

# FREE THINKER

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## THE CELIBATE PRIESTS OF ROME

IT MUST BE distressing for the Vatican to see that an increasing number of Catholic priests believe that they should be allowed to marry. *The Observer* reports (Feb. 19th) that about 1,000 priests a year ask the Vatican to release them from their vows, and problems caused by celibacy are the most common of the reasons given. Recent surveys in Holland showed that 1,750 out of 5,000 clergy felt that priests should be allowed to marry and in the United States 60 per cent said marriage should be permitted, as many as 31 per cent adding they would probably marry if it were.

Mr Charles Davis, a leading British theologian, recently left the Roman Catholic Church and married. Father Arnold McMahon, a 27-year old priest of the Divine Word Missionaries Order, has since announced his decision to marry a 27-year-old Malayan statistician who is a non-denominational Christian.

Doubtless Roman Catholic priests wish to marry for one or more of many mundane reasons. The priest is in love; he wants the company of a woman; he wants to love a finite being in a finite way. The Pope may say that the Church and Heaven are home enough for him, but the priest is no longer satisfied with these. He wants an earthly home in which he can withdraw physically, mentally and emotionally from the divine stamping ground; he wants the chance to be human himself, to feel earthy human passions and, Papa forbid, to indulge them. He wants to be an ordinary father as well as a spiritual one; he wants to have children, to be part of a human family and not just part of a heavenly one. He wants to experience for himself the hundred and one problems of living which he has previously experienced only vicariously in the confessional box. Dare one say, dare he say, that in marrying he is also moving away from the authoritarian control of the allegedly divine ecclesiastical power structure.

The Vatican has long realised the dangers of permitting

priests to marry. A married priest has a wife to love as well as his Church. He has a woman's wishes to meet as well as his Pope's demands, and sometimes the two may not be compatible. He has something outside the Church to occupy him, to distract him, to claim some of his time, energy, affection and passion. Above all, a married priest has an anchor outside the Church and is less likely to continually tolerate papal authoritarianism than an unmarried one. All this applies with greater force if his wife is a non-Catholic.

Married priests will sap the power of the Roman Catholic Church and drain its life-blood. I say will, because it is only a matter of time before the Pope, which one I do not know, permits the marriage of his priests. He will permit their marrying because, evil though it is, it is the lesser of two evils. The other evil is that fewer and fewer men will be attracted to the priesthood. Priests are already in short supply. Archbishop Beck appeals in his pastoral letter to sixth formers and students at universities and training colleges to enter the priesthood. "We have only six students due for ordination this year", he says. A shortage of priests has led to a reduction of staffing in the Roman Catholic archdiocese of Liverpool. During the past few months assistant priests have been withdrawn from 20 parishes. The rot is setting in in a very big way.

The Vatican knows it cannot hold out for long on the question of a celibate priesthood. If it tries to maintain its centuries old tradition in this respect it will lose more and more priests and fewer and fewer men will want to become them. By permitting marriage it will automatically cause a diminution of its power over individual priests. But what it surrenders qualitatively it will for a time retain quantitatively. For the Roman Catholic power mechanism it is best to have complete power over a man. But if this cannot be, better to have half power over him than none at all.

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FATHER GORDON ALBION HAS ACCEPTED MY CHALLENGE (see FREETHINKER February 10th) TO PARTICIPATE IN

### THE TRIAL OF THEISM

Further details will be announced later.

## TOTEMS AND TABOOS

W. Bynner

IN HIS illuminating work *Totem and Taboo* Sigmund Freud writes

"The most ancient prohibitions and important taboos are the two basic laws of totemism: Not to kill the totem animal, and to avoid sexual intercourse with members of the totem clan of the opposite sex; these then must be the oldest and most powerful of human desires".

Far reaching conclusions depending on the acceptance of these assumptions are closely analysed by Freud in the succeeding chapters. A brief summary of the major points may be inadequate to convey the full force of Freud's argument, but this is all that the scope of this article allows. Freud finds that the customs of certain Australian aboriginal tribes

"bear the impress of deliberate design aimed at preventing incest". Quoting Frazer's *Golden Bough*: "The law only forbids men to do what their instincts incline them to do; for the law to prohibit and punish what nature itself prohibits and punishes, would be superfluous. Instead of assuming therefore that there is a natural aversion to incest, we ought rather to assume that there is a natural instinct in favour of it, and that if the law represses it, it does so because men have come to the conclusion that the satisfaction of these natural instincts is detrimental to the general instincts of society".

Discussing the conditions of primeval man, Freud writes

"The most probable view is that primeval man aboriginally lived in small communities, each with as many wives as he could support and obtain, whom he would have jealously guarded against all other men. Atkinson (1903) seems to have been the first to realise that the practical consequence of the conditions obtaining in the primeval horde must be exogamy for the young males. Each of them after being driven out might establish a similar horde, in which the same prohibitions would rule. A conscious law 'No sexual relations between those who have a common home' would develop into 'No sex relations within the totem.'"

Freud shows that psycho-analysis reveals that the totem animal is in reality a substitute for the father, and that although the killing of the animal is as a rule forbidden, its ceremonial killing becomes a festive occasion; it is killed but it is also mourned. If we now bring together the psycho-analytical interpretation of the totem with the fact of the totem meal, and with Darwin's theories of the earliest state of human society, the possibility of a deeper understanding emerges. One day the brothers who had been driven out came together, killed and devoured their father, and so made an end of the patriarchal horde. Cannibal savages as they were, it goes without saying that as well as killing, they devoured their victim, and, by so doing, each acquired a portion of his strength. The totem meal, which is perhaps mankind's earliest festival, was then a repetition and a commemoration of this memorable and criminal deed.

William Robertson Smith in his *Religion of the Semites* was able to show that the totem meal had, from the beginning, formed an integral part of ancient sacrificial rites.

"Sacrifice was nothing other than an act of fellowship between the Deity and his worshipper."

And originally only animals were sacrificed.

The two taboos of totemism in which human morality has its beginning are not on a par psychologically: the first, the law protecting the totem animal, is founded wholly on emotional motives; but the second, the prohibition of incest, has a practical basis as well. Sexual desires do not unite, but divide men. The brothers were all one another's rivals in regard to the women. Each of them

would have wished, like his father, to have all the women to himself. The brothers had no alternative but to introduce a law against incest.

The claim of totemism to be regarded as the first attempt at a religion is based on the first taboo; against taking the life of the totem animal. Totemic religion arose from a filial sense of guilt and was an attempt to allay that feeling and to appease the father by deferred obedience to him. Later religions make their own attempts to solve the same problem. In the act of sacrifice before the god of the clan, the father is in fact represented twice over; as the god, and as the totemic animal victim.

The doctrine of original sin was of Orphic origin. It formed a part of the mysteries and spread from them to the schools of philosophy of Ancient Greece. Mankind, it was said, was descended from the Titans who had killed the young Dionysius-Zagreus and had torn him to pieces. The burden of this crime weighed on them. A fragment of Anaximander relates how the unity of the world was broken by a primeval sin, and that whatever issued from it must bear the punishment. An Arab totemic sacrifice described by St Nilus which included the tumultuous mobbing and tearing to pieces of the sacrificial animal, reminds us clearly enough of the Greek myth.

There can be no doubt that in the Christian myth the original sin was one against the father. If, however, Christ redeemed mankind from the burden of original sin by the sacrifice of his own life, we have to conclude that the sin was a murder. The law of retaliation, which is so deeply rooted in human feelings, lays it down that a murder can only be expiated by the sacrifice of another life; self-sacrifice points back to blood-guilt. If this sacrifice of a life brought about atonement with god the father, the crime to be expiated can only have been the murder of the father. This, says Freud, is confirmed by the findings of psycho-analysis.

In the Christian doctrine, therefore, the founders of Christianity were acknowledging the primeval crime by claiming that atonement for it was to be found in the sacrifice of the only Son. Atonement with the father was all the more complete since the sacrifice was accompanied by a total renunciation of the women on whose account the rebellion was started. At that point the inexorable law of ambivalence stepped in. The son's atonement brought him at the same time the attainment of his wishes; he became himself a god, beside, or more correctly, in place of, the father. A son-religion displaced the father-religion. As a sign of this substitution the ancient totem meal was revived in the form of communion, in which the company of brothers consumed the flesh and blood of the son (no longer the father) obtaining sanctity thereby and identifying themselves with him. In the Christian communion and its fresh elimination of the father we can see a repetition of the guilty deed. As Frazer put it, "The Christian communion has absorbed within itself a sacrament which is doubtless far older than Christianity".

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## PUBLIC FORUM: RELIGION IN THE SCHOOLS

David Reynolds

ON February 10th Caxton Hall was packed with a 400-strong audience for the NSS Public Forum. Many people, unable to obtain a seat in the crowded hall, were standing when David Tribe, President of the National Secular Society, opened the proceedings by introducing the speakers: Brigid Brophy, novelist, broadcaster and more recently playwright; David Collis, editor of the *FREETHINKER*; Dr Ronald Goldman, principal of Didsbury College of Education; Alan Humphries, headmaster of King Alfred School in Hampstead, one of the first non-religious schools; Peter Jackson, Labour MP for High Peak, Derbyshire, a considerable force in the house against the existing state of the law as regards education; and Mother Mary Norbert, lecturer in Psychology at Cavendish Square College.

Dr Goldman set the lively pattern which the forum was to follow with a very well delivered speech in which he supported religious education and with reservations the 1944 Act. He justified this by pointing out that our society is based on Christian ethics and that a child must learn the values of his society. A child must experience worship because if he does not he will have no concept of what it is. However, he said he would be "perfectly happy if the outcome were open ended", particularly as "many religious teachers are doing the NSS' job very well". He remarked that all children have emotional needs and will invent their own religion if given none. However, he thinks many reforms are needed, because the way in which religion is taught at present is not suitable for children.

Peter Jackson, MP, spoke next and nobly stuck to his brief, "the single school areas". He showed how the 1944 Act had been violated in two ways. The Act said there should be a choice for parents, but twenty-three years later the places where there is no choice are increasing because of the influx of people into the commuter belt. At the time it was said "the generous settlement of fifty per cent should remain on the statute book for a long time", and, as Mr Jackson pointed out, "the whole notion of the voluntary system will go because by the year Two Thousand this will have become one hundred per cent". He gave an example of Wheathampstead, a village in the commuter belt with one high Anglican school. The parish council, echoing the wishes of inhabitants, wanted the County to do something about it. However, the government are to rebuild the existing school, which will remain religious. He showed what Humanist parents have to put up with by quoting a school manager, "Every activity is informed with religious spirit, even maths and football". He ended by quoting the Minister, who defies Sir Edward Boyle by stating, "If certain people want secular education they must pay for it".

David Collis first stressed the complexities of the problem, and then pointed out that it is not right that religious instruction and the daily act of worship should continue just because the majority of parents may want it to. He quoted Sir Henry Haddow who said in 1931, "What a wise and good parent will desire for his child a nation must desire for all children". "But", asked Mr Collis, "how wise are the majority of parents? How well informed are they? What do they know about religion in schools?" He referred to the National Opinion Poll survey, which found that 90 per cent wanted the present system to continue. The 2,165 people interviewed had the current situation

explained to them by a brief introductory sentence. "Surely we should consider well-informed public opinion, not the opinion of those whose only information about the problem is that given in a few words." He then cited the case of the 700-strong Panorama audience, all parents, teachers and sixth formers, some of whom had come a long way to be there. It contained a considerable majority who wanted the system changed.

Mother Mary Norbert discussed David Tribe's *Religion and Ethics in Schools*. She seemed to find an answer in "limited integration, in which any minority can freely operate". She refuted the argument that a good home and church-going parents should be sufficient, because adolescents can become schizophrenic. She summed up by saying that "Where minority groups can afford to they should be allowed to provide alternative education", and offered some qualifications to this.

Alan Humphries then gave a description of his school. It is completely free from any obligation to teach religion. The day is begun with a corporate act, which has nothing to do with worship or religion. It may be music, reading, or drama, serious or funny, conducted by the teachers or the pupils. Comparative religion is taught to the sixth form only. Mr Humphries admitted that this would leave a moral gap in the student's curriculum, which cannot be filled in the classroom, but which is filled by equating school life with the outside world. This is achieved by having a school council which operated self-government, electing the holders of positions of responsibility, and giving the children the widest possible choice as they grow up. "The biggest gain is that there is no hypocrisy." He said an important point is that "a teacher is not entitled to teach opinion as if it were fact, and not entitled to teach matters of faith as if they were scientific principles".

Finally, Brigid Brophy made out an irrefutable case for the NSS line on religion in schools primarily by demonstrating how ridiculous the existing law is. She made a series of remarks worthy of quote. "If parliament compels children to worship, they are implying that there is someone to worship, and this is beyond the competence even of parliament." "The churches have their own premises and have no right to insist on the use of public educational facilities to act as part-time churches." "The NSS are not asking for money to indoctrinate their children in atheism. Nor do we want an Act of Parliament guaranteeing that there is no god because this is also beyond the competence of parliament." She maintained that children deserved free access to the facts and that the present system produces a lot of young cynics, who either opt out of thinking, or dispense with the moral as well as the spiritual side of Christianity. She finished by saying, "I don't know how we can teach our children to be moral, but I know that the worst possible way of doing it is to be immoral ourselves".

Questions followed the considerable applause to this speech. Dr Goldman said in answering one of them that he did not think religion and morality were necessarily connected. The forum ended with an irate but entertaining speech from a deputy headmaster, who admitted that he was a hypocrite when he took morning assembly. "The Appointments Board don't ask you your religious beliefs. They ask what is your attitude towards morning assembly. Now, I know the answer to this one. If you're not sure (here he lowered his voice) take care."

## NEWS AND NOTES

THE *Sunday Times* reported (Feb. 19th) that at a recent meeting of the standing committee on the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Bill, Mr Simon Mahon, a Roman Catholic member opposing the Bill, mispronounced the Hippocratic Oath as "Hippocritic" and there were cruel hoots of laughter. Mr Mahon went on to say, "I am trying to do what I think is right . . . I can do little harm with the views I am expressing . . . We are discussing the termination of life under certain conditions and we are doing the best we can with our finite minds, discussing something which actually belongs to the infinite and which is only understood by the infinite. That is why it becomes so difficult for our puny minds, for what we are discussing is the handiwork of God".

It is remarkable that those with puny minds are able to say so much about so difficult a subject. How can a finite being with a puny mind understand anything of something which, on its own admission, can only be understood by the infinite. And understanding nothing how is the puny mind able to be so dogmatic about what is right and what is wrong. If life belongs to the infinite, how can even a puny mind believe that a finite being can terminate it. The puny mind may feel with some understandable motivation that the life *I* believe is terminated is not terminated but merely transferred to another sphere of life which also belongs to the infinite. But if life is *not* terminated as far as the puny mind is concerned, what is the fuss about. Again, how can a finite being really terminate what is the handiwork of an infinite, omnipotent God, unless of course the infinite *wants* the finite to be terminated.

It may well be that God feels there are enough puny minds cluttering up the earth and that enough is enough. The Divine Order has clearly been transmitted to the British House of Commons whose members with non-puny minds have the good sense to try and clear up our harshly muddled abortion laws.

"Enough of puny minds. If the mother wants to preserve her sanity by not having another puny mind on her hands, that's all right with me because I don't want it either. It has been my eternal experience that puny minds often become giant blathermouths. I am sick and tired of them, particularly those who talk about their puny mind and then have the downright cheek to call it my handiwork. My handiwork indeed. Let's have some sense on earth. All puny minds still living in the finite are to make the effort to improve themselves. For goodness sake stop snivelling. The kindergarten up here is already overcrowded with adults who left the finite still convinced of the puniness of their minds. It takes me ages to teach them how to think. I'm getting so fed up with them that I'm thinking of quitting the whole puling lot up here and going down to earth to live as a finite freethinker."

### Bless all who sail in her

TWENTY-SIX Scottish ministers protested against visits by two prominent churchmen to British nuclear projects last week. They criticised the Bishop of Chester, Dr Ellison, who offered prayers at the launching of a Polaris submarine at Birkenhead, and Dr Leonard Small, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, who visited nuclear bases on the Gare Loch.

Who said the God of War was dead?

### From Wargod Jehovah to Wargod Mao

FAMILY HAPPINESS in China has been declared bourgeois. Cultural Revolutionists say it should be replaced by a permanent atmosphere of criticism and the struggle of two ideologies, according to a report in the Soviet journal *Nedelya*.

The journal quoted a Chinese Red Guard newspaper as warning against compromises in quarrels between husbands and wives as this was against the thought of Chairman Mao.

*Nedelya* quoted another Chinese newspaper for the following observation: 'Love is a petty bourgeois prejudice, a vice of capitalism. We must put an end to wasting time on day-dreams and sentimental conversations, and put it to greater use by studying the works of Chairman Mao'. (*Observer* report (Feb. 19th).)

### Secularists on the warpath

THUS spoke the *Times Educational Supplement* leader of the National Secular Society meeting on religion in schools. A report of the February 10th Caxton Hall meeting appears on page 67.

### Note to contributors

WILL THOSE who submit articles please type them on one side of quarto paper with double spacing and adequate margins. Those unable to type them should write them legibly and the other points apply. It is not my practice to comment on articles. They will be either accepted or rejected. If they are accepted the writer will be informed in due course and will receive three complimentary copies of the issue in which his article is published. Those who wish to have their articles returned in case of rejection should enclose a suitably sized stamped addressed envelope.

Writers of letters to the Editor should observe the same points of presentation. Letters are accepted on the understanding that they will be cut if necessary. They should be short and to the point. Illegible letters have no hope at all of being published. Letters to the Editor will not be acknowledged.

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## THE EDUCATIONAL PROBLEM

F. H. Amphlett Micklewright

DURING the last year or two, secularists have done much towards forwarding the case for secular education in the state schools. Difficulties have been considered and problems faced. Changes in the law have been advocated. But one basic problem still remains. It is that of the practical effect of the organisation of the educational system outside the larger areas. Despite the vast procedural reforms of 1944, many smaller areas still retain their local educational authority. At first sight, this would seem to have little to do with the problem which faces the secularist. But, at root, many smaller authorities generate an educational approach which must of necessity be antipathetic to any progressive views whether in religion or elsewhere.

The atlas of England and Wales will not show the Borough of Bunkerton. It is nevertheless real enough. It is an outlying area on the edge of a vast urban conurbation and gradually developed during the later years of the nineteenth and the opening decades of the twentieth century. In Victorian days, it was a country town redolant of the Toryism of the countryside around. At its incorporation, it had grown into a sizeable place and had become a dormitory area for the later Victorians as they made money and moved out from the conurbation. Its Toryism was still marked and its lists of members of Parliament contain some names well-remembered in those circles. It had now achieved the status of a local governmental area. The Victorian *paterfamilias* was too busy making money within the conurbation to trouble about this aspect of life and the local council became the haven of the small tradesmen of the town. So it has continued through the years with a sprinkling liberally incorporated of builders and estate agents among the councillors as Bunkerton has grown and local development has become a profitable industry. The occasional solicitor reminds the observer that Bunkerton Council needs professional advice as this major local industry perplexes the less literate councillors. In the meanwhile, over the years, Bunkerton has grown and has developed industrial areas whilst its spread has joined it physically on to the urban conurbation.

The visitor to Bunkerton will find that the town has been redeveloped along the lines which might be expected. Everywhere are buildings of the latest pattern which show the concern possessed by Bunkerton Council for the good of trade. Cultural activities are not forgotten but they are kept to an unimaginative minimum. Bunkerton is still a dormitory and many of the workers in its industry live away whilst many who work elsewhere sleep in Bunkerton. As a result, progressive movements tend to be swamped by the nearness of the conurbation and unable to secure a coherent local voice. Many trades unionists live in Bunkerton but they do not form a solid phalanx of opinion in the borough at large. As a result, the inherited Toryism of the area, assisted as it is by later boundary changes, has degenerated into the crude local politics of the small time businessman and the shopkeepers. Bunkerton, in short, is the haven of anti-intellectualism and mental reaction and its local government reflects this state of being to the full.

Local government in Bunkerton has one major aim, that of keeping down the rates. It wishes its local patriotism to be assuaged but it wishes to do so on the cheap. It has one or two show parks, but the majority of its open spaces are dreary places. They serve as silent witnesses to municipal parsimoniousness. Its central library passes muster but the various branch libraries scarcely stand forth as examples of modern librarianship in the twentieth century.

Public amenities are of a sadly limited variety when the size of the population is considered. Again and again, its unimaginative policies have called for criticism. Needless to say, local government in Bunkerton is soundly Christian. Both its bishop and its vicar are made much of in Town Hall circles. Days of national churchgoing are fittingly observed. Once or twice, when the matter has arisen over appointments and the like, Bunkerton aldermen have been among the first to testify that they will have no truck with atheism, a creed which makes one shudder and which one would identify with Marxist Leninism if only one had sufficient knowledge to know what Marx and Lenin were talking about. Dissent has a certain local standing as the creed of the small tradesman must have its place in the sun. In short, Bunkerton is a soundly Christian borough run along the lines of a strong alliance between God and Mammon.

The secularist will be most interested in its Local Education Authority. It has a few grammar schools but the number of grammar school places which it can offer are strictly limited. It has a very limited range of further education of which it is very boastful, but which is a mere trifle when compared with the technical colleges and the like maintained by its vast neighbour. It has a number of secondary modern schools and the usual primary schools. Of course, in such a community, nursery schools are obvious by their non-existence. It maintains one educational office to which one Ministry of Education Inspector is attached and there is a Local Education Officer who employs a few local inspectors. We understand that he complains that he has staffing difficulties and is only too anxious to grab any temporary help that he can get. A few enquiries at large suggest that Bunkerton has not too good a name in the teaching profession and that one hears continual complaints of its parsimony when measured by that of the large neighbouring authority. Be this as it may, most teachers wishing to come into the area seem to apply to the larger area and Bunkerton attracts but few.

But let us lift the latch and enter a typical secondary modern school in Bunkerton. It is to be admitted that there are a few show places but they are very few and the enquirer is seeking the typical. We meet the headmistress and find that this worthy lady is of course a non-graduate with a training college certificate. She has an elderly deputy who is looking forward to retirement and who can claim no sort of academic status. There is a staff of variant age recruited from teachers' training colleges. Graduates are few if not altogether non-existent. It may seem strange to labour this point until it is recalled that the certificate is the lowest qualification in teaching, has no sort of academic status and does not count towards entry for a degree course in a university. The day starts with the act of worship and we notice that nobody has contracted out of a ceremony at which a hymn is sung by bored children and some nondescript prayers are recited for their benefit. Enquiry directs us to an RI specialist, a young girl from a training college who scarcely seems to have had time to face the problems of ordinary living much less those of the riddle of existence. We wander from room to room and find lessons being given with a tremendous stress upon the exact maintenance of the pupil's exercise book, the dating, ruling of margins and the like. There is a pretence of subject-teaching but, back in the headmistress's study, we gain the impression that the real atmosphere is one within which every teacher should teach something of everything.

In fact, the school which we visited in imagination is merely an old-fashioned Board School with a new look. There may be a lip-service paid to educational progress but its vitality and its basic meanings have passed by this Bunkerton school. Enquiry reveals that the large number of secondary modern teachers upon the staff of the Bunkerton authority are of the brash and half-educated type we describe. The headmistress proudly tells us of GCE results but we find them to mean little. A few children have scraped through a limited number of subjects at a poor grade. At the same time, it is clear that there is no such thing as staff democracy in this school. The mediocre and nondescript head is all too anxious to talk about the power resident in her office. At this stage, a local inspector enters. He seems unwilling to talk about Bunkerton education in any way that implies criticism and becomes quite heated about the question of graduates on the staff. No graduate, he asserts, would be happy in a school of this kind nor would any person of scholarly interests. We mutter a few abashed words about the potential intellectual achievement of working-class schools and hasten away.

A few more enquiries bring forth much light upon Bunkerton's policy in recruiting its teachers. Graduates earn extra increments and a good honours graduate costs money. We can imagine how this would react in the minds of most of the council, few if any of whom have ever come within the gates of a university. The teaching staff preferred is recruited direct from the training colleges and is subjected to the discipline which is reflected in the faces of the inspector and the headmistress. It is easy to see why few contract out in an atmosphere where headmistresses distribute leaflets advertising weeks of prayer and the like. Bread and butter are dominating motives and it takes a person of strong will and some education to stand out. As a result the generalised teaching staff of Bunkerton become malleable over the years and obey the voice of authority. We hear of graduate teachers who from time to time have sought supply work under the Bunkerton authority. One held a high honours degree from an English university and

had taught to examination levels. He was put into a most indifferent school, his talents were wasted and he suffered a year of boredom. At the end of the year, as his temporary supply post was running out, he asked whether he might have GCE work next year. Apparently this showed an undesirable ambition and he was promptly dropped. For many years now, he has occupied a most responsible teaching post under another authority. A B.Sc. took a temporary supply job to teach science. She was sent to a place where it was her duty to be malleable. Her experiences were such that she gave up at a day's notice and fled from teaching. Other cases have come our way, of specialised teachers who were misled over available equipment or of graduates whose services have been quickly dropped the moment they showed that they had a mind or will of their own. Nor can one overlook the sheer prejudice and jealousy shown by the mediocre placed in responsible positions against those who turn up with far better qualifications than they possess. The claim is asserted that it is only the training college *alumni* who can teach and trouble brews.

For the secularist, this picture is a serious matter. Bunkerton is clearly too small to have an authority of its own. It should be merged in the greater neighbour and administered as a local unit of it. But Bunkerton has introduced a dry rot which eats away at the very heart of its secondary education. Plans for secular education, for raising cultural standards, for teaching comparative religions and the many subjects which the NSS and humanists generally have canvassed promise to come to naught in such an atmosphere where the whole system is poisoned by the narrow and reactionary outlook which permeates the local government. It would be possible to say what should be done in Bunkerton to spread educational enlightenment generally. But a new Education Act must first destroy the local arbitrary authority and the many others like it throughout the country. Indeed, a fresh clause must be added to the secularists' educational demands if proper reform is ever to come.

## SECULAR WEDDING CEREMONY

WEDDING CEREMONY: Ute Hetz and Richard Segedi, July 3, 1965, Cleveland, Ohio.

**DAR**—WE HAVE come together as friends of Ute Hetz and Richard Segedi in order to witness their marriage. Unlike the majority of people, Ute and Richard do not believe that marriages are made in Heaven or that they can be sanctified by religious incantations. It is for this reason that they asked me to officiate at this ceremony.

I believe that marriages are made on Earth between two people who find that it is in every way better to live together than to live apart. I believe that when two people agree to coexist, they have, in fact, married each other. At this point, all forms of ceremony are superfluous. Nobody can bless them and no known form of magic can insure their happiness. Of course, the State requires that you obtain a licence and have someone officiate at the wedding—but this is a mere formality. The contract has already been made and the success of a marriage has not the slightest connection with the manner in which the wedding took place.

A successful marriage is an agreement based on mutual understanding. In the words of Robert Ingersoll: "The place to be happy is here. The time to be happy is now. The way to be happy is to help make others so". I am licensed by the State of Ohio and granted the

privilege of solemnizing marriages and yet, neither the State nor I can do more for Ute and Richard than they can do for themselves. I will, therefore, call upon Ute and Richard and ask them to tell us of their proposal and intentions. Richard, will you begin please?

**Richard**—As a free and independent member of the Human Race, I declare before mankind that it is my sincerest wish to share my life, without reservation, and my possessions, my joys and my sorrows with Ute Hetz. I shall always care for her and treat her with kindness as a partner, a friend and an equal in every respect.

**DAR**—Ute, will you please give us your response?

**Ute**—Yes, I have heard the statement of Richard Segedi and I will respond before Mankind in the same manner. As a free and independent member of the Human Race, it is my intention to share my life without reservation and my possessions, my joys and my sorrows with him. This is my sincerest wish. I shall always care for him and treat him with kindness as a partner, a friend and an equal in every respect.

**DAR**—Have you both decided once and for all to become man and wife?

**Both**—WE HAVE.

**DAR**—Then, indeed, you are man and wife. May we all wish you every happiness now and in the years to come.

Dr D. A. Rickards

## THEATRE

David Tribe

**The Promise** (Aleksei Arbuzov), Fortune.**Love for Love** (William Congreve), National Theatre.

THE OXFORD Playhouse has the distinction of two current London runs. One of these is a Russian play, *The Promise*, written by producer/dramatist Aleksei Arbuzov and sympathetically translated by Ariadne Nicolaëff. With typical, but nonetheless engaging, Russian sentiment and pessimism, it describes the intellectual romance of a disappointed lady-doctor, engineer and poet, who first came together as teenagers in 1942 during the Nine Hundred Days' Siege of Leningrad. The two youths are called up. In 1946 the engineer returns a Hero of the Soviet Union, but still moody and narcissistic; the poet returns armless and wins the doctor's sympathy and hand, if not her heart. Thirteen years later, convinced that he has imprisoned his wife by the myth of his poetic genius, he renounces her to his friend. It is an eternal triangle with the angles rounded off and, if anything so bourgeois could occur in the Soviet Union, the hint of homosexual attraction.

The generally splendid acting by Judi Dench, Ian McKellen and Ian McShane rather exaggerates the passage of years. Alix Stone's set captures this well, but not a Russian atmosphere. Frank Hauser directs with imagination and economy.

AS THE RESTORATION passed, via short-lived turbulence, into the Glorious Revolution, so Restoration Comedy was humanised with minimal fuss. Foremost in the transition was William Congreve (1670-1729), admired by Dryden and Voltaire, Johnson and Hazlitt. In his famous *Love for Love* (1695), mixed with the usual conceits and tangled sub-plots is a parable on the superiority of love to worldly considerations. Lawyers and roués, gold-diggers and star-gazers, gossips and gawks are mercilessly panned. There are fine witty exchanges, as when a tomboy is instructed by her seducer to see the prelude to love as "I must ask you questions and you must answer", and says innocently, "What, is it like the Catechism?"

Peter Wood's lively production is a somewhat streamlined version of the original, though authentically designed and dressed by Lila de Nobili. Some charming music by Marc Wilkinson is evocative, though played with modern instruments. But the great strength of the production is its star-studded cast, notably Joyce Redman as a rapacious widow, Laurence Olivier as a garrulous top, and Miles Malleon as a superstitious old fool. Actually Mr Malleon is a link with the purgative mind of Congreve and with the last professional London production of the play by John Gielgud in 1944.

## LETTERS

## Notes on Cathy

THANK YOU for the blank space on page 1 of FREETHINKER for Jan. 27th—it enabled me to make a few notes, which I now copy as follows:—

Cathy and husband started married life on his wages of £25 per week. Did they always pay their rent regularly? Was their rent economic? Or, did they keep up their mortgage repayments regularly? Landlords cannot allow people to live in their houses with mounting arrears.

Out of the rent, there are to pay, besides something for the Landlord, rates, taxes, repairs, chief rent, insurance, mortgage interest, agent's fees, postages, Bank charges, office expenses and staff, Solicitor's and Accountant's fees, purchase price, etc—all to be reimbursed out of the rents.

The social structure cannot be maintained on defaulting tenants who run up irrecoverable debts and leave houses dirty and damaged, the costs of which all have to be borne by the Landlord.

The Landlord has to live out of what he can get—just like the grocer, the tailor, the builder, the doctor, the parson, the rent officers, etc, etc. If rents are not economic (too low) the Landlord has to do something about it—can you blame him? If you don't have Landlords, you have hordes of Municipal Rent Department Officials—they also have to be paid out of the rents, or the Rates.

How much of the distress and public nuisance of the Cathy type arises from their ineptitude? The question is, why do we breed so many inferior people who cannot look after themselves? See that everybody has a house, of course, but will that prevent the congenitally foolish (of which there are so many, in spite of universal, free, compulsory education for the last two generations) from making a mess of their lives and becoming a nuisance and burden on their fellow human beings?

I certainly think that Atheists, Agnostics and Freethinkers do not belong to that inferior crowd above mentioned—because they think!

PETER STODDARD.

## Chaotic Christianity

AMONG Christians whose names are well known to the public are Dr Ramsey, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Robinson, the Bishop of Woolwich, Lord Soper, the Pope, Cardinal Heenan and Billy Graham, the evangelist. Such men, in spite of widespread talk about unifying the churches, seem unable to agree among themselves as to the nature of the god they say they worship. Some even wrap up their views in such jargon that no-one else can understand their meaning.

But all seem quite complacent over the situation regarding religious education in schools. They either ignore or do not realise the fact that only ten per cent of the population are Christians. Yet they feel so unsure of their message that they insist it must be presented daily to young children, lest they begin to think for themselves!

We can hardly excuse the Christians' cynical indifference to human problems on the grounds that they are too busy saving their souls. Nor can we expect well-fed celibate priests to have the slightest comprehension of the problems and frustrations of a mother trying to bring up a large family of children on a small wage in far-from-ideal conditions. Some Christians are even prepared to debase their own noble music in a frantic scramble to draw in the teenagers, who, incidentally, have already suffered daily indoctrination at school for ten years!

RUTH HANCOCK.

## The need for marriage

MICHAEL GRAY suggests that I am being illogical in drawing attention to the exceptional dependence of human offspring as compared with those of other animals, but the inference is not far to seek. Failure to differentiate between mankind and other animals is a mockery of Humanism. Moreover anyone who extols freedom whilst neglecting the corresponding responsibilities tends to bring into disrepute the cause he purports to serve.

Mr Gray protests that I should not criticise his omissions, and that his article on "free" love dealt with risk and moral duty, but in fact there was nothing about risks. He still doesn't say what his "responsible adults" are supposed to be responsible for, and to whom. Ought society not to be concerned to deter arbitrary desertions and irresponsible parenthood? If marriage does not deter these things, why has it not been abolished—even by progressive and atheistic governments? Does any community, society, political party, or even a single MP support Mr Gray's views on sex? As these views are not modern, they could have been proved at any time in civilised history.

The present divorce laws put a premium on hypocrisy, and are unduly harsh. The remedy for this is law reform, not lawlessness. I am glad to read W. Bynner's more realistic appraisal.

DAVID BIRD

MR I. S. LOW uses a better expression, viz "Merge" than my phrase "give up to" in describing what happens to sovereignty when a nation joins in a World Government. (See the FREETHINKER, Dec. 9). And he is certainly right when he writes, "World Government is the logical extension of the idea of Democracy, 'government by the people'".

Against my suggestion of making the UN into a World Government he writes, "Against it is the fact that the Governments of the nations of the world will never agree to give up their power to a real World Government until they are forced: and the UN is made up of such national governments".

While it is a fact that the UN is made up of nations, nations are made up of peoples and when the people decide that they prefer peace and prosperity to the danger of extermination in a nuclear war their representatives will vote to make the UN into a World Government, with power over international matters, leaving national and local matters to the nations and its subdivisions.

The World Government cannot be formed on a peoples basis until the people have a common language in which to write, interpret and enforce the law. The only language that has a chance to become that language soon is Esperanto. So every free-thinker should urge action on the petition of 71 million people for Esperanto, now before the UN. Then we can turn from war to law and have peace and prosperity.

Any reader of the FREETHINKER can get a booklet, *Freedom of Speech*, which brings the story of Esperanto up to date, by writing to the British Esperanto Association, 140 Holland Park Avenue, London, W11.

Yours for peace NOW.

GLENN P. TURNER

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

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

Humanist Holidays. Hastings: Thursday, March 23rd to April 1st. Burton-in-the-Wirral, Cheshire: Painting Holiday, July 29th to August 12th. Details from Mrs M. Mepham, 29 Fairview Road, Sutton, Surrey. Telephone, Vigilant 8796.

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

### OUTDOOR

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

Manchester Branch NSS, Platts Fields, Car Park, Victoria Street, Sunday evenings, 8 p.m.: Messrs COLLINS, DUIGNAN, MILLS and WOOD.

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

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

### INDOOR

Birmingham Branch NSS (Midland Institute, Margaret Street), Sunday, March 5th, 7 p.m.: RICHARD CLEMENTS, "The Secularist Outlook".

Brighton and Hove Humanist Group (Regency House, Oriental Place, Brighton), Sunday, March 5th: Dr. D. STARK MURRAY, "Medicine and Mankind".

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, March 5th, 6.30 p.m.: 86th Anniversary Meeting. Speaker: HECTOR HAWTON.

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, WC1), Sunday, March 5th, 11 a.m.: Dr JOHN LEWIS, "Youth Without a Faith"; Tuesday, March 7th, 6.30 p.m.: TONY SMYTHE (General Secretary, National Council for Civil Liberties), "Authoritarianism and Civil Liberties".

South Place Sunday Concerts (Conway Hall, London), Sunday, March 5th, 6.30 p.m.: Dartington String Quartet. Hadyn, Mozart. Admission 3/-.

The Progressive League. Easter Conference at Grittleton House, Chippenham, Wilts. Details from Ernest Seeley, 38 Primrose Gardens, London, NW3.

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

## REVIEW

Kit Mouat

BRIGID BROPHY'S first play *The Burglar* opened in Brighton on February 6th. It deserves a long and successful run when it reaches the West End. The basic ingredients of bedroom comedy make enviably palatable the underlying serious comment on our society, from the value of property to the middle classes and penal reform to fox hunting and sexual ethics. It was as impossible not to be reminded of Shaw as it was not to be glad that it was in fact Brophy. Jim Dale as the moralising burglar with a "puritan sense of superiority" is quite outstanding, but he is excellently supported by Gerald Flood, James Villiers, Sylvia Childs and the very beautiful Sian Phillips. Carl Toms' set is effective. A few moments of drag in the last act were, I suspect, a weakness in Frank Dunlop's otherwise good production rather than any fault in the writing which, with a real feeling for timing and action, made good theatre from first to last.

No doubt everyone will find his or her own cause for applause. "Being female doesn't confer medical training", Edwina points out to an audience which probably still takes it for granted that being female does. After a lively attempt psychologically to identify House with Woman, the remark, "If you believe that you will believe anything . . ." settled the question for me of many of our modern psycho-theological doctrines. "We keep up a supply of criminals for the fun of hunting them down and then compensate you with glamour . . ." the burglar is told, and he is disgusted to hear sexual immorality probably keeps down the murder rate. But don't just read reviews: go and see *The Burglar* for yourself. I haven't laughed so much for ages.

## BOOK REVIEW

Ruth Samuel

**Private case—public scandal**, Peter Fryer, Secker & Warburg, 21s. IN the British Museum there are a number of books that are difficult or impossible of access by the general public and even research workers, in spite of the fact that the books have been given to and sometimes bought by the nation. Most of them are of an allegedly pornographic nature, though it is not always clear how this point is decided, and they make up the Private Case of the British Museum. There are in addition some libellous and confidential books whose very titles are suppressed and which are available to nobody. Mr Fryer has undertaken a mission to investigate the reasons for this state of affairs and his account provides a readable and reasoned attack on the system. It is doubtful however if the subject merits a book devoted to it; books have been written for more trivial reasons than this it is true, but it could be that a long article in a serious newspaper or magazine might better have served Mr Fryer's purpose in making the issues known to the widest possible audience although this would have seriously limited his choice of words in quoting from the books. Historically it looks as if the Museum reserved these books for the exclusive use and entertainment of the upper classes. At times officials seem to have been extremely obstructive in preventing research workers from seeing or knowing of books that might be important to them; it was only in very recent times that the private case books have been listed in the Museum catalogue. Though this particular issue may be of interest to only a few it does touch on an important principle: that we must guard against the action of officials who, perhaps with the best of intentions, produce further limitations of the people's rights. Peter Fryer's review of the private case books shows their widely ranging content and literary quality and how they frequently reflect varying aspects of social life at different periods of history. His well-humoured and thoughtful comments will enable the reader better to assess pornography and his own attitudes to it. Pornography for many is likely to be no more than a passing phase, but for some it could serve sublimatory purposes and for others it could provide useful sexual guidance; it is a subject of sociological and medical importance. Mr Fryer is to be thanked for lighting up a dusty corner of the British Museum and for drawing our attention to the would-be censors who should not be allowed unchallenged to erode the rights of the individual.