or roast beef with two or three potatoes and cabbage, peas or turnips. On other days, except Fridays, we had fish, usually mackerel, or rice boiled with raisins, and on some Fridays rhubarb and rice were served. Supper, which was at 7 p.m., consisted of one slice of bread and dripping and a mug of cocoa. After meals two boys from each table remained in the refectory to do the washing-up.

At 2 p.m. all the pupils reported to their workshops. The following trades were taught: shoe-making, tailoring, baking, farming and knitting. There was also a garage for motor mechanics, a power house and a smithy. Very young boys did the darning and knitting or polished the floors or worked in the greenhouse. In the farmyard was a slaughter house where cattle, sheep and pigs were killed. Letterfrack was almost entirely self-supporting.

There was a period of recreation from 5.30 to 6 p.m. and after supper there was drill in the yard for half an hour. Boys who made mistakes at drill were beaten on the backs and legs by Brother D. who used a cane walking stick. Drill was also done on Sundays from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., but would be carried out as a punishment at other times instead of play or recreation.

On Saturdays there was no school, so we went to the workshops in the morning and in the afternoon we went to confession, and on Sundays we went to Mass in the morning and sometimes played football in the afternoons. One day a week we would go to the hall and undress and pick the lice off our clothing.

There were three dormitories, St. Patrick's for the senior boys, St. Michael's for the boys from 9-13 and a small dormitory for the very young children in the new building. The two big dormitories had six rows of beds, three each side, with a brown carpet in the centre. Outside there were shelves and very small pigeon holes where we kept our Sunday suits, blue serge jacket and short trousers, each one being numbered. Beds were also numbered with white paint. I was number 151.

In each dormitory there were three electric lights. The centre light was very dim and it burned all night. Boys who wet the bed had a towel knotted round the rail at the head of the bed. This was for the benefit of the night man who would call the boys every two hours to use the toilet. The night man was often drunk and he would fall asleep sitting on one of the beds and when he

woke he would beat the children by putting them across the bed and using a whip made of leather laces. Those who had wet the bed were beaten on the bare bottom.

We were called at 6 a.m. and went immediately to the wash house after collecting a piece of red carbolic soap and a stopper for the basin. After being washed and dried we lined up to be examined. We held out both our hands showing backs and fronts, leaned forward to show the back of our necks, and turned the head slowly in a clockwise motion to show our throat, ears and face. If not washed clean, we would be beaten, sometimes on the hands and other times on the bare back or face, usually six blows. Then we would be handed over to a monitor to be washed in a bathroom with a scrubber.

At the back of the school there was an avenue to the main road. This avenue was infested with rats. They lived well on fish heads and other garbage which was thrown out a little distance from the back of the kitchen. Older boys would catch the rats in wire cages and take them to the yard and poke out their eyes with wire before releasing them to be killed by the school manager's cocker spaniel. The Brothers said it was sinful to be cruel to any of God's creatures, including rats, which were sent on this earth for a very special reason.

A few of the boys had visits from their parents from time to time, but they would dread these visits and hide in the lavatories when the parents arrived. The reason was that the parents would be ragged and badly dressed and the children were ashamed to be reminded that they were paupers. We were always being told that our parents were no good because they didn't look after us and that we were no good either.

My parents were never able to afford the fare to visit us while we were in Letterfrack. I spent eight years there and did not see them until I went home, though my mother once sent us half a crown which the teacher divided equally between the four of us. With few exceptions almost all ex-pupils from industrial schools are, in my experience, failures. My experiences there have haunted me all my life and even now I find it difficult to talk about them.

## Schopenhauer's Criticism of the Kantian Ethics

By G. McKENZIE

ACCORDING TO Schopenhauer, the will to live, at the level of human consciousness, is manifested as insatiate desire. Man's basic experience therefore is want, and so life is primarily pain, i.e. unsatisfied craving. Pain then is the rule, the positive; pleasure is the negative, only the exception in our life, the temporary relief or satisfaction of want. The life of endless craving is thus miserable and essentially futile; it is also self-centred, a life of ruthless disregard of others. Men are forever engaged in a war of conflicting opinions and greeds. Exploitation, oppression, cruelty, callous or diabolical, characterise human affairs. We are so accustomed to the sordidness that any departure from it surprises us or puts us on our guard against subterfuge; or else, as if by common agreement, we undertake to muzzle the beastly greed by social restraint, to hide it from too flagrant view by screens of



politeness and etiquette. How can we then perversely close our eyes to reality?

In such a view of human life, a life of insatiate greeds preying on each other, of wretched and futile desires, what meaning could morality have?

In his work, *The Basis of Morality*, he takes up this problem more systematically: Is the function and basis of morals to be sought for in an idea of morality which lies directly in the consciousness (or conscience) and in the analysis of the other ethical conceptions which arise from it? Or is it to be sought in some other source of knowledge? This question is ostensibly the same as that which confronted Kant in his *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*, and Schopenhauer's first task was accordingly a criticism of the Kantian ethics.

Despite his manner of treatment, severe in the case of Kant, contemptuous towards Kant's followers — especially Fichte — Schopenhauer's critique of the ethics of duty is among the most searching, and is also an indispensable introduction to his own view of morals.

Kant undertakes to establish a moral philosophy on a basis of "pure practical reason." Ethics is not a statement and statistical summary of what men do, irrespective of their actual practice. This first false step, according to Schopenhauer, vitiates the entire procedure of Kant's ethics. For how are we warranted in declaring what "ought" to be done, even though it never is actually done? Unless such a rescript is based on the facts of human life, though it may maintain solemnly a lofty authority above and beyond experience it is finally a vain and ineffectual pretense.

If, however, it does find its substance and force in effective compulsion, then it is only a disguise of the old morality of rewards and punishments, social or theological legalism, a spurious ethic in a new solemn garb.

Stating his criticism in terms of Kant's own terminology, Schopenhauer would maintain that a categorical imperative, the conception of an unconditioned obligation, is completely unthinkable, he also calls it nonsensical. But a hypothetical imperative, obligation deriving its force in motives by appeal to consequences, would be compulsion and therefore not moral. The conclusion seems to be that ethics cannot disregard actual human conduct, and that morality cannot adequately be expressed in terms of law and obligation. Both of these inferences Schopenhauer undertakes to develop and maintain against Kant.

It is because Kant cannot find morality in experience that he would dictate it categorically from above. But emptied of any specific content, the alleged law of reason would have only its bare lawfulness to recommend it. So Kant finds that moral imperative affirms simply its own universality and necessity. The duty appears to be to act dutifully, as we see it in Kant's maxim. The mere appeal to universality does not yield a distinctively moral response, and is thus barren as a moral principle. Schopenhauer maintains in fact that Kant's alleged disinterested categorical imperative finds its actual fuller statement in terms of the very egoism which Kant had initially and solemnly disdained.

Though Kant insists on disinterested dutiful motivation — speak the truth though the heavens fall — yet he declares as a certain conclusion that in a rational universe the heavens will not fall through veracity. In spite of Kant's grand a priori edifice, egoism is sitting in the judgment seat, scales in hand.

Schopenhauer appears to be sustained in his basic claim that, "if the moral imperative is to have any substance

and concrete significance, it must be in some sense rooted in experience, and find its sanction in human nature." In this criticism of Kant's ethics, the fundamental principle and method of Schopenhauer's moral philosophy is revealed.

Ethics has to do with actual human conduct, and not with a priori building of card houses — a performance which yields results that no man would ever turn to in the stress and battle of life, and which, in the face of the storm of our passions, would be about as serviceable as a syringe in a great fire.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### THE VATICAN

Dr. L. H. Lehmann said that inside the Church of Rome there have always been two conflicting parties, the conservatives and the liberals. But this appears to be too much of a simplification. As Mr. Ridley says, the present Pope seems to be a "middle-of-the-road" man, and have there not been others? It is terribly easy to resort to the simple progressives v. reactionaries view of history. At present, for instance, some would have us believe that there are only two powers in the world; the USA and the USSR—and you please yourself which is progressive! But what of Africa, China, India, etc., etc.?

WILLIAM STRY.

May I inform, the erudite Mr. Ridley that you cannot have a progressive pope, any more than you can have a white Negro! Without exception all assist in the political machinations of the Vatican! Pope John's role was as a confidence winner, which he carried out with success and expertise, so much so, he has almost converted some of our readers! Sorry, Mr. Ridley.

H. FAIRHURST.

### ATHEISM v. AGNOSTICISM

It not Mr. Simons imposing on his opponent a test of truth which no scientist adopts? No scientist advances absolute proof, for the reason that no such proof can be furnished. The scientist's assertions or denials are put in the form: "So far as can be seen at present . . .". In other words, he offers merely a high degree of probability for either assertions or denials.

Curiously enough, Mr. Simons adopts the absolutist position when he asserts that when nobody sees the apple on the table, it is not there. True, the scientist would also say briefly that the apple is not there, but always with the implied proviso: so far as can be seen at present.

Therefore if the evidence advanced for the existence of either the Christian God, or any other god, seems to us inadequate, we are justified in using the scientific brevity and saying that these entities do not exist, shielding ourselves behind the qualification implied in all scientific statements: "So far as can be seen at present."

HENRY MEULEN.

### OBITUARY

We regret to announce the sudden death of Gertrude May Turner on September 5th, 1964 at the age of seventy-three. She was for nearly fifty-three years the wife of National Secular Society member Mr. Percy Turner.

Mrs. Turner is also survived by her two sons, four grandchildren, and two great grandchildren, to whom our deepest sympathy is extended.

The General Secretary of the National Secular Society conducted a secular funeral ceremony at Golders Green Crematorium on September 11th.

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