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LOOKING FOR A SOUL

THREE WEEKS ago Arizona Superior Court Judge, Robert L. Meyers, concluded a pretrial hearing and tentatively set June 5th for a trial to decide whether any human being can prove the existence of a human soul.

James Kidd, an Arizona miner, vanished in 1950 and was later declared legally dead. Neither his body nor his soul was found, but his pencilled will was. In it he bequeathed \$200,000 for "research on some scientific proof of a soul of the human body which leaves after death".

Naturally there are quite a number of claimants for the legacy. Most of them are people who believe they can or have communicated with the dead. One such is Mrs Nora Higgins (57) who said that Kidd appeared to her in her bedroom a week before the hearing. "But in about half a minute he disappeared into a white fluorescent light and went up through the ceiling," she said.

The case will revolve around what Judge Meyers finally decides is the legal definition of the word "soul". Before he begins hearing testimony in June there will be another pretrial conference at which he will rule on the definition to give the forty-six claimants as a basis for their argument.

The soul which James Kidd clearly wants for his money is the human one which leaves the body after death. James Kidd is not alone in his interest. I am interested. Doubtless many, if not all, readers of the FREETHINKER are interested. I have heard so much about my soul from religionists and I have looked so hard for it but been unable to find it that I necessarily wonder whether it is I or they who are blind, or perhaps I should say deaf. A blind man can imagine he sees things just as a deaf man can imagine he hears. I've never quite made out whether you see a soul or hear it. I've certainly never heard a substantiated case of anyone tasting it, a real live genuine one that is. And I've never heard of anyone smelling it. And I've never heard of anyone touching it.

It may well be that some superstitious supporters of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children believe, in common with many others, that the eternal soul is con-

ceived simultaneously with the physical organism of the embryo. Such supporters may wish SPUC to join forces as soon as possible with the yet to be formed CUPS. The observant will notice the extraordinary coincidence that CUPS is SPUC spelt backwards. It may be that this coincidence has a sombre symbolic significance which will become apparent later on. CUPS stands for the Corporation for the Unveiling of Perpetual Souls. Now as I understand it from a well-informed would-be founder of CUPS, these Perpetual Souls can be poured into cups once they have been unveiled. And Extra-honorary Life Members of CUPS will have the privilege, on payment of 100 guineas to the Central Committee Fund, of drinking one of these Perpetual Souls from a cup or, on payment of an extra 10 guineas, from a golden chalice. My informant tells me you will then feel you have a bit of eternity in you and very much the better for the experience. Just a minute, readers. There's a lady at the back saying I am being blasphemous and obscene. Really, Madam. Are you unaware that in this very country people already drink synthetic souls from cups at least once a week and that this has been going on for hundreds of years? Your ignorance of their existence surprises me. Now, if I may continue. The big difference about CUPS, when it is formed, is that you will actually be able to see the Perpetual Soul and recognise it as such before you drink it. Yes, indeed, before your very eyes. There is even talk of appointing an independent judge, though not one seconded from the National Health Service, to certify that the alleged Perpetual Soul is indeed both a soul and a perpetual one. Such is the extent to which the projected CUPS intends eliminating any suspicion of fraud.

As I say, some people may consider that when CUPS has been formed, SPUC would do well to join forces with it. We can then have big public meetings at which SPUC can display a jar of Unborn Child and CUPS can unveil a jar of Perpetual Soul. Then even the densest of us will be able to draw the appropriate conclusion. Namely that if we'd had the patience to wait a few years and allow God and Nature to take their course what appeared in the first jar would have appeared in the second instead and the spirit world would have been all the richer for it.

If any readers are nauseated by what I have to say on this subject, let me remind them of this. In this country and throughout the world there are thousands, indeed hundreds of thousands, in fact millions of people who, still in the twentieth century, batten on human credulity, human hope, human fear. The doctrine of 'the eternal soul' has been one of the greatest weapons of superstition available for one person to exploit another. That weapon is by no means obsolescent.

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Harry Lamont

ABOLISH COMPULSORY RELIGION IN SCHOOLS**Speaking Personally**

LISTENING TO REMARKS on the wireless by the Head of a public school, I was amazed by his lack of logic. He said that just as he would not allow a boy to opt out of Maths, so therefore religious knowledge must also be compulsory.

But the two subjects are quite different. The truth of Maths can be proved, but religion consists of legends, unwarranted assumptions and plain poppycock. Why continue to stuff the pupils' heads with such nonsense?

I taught for 40 years in several types of schools. Always I found the morning religious service futile, boring and exasperating. The hymns were dreary, the prayers repetitious, monotonous and perfunctory.

Usually the staff sit on a raised platform. The pupils assemble in the hall and most of them regard the whole performance as a joke. There is a good deal of surreptitious fooling, to which the staff conveniently turn a blind eye. I used to feel intensely annoyed when I had to discipline boys for misbehaviour during the compulsory religious service, because secretly I sympathised with them.

Compulsion in religion turns most pupils against the creed you are trying to inculcate. I speak from experience. Sixty years ago we boys were indoctrinated with religion in a manner which was calculated to produce saints, but which merely manufactured scoffers, cynics and agnostics.

I once stood behind some boys who seemed to find a certain hymn hilarious. Listening carefully I heard them sing:

"The Lord said unto Moses,
'All Jews shall have long noses';
The Lord said unto Aaron,
'You shall have a square un'."

There has long been a superstitious notion that young people will become good citizens if they are compelled to take part in religious observances, but such an idea is a complete fallacy. I have long maintained that it would be far better to teach ethics, the science of morals or conduct. We should inculcate truth, honesty, justice, tolerance and kindness, for pragmatic reasons.

So many pious people pay lip service to religious dogmas, but remain hard, unkind, ruthless and devoid of pity. We all know the zealot who fulminates about hell fire and damnation for all who do not share his fanatical views.

One of the worst features of compulsory religion in schools is the appalling hypocrisy it produces. To 'suck up' to the staff pupils pretend to be devout. They pay lip service to the prevailing holy cant, but secretly regard it as the nonsense it is.

The Duke of Wellington said that if you educate people without religion you merely turn them into clever devils, but to my mind the cleverest devils of all are the religious ones who would burn heretics at the stake and are absolutely pitiless to those they regard as errant souls.

Children usually have very garbled ideas about religion, like the little girl who said they had been singing about a cross-eyed bear called 'Gladly'. She was referring to: "Gladly my cross I'd bear".

We stuff a child's head with holy claptrap and think we have done something worth while. On the contrary we have done him a lot of harm. Superstitious twaddle never did

anyone any good. When we pretend that religious dogmas are true we deceive ourselves and are dishonest.

Coleridge said that he who begins by loving Christianity better than truth will proceed by loving his own sect or church better than Christianity, and end by loving himself better than all, which is precisely what happens to the vast majority of fanatical believers. They maintain a superstitious reverence to a hocus-pocus of holy humbug. They remind me of a broody hen sitting on stone eggs and pecking at anyone who comes near.

It has been well said that the truth shall make us free, which has long been one of my favourite quotations. It has also been stated that truth cuts like a sword. Few can stand it. The majority prefer cant, falsehoods and consolatory simulacra, provided they wear a religious cloak.

William Congreve refers to the nauseous cant that people in love commonly use. But of all the different sorts of cant in common parlance the religious variety is the worst. The parson bleating like a nanny goat with the bellyache loves to wallow in holy cant. To him it is gorgeous, to me nauseating.

Compulsory religion gives children strange ideas. I met a little boy the other day who said it wouldn't be much use challenging God to a race because He is everywhere and would be at the finishing post as soon as He started.

One can make out a reasonable case for teaching comparative religion, but only a lame one for pretending that a certain creed is true and all others false. If fanatical Christians had been born in India they would almost certainly have become Hindus.

Samuel Butler, in *Erewhon*, refers to those who have received a liberal education at the colleges of unreason, and taken the highest degrees in hypothetics, which are their principal study.

When I listen to professors of Divinity preaching and pretending to know all about God. I am amazed at their arrogance, dogmatism and impudence. Anyone would think they were on the phone to Him every day. Their whole stock-in-trade is human credulity. They don't know if there is a God or anything at all about Him, if He does exist. A student said to me the other day that a certain divine must know because the holy man is a DD.

"But that doesn't impress me at all," I replied. "The description 'Dreamy Daniel' would fit as well as 'Doctor of Divinity'. They pretend to be experts in knowledge for the validity of which they have no proof of any sort."

If I had to summarise my objections to compulsory religion in schools I should say it is dishonest to pretend that a certain code is true when we have no evidence at all for such an assumption. We pretend that certain dogmas are valid when they are merely eye-wash, formulated by an ancient tribe not renowned for its perspicuity.

Christopher Marlowe wrote:

"I count religion but a childish toy,
And hold there is no sin but ignorance."

Religion is a hangover from the superstitious notions of a primitive people. We have no right to inflict a certain creed on defenceless children. Of course most of the intelligent ones chuck it overboard soon enough, but the time devoted to its study is completely wasted.

THE PASSIONATE SCEPTIC

Simon Ellis

Review: *Autobiography of Bertrand Russell*, Vol. I (pub. Allen and Unwin, 42s).

WHEN A BOOK, on its publication day, is mentioned in five separate BBC programmes it is surely unique in the history of publishing. When, in addition, the author is a world-rank mathematician and philosopher and the embodiment of all the qualities that the word 'humanist' implies, the best tools that a reviewer can bring to his task are humility and a sense of the enormity of his own presumption. Criticism is impossible and the danger of adulation is all too obvious. I steer thankfully for the haven of the purely descriptive.

Bertrand Russell's father, Lord Amberley, was an atheist and an associate of John Stuart Mill whom he supported in campaigns for women's suffrage and birth-control. He died when his son was four, leaving instruction that the boy was to be brought up by fellow-atheists, free from the influences of the Christian superstition. However, a court action overthrew this testamentary instruction and the young Russell passed into the legal custody of his grandparents. Within two years, his grandfather died and, during his early years, the main influence on him was his grandmother whom he describes as "A Puritan moralist . . . intellectually limited . . . viewing everything through a mist of Victorian sentiment". It is curious to discover that the future author of *Why I am Not a Christian* was destined, in the hopes of his grandmother, to become a Unitarian minister. It was to this faith that his grandmother was converted late in life and to which Russell himself adhered until his final break with religion at the age of seventeen. Yet, in spite of the differences between Lady Russell and her grandson, it is clear that her influence was not merely transient.

"But in retrospect, as I have grown older, I have realised more and more the importance she had in moulding my outlook on life. Her fearlessness, her public spirit, and her indifference to the opinion of the majority have always seemed good to me and have impressed themselves upon me as worthy of imitation."

At the age of eleven, under the tuition of his elder brother, he commenced the study of mathematics, the subject in which he was later to achieve eminence. From the beginning, he was reluctant to accept the fundamental premises on which mathematics was based and, although this dissatisfaction was temporarily set aside, it remained to form the basis of his future work through *Principles of Mathematics* to the *Principia Mathematica*. To the estimated loss of £600 on this work, Cambridge University Press contributed £300 and the Royal Society £200. So, for ten years' work Russell and Whitehead received a bill for £50 each. To this work, as to the statement, "From that moment (aged eleven) . . . until I was thirty-eight, mathematics was my chief interest and my chief source of happiness", I, perhaps not alone, can bring no greater tribute than the blush of my own inadequacy.

Perhaps one of the most superficially persuasive bases for Christian belief lies in the so-called "First Cause" argument and there can be few rationalists who, having had however scanty a religious instruction in childhood, have not paused in their progress to freethought at the suggestion, "The universe is there; someone must have made it". In fact, the statement poses more questions than it claims to answer and is as great a *non sequitur* as "Sirius is nine light-years from Earth; this proves that Mary of Nazareth produced a virgin-birth". Yet, from conversation with believers, it seems the alleged First Cause still holds

considerable sway and it is interesting to note that this was the last link with belief that Russell had to break. He describes, as he has at greater length elsewhere, how his reading of John Stuart Mill's *Autobiography* led him to abandon the "First Cause" argument and to become an atheist. Professor Julian Huxley has described the sense of mental liberation which comes from the final rejection of superstition. This is echoed by Bertrand Russell.

"Throughout the long period of religious doubt, I had been rendered very unhappy by the gradual loss of belief, but when the process was completed I found to my surprise that I was quite glad to be done with the whole subject."

The lack of religious belief was to prove significant later. The author describes his misgivings that the time and energy devoted to *Principia Mathematica* might have been better employed in politics or economics. After its publication, he applied to be considered as the Liberal candidate for Bedford. The following delicious dialogue ensued:

- Q. Are you a member of the Church of England?
 A. No. I was brought up as a Nonconformist.
 Q. And have remained so?
 A. No. I have not remained so.
 Q. Are we to understand that you are an agnostic?
 A. Yes, that is what you must understand.
 Q. Would you be willing to attend church occasionally?
 A. No. I should not.
 Q. Would your wife be willing to attend church occasionally?
 A. No. She would not.
 Q. Would it come out that you are an agnostic?
 A. Yes, it probably would come out.

"In consequence of these answers, they selected as their candidate Mr Kellaway, who became Postmaster General and held correct opinions during the war. They must have felt that they had had a lucky escape."

Bertrand Russell's own pacifism and opposition to the first world war are foreshadowed in his disagreement with Sir Edward Grey over the policy of Entente Cordiale. Winston Churchill was also critical of the Entente Cordiale policy, and one suspects that there could be few other occasions when these two would share the same point of view.

The volume deals with the author's early marriage and love-life but this is a sphere where a reviewer's description would be tedious and his comment impertinent. Frankness can be debased when conveyed secondhand by the inexperienced and, on this aspect, the reader should refer to the autobiography itself. Of other characters who appear in the pages, two call for mention. The affinity with Keynes comes as no great surprise; mathematicians, one imagines, are birds of a feather. Much less predictable is the deep affection and admiration felt for Joseph Conrad and for his books. A love of the sea and typhoon-tossed adventure seem to go curiously with mathematical philosophy, yet this relationship extended to the author's naming his first son after Conrad. "I wish I could make his light shine for others as it shone for me." Perhaps, through this autobiography, that wish may be partly fulfilled.

This first volume of the autobiography ends at 1914 and consequently the writer's literary output with which a wider non-mathematical readership is familiar is not covered. The period of *Enquiry into Meaning and Truth*, *Marriage and Morals*, *In Praise of Laziness*, *ABC of Relativity*, and, perhaps outstandingly, *History of Western Philosophy* is yet to come. One looks forward with eagerness to Volume Two and with confidence to Volume Three.

NEWS AND NOTES

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION in schools is defended by the Joint Council of Heads who claim that "criticism expressed in some quarters . . . does not represent the views of teachers and parents". In the *Times Educational Supplement* somebody who sees the problem through stained glass spectacles, bitterly attacks Brigid Brophy's new pamphlet *Religious Education in State Schools* (published by the Fabian Society), in which she states: "It is an immoral hypocrisy to compel worship to take place in the school". The TES pontificates: "The plain fact that compulsion is there is because the majority of people in this country want it".

It is a poor lookout for educational standards if they are going to be fixed by majority opinion. Perhaps most people do not care if their children are indoctrinated with beliefs which they themselves do not accept. If so, let them do their own dirty work, or send their children to the churches and Sunday Schools, which are almost empty. Indeed, some are forced to amalgamate, or resort to gimmicks such as pop groups in a desperate attempt to bring back their straying sheep. The artificial linking of religion and ethics, and complete ignorance of what goes on at morning assembly means that people will give ill-considered opinions on the question of religion in the school.

Until recently, the main opposition came from Secular Humanists, but increasing numbers of thoughtful and democratic Christians are admitting the validity of our arguments. The problem must not be swept under the carpet, and there is a great need to have it discussed in parent-teacher organisations, colleges of education and the trade unions, particularly the National Union of Teachers.

Brigid Brophy's pamphlet *Religious Education in State Schools* is brilliant. Further comment is unnecessary, except that it is available from the National Secular Society, 103 Borough High Street, London, SE1, price 2/10d, including postage.

One hundred years of freethought

It has nearly always been the lot of reformers to see only a fraction of the result of their labours. Future generations benefit, but because of the slanted and superficial version of history taught in most schools, the majority of people have no knowledge of the valiant men and women who worked for the betterment of life and society.

Just published by the National Secular Society

WHY I AM NOT A CHRISTIAN

BERTRAND RUSSELL

(1/-, plus 4d postage)

Just published by the Fabian Society

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN STATE SCHOOLS

BRIGID BROPHY

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103 BOROUGHS HIGH STREET, LONDON, SE1

Those who campaign for radical causes tend to be a pessimistic band. Certainly it is foolish to imagine that all the battles have been won, but it is even more foolish not to recognise the progress and changes which have taken place, particularly during the last hundred years. Many organisations—trade unions, co-operative bodies, political and educational groups—have played a conspicuous rôle.

The National Secular Society, which celebrated its Centenary in 1966, has formed the spearhead of the radical-freethought movement. Hitherto the story of its development has been hidden away in old journals, minute books and specialist histories long out of print.

David Tribe's book *One Hundred Years of Freethought*, deals with the grassroots struggle, the movement's successes and failures. It is as welcome as the flowers in May—when it will be published by Elek Books, 2 All Saints Street, London, N1, price 42/-. If you can't afford to buy a copy—and even if you can—make sure it is obtainable at your public library.

Cheek

Judges and magistrates often make rather tart comments, but the outrageous impertinence of Mr Otto Shaw, Chairman of the Court at Bearsted, Kent, has resulted in richly-deserved rebukes from many quarters. A young man appeared before him—accused of driving offences if you please—and it was stated on his behalf that he was now under the steady influence of a girl. Whereupon Mr Shaw asked him: "Have you slept with her?"

Mr Marcus Lipton, MP, who announced his intention of writing to the Lord Chancellor to protest, said he was doing so because he thought it "quite monstrous that magistrates should poke their noses into things which do not concern the case before them".

And so say all of us.

Curtain up

Two of the artistes who performed at the concert presented by the National Secular Society and the World Union of Freethinkers in London last September are appearing in West End theatres. Constance Cummings plays a leading rôle in the revival of Noel Coward's comedy *Fallen Angels*, which seems to have settled down to a successful run at the Vaudeville.

On Sunday, April 23rd, Richard Ainley will present what is described as "an evening of poets, playwrights, pleasantries and personalities", at the New Arts Theatre Club. Only an actor of outstanding ability can delight an audience for over two hours as Mr Ainley did at a Hampstead theatre some time ago. I am pleased that more people will be able to see him on this occasion.

Enough is as good as a feast

Some of the 170 guests who attended the National Secular Society's annual dinner travelled from Scotland, Merseyside and the Midlands, so the popularity of such functions is obvious. But as it was the third to be held in London since the beginning of the year, it is evident that there should be consultation between the organisers. A liaison committee has been formed, but decisions regarding dates and restaurant booking often cannot be deferred.

Swinging!

It is reported that a hymn-writing competition sponsored by Southern Independent Television has attracted over 3,000 entries. A rumour that Malcolm Muggeridge, Godfrey Winn and Mary Whitehouse will sing the best of the bunch at the Billy Graham opening night at Earls Court on June 23rd is unfounded.

E.A.

NEW THINKING ON WAR AND PEACE: III

A. C. Thompson

Liberty and War

This is the third of four articles which look frankly into the causes and prevention of war. Next week the final article will appear, EDUCATION AND WAR.

THE PAGES of history are filled with intolerance. Religious wars, persecutions, suppression of freethought by governments, hangings, burnings at the stake, witch-hunting, ostracism from society, anathemas and excommunications, concentration camps, gas chambers, political prisons, inquisitions, tortures and other horrors were denials of a free right to think and to speak. The cruel persecutions of the scientists Galileo and Bruno, of Vesalius and Servetus, and of the other pioneers of the science which has so profoundly shaped our present way of life, will forever stand as an everlasting disgrace upon human reason.

People have beliefs. People are willing to fight for, to kill another, and to die, for what they believe in; but often what they believe in has no more foundation than a contrary belief. Dying for one's beliefs, or willingness to die for them, has always been upheld as noble and right if the beliefs are true and if their preservation is thought to affect the welfare of society or of humanity. Many scientists have died thus for their beliefs, rather than that the truth, as they saw it, should perish. Others die because one man believes one way and another believes another way, and they hate each other for it and fight a battle over it. Does victory in battle establish truth—is it a reliable method of proof?

Doctrines satisfy people. They generate the feeling that a mystery is now completely explained and one need search no further. People cling to their doctrines. They close their minds to every alternative belief, they want everybody else to believe exactly as they do, and they ridicule, persecute, ostracise or war against people who believe anything different. People bind themselves together on the basis of their beliefs; he who believes what we do is one of us, and anyone who believes differently is a stranger and a potential enemy. It is easier to believe what everyone else does, than to doubt, to argue and to suffer.

Why are people intolerant, that is, why do people think they are morally right or justified in persecuting freethinkers? For if they believed themselves evil, they would not do it. The Social-Survival theory of ethics explains that people employ common belief as a basis for society. Groups within society which have opposed beliefs tend to fragment the whole society into separate minority-societies which are felt to lack the cohesiveness necessary for united action such as that required for defence or war. The cardinals of the Inquisition told themselves and their faithful that they were fulfilling the purposes of God in condemning independent thinkers to rack and faggot, for dissent would divide the ecclesiastical society. Compulsory unity of belief has been looked upon as a means for preserving society; and this conviction both offers evidence to support the validity of the Social-Survival principle as the actual ethical standard which people unwittingly and implicitly follow, and also offers insight into the sources, effects and justifiability of dogmatism.

The argument that society must suppress unconformity

of belief to protect itself from being harmed was refuted by John Stuart Mill in his celebrated essay "On Liberty" (1859) which upheld freedom of thought as a necessity for the advance of knowledge. Those who would suppress an opinion deny its truth, but are not infallible. If the opinion is true, they seek to rob mankind of a truth. If it is false, it can be known to be so only by being shown reasonably to be so; and the only reason for believing the contradictory to be true is the liberty extended for refuting it.

Consider the trouble between India and Pakistan. The turmoil and bloodshed that has occurred in India since independence from England in 1947, and the division of the country into two parts, India and Pakistan, has been the result of hostility between the two religious groups, the Hindus and the Moslems. It can certainly be said that if the Hindus were Moslems or if the Moslems were Hindus, there would have been none of the bloodshed, population displacement or other troubles that have divided India. Whether Hinduism or Islam is the one true faith that can lead all men to salvation may be difficult to demonstrate with logical proof so conclusive as to convince all reasonable men everywhere. Despite this reasonable doubt, the adherents of each faith are so positive that they alone have the truth, and the others have not, that they are willing to die fighting for what they believe. But this does not mean to die fighting to save their beliefs from being refuted, nor does it mean to die fighting to persuade the adherents of the other faith to change their beliefs; it means, rather, to die fighting because of hatred and fear of other people with different beliefs. The adherents of each side might, in all reasonableness, be willing to concede that their philosophical and religious beliefs are not completely certain, or at least are open to question and debate. But the adherents of either faith have not been taught this reasonable attitude; instead, their societies have closed their minds, dogmatically, forcibly, insistently. The pressure to conform has been the threat of ostracism from family and friends, loss of station in life, rejection by society. The basic cause of the India-Pakistan trouble is intolerance, and intolerance is the result of dogmatism.

The India-Pakistan conflict indicates an important conclusion: the education for international understanding which is advocated by world peace organisations is insufficient. It is possible for two peoples to speak a common language, to know each other's customs, indeed to live with each other from birth, and still go to war against each other. The people of India and Pakistan grew up together. It is not enough for education for international understanding to stress foreign languages and literature, history, geography and international relations and to be supplemented by foreign radio broadcasting and correspondence and world travel. Something more is needed: acceptance by each other's societies.

It will be objected that the Hindu-Moslem antipathy is deep-rooted, centuries old, and hence cannot be mitigated except over many generations, perhaps centuries. This is muddled thinking. No such antipathy exists in the minds of new babies that are born in either India or Pakistan. They would not hate unless they learned to hate and they would not learn hatred unless they were taught it.

Consider a second troubled area, the Near East. It can probably be said with truth that if the Jews had been Moslems, they would have been welcomed by the Arabs,

for they are an enterprising and industrious people who have done much to improve the land. Here again, there is international hostility which is based fundamentally upon a difference of belief, but not only a difference but an intolerance.

Of all the troubles that threaten to disturb the peace of the world with a third global conflict, undoubtedly the most ominous is the hostility between the Capitalists and the Communists. The Americans probably fear that Communism not only might achieve world domination, but that, if it only gained control of markets and commerce in a substantial portion of the world, it might be able to force America into economic dependence and submission without even an effort to disturb the country itself. At any rate, Americans seem to regard Communism as a threat to their security and survival, and are greatly alarmed by its spread among other countries. If Communists do have an intention of world domination, this is not, as will be shown, because of a conviction that they are logically right, but because they fear the Capitalist countries, which have condemned them on religious and ideological grounds, as a threat to their survival. Throughout history, many countries and leaders have sought world domination because they thought it would relieve them of fear of all enemies. This is an important point. It is not the logic of Capitalism or Communism that matters, no more than the logic of Hinduism, Islam, Judaism or Christianity. This has been strikingly proved, in recent international relations: there was a cold war between the USA and the USSR, and these two "powers" as they are called, were several times at the brink of World War III; but as soon as Communist China became the adversary of both, the cold war thawed. Previously hostile peoples become united when they have a common enemy. Hence it must be obvious that security, not logic, is the issue. In a Capitalist-Communist war, millions of people might die without knowing so very much about either Capitalism or Communism. They would die, really, for their society, and would still die if the Capitalist and Communist nations were reversed.

China, in turn, has repudiated the Soviet Union, simply because the Kremlin might rule the Communist world. In adopting Communism, China at first accepted Russian guidance, experience and aid; but their vast population could not survive as a free, independent society as long as they remained a "satellite" of the Soviet Union, subject to Russian domination. The Chinese have a moral obligation, and this must not and cannot be denied, for the sake of survival of their society, to be hostile towards the United States which officially disapproves of their society and frustrates their claim to a place among the nations of the world.

If hostility is due, not to logical dispute between two sides, but to the mutual fear they have of each other, what is it, precisely, that causes the fear? Basically, it is caused by the fact that the people of both sides are being indoctrinated. Ordinarily, in any free society, there is variety of opinion; nowhere does everyone think alike. The great mass of Americans would not hate the Chinese, and the great mass of Chinese would not hate Americans; the great mass of people in both countries are not expert in their ideological difference. The few statesmen and others who know the difference regard them, I say erroneously, as a threat, and those few, who are most vocal, cause everyone to be indoctrinated with distrust, hatred and fear.

Think of the thousands who crowded into the Piazza Venetia to hear the words that exploded from the mouth of Mussolini glorifying the marauding Romans. Why did

the Germans follow Hitler? The memory of this one man is still an obstacle to world peace, for people everywhere visualise the possibility of another such man. A characteristic of offensive war is compulsory unity of opinion. Statesmen believe and preach that conformity is necessary for solidarity and survival; but, countries composed of a mixture of peoples of widely different origins and sentiments enjoy enduring peace, such as Switzerland, which does not have even a national language. Peace depends, then, on tolerance.

Next, why do statesmen erroneously regard a difference—ideological, social, religious, racial, economic, any difference—as a threat? Because these differences produce different societies, and these different societies compete with one another. Everyone, as long as man has been a social animal, has realised implicitly the basic law of ethics: all moral behaviour is directed towards the survival of the agent's society. It is because this law has not been declared explicitly and an alternative spiritual theory has instead been accepted as the ground of morality, that people apply it erroneously, without understanding what they are doing, adding a vague, undefined word, "patriotism", and that people are so easily inflamed with distrust, hatred and fear of another society.

If neither the Communists nor the Capitalists indoctrinated their peoples, nor tried to convert others, the Americans would leave Vietnam, for there would be no sense in continuing a war there. It is hardly conceivable that they would leave otherwise, for to leave would be to leave a Communist government behind them, and they cannot forever dictate the form of government of a foreign state. Their other solution is to drive out or exterminate the Vietnamese and to repopulate the country with indoctrinated Capitalists.

What is the remedy? It is intellectual freedom. Free-thought can prevent war. But it would need to be free-thought over the whole earth, and this might be difficult to establish, because subservience of thought is ingrained in people everywhere, by education, from their earliest childhood on. In the next article, I shall deal with Education and War.

THEATRE

David Tribe

On Approval (Frederick Lonsdale), St Martin's.

Relatively Speaking (Alan Ayckbourn), Duke of York's.

A Pound on Demand and **The Shadow of a Gunman** (Sean O'Casey), Mermaid.

FREDERICK LONSDALE (1881-1954) is remembered as the doyen of the drawing room and musical comedy in its heyday. He swooped to fame and fortune early in the century and inevitably plunged from it in the middle. For many years he was the dirtiest word you could use in the respectable neo-art theatre. But like the early Coward comedies he has lately re-emerged. **On Approval** (1927) tells of the wealthy widow who invites her impoverished suitor to spend a month with her alone on approval at her Scottish home. The twenties may have been roaring, but the Lord Chamberlain reigned in the theatre and the experiment is strictly extra-bedroom. An heiress friend and a bankrupt duke turn up uninvited—which is just as well for the comic invention as Lonsdale cannot manage duologues. Lightweight it all may be, but there is rarely a dull moment. The dialogue is surprisingly fresh ("I say, George, how did you lose your money?"—"Women"—"No, I mean your big money"—"Big women"). The play is in repertory with Giles Cooper's **Happy Family**, and has the same cast with the replacement of Gillian Raine by Polly Adams. They all give professional performances but those who saw their magnificent **Family** will feel some disappointment. Pamela Ingram is

again the designer, with her usual attention to detail. Murray Macdonald efficiently directs.

Relatively Speaking is a merry mix-up, whose ingredients are a secretary and her boy-friend, a businessman and his wife. The secretary unaccountably decides to visit the businessman, her former lover, at his home one Sunday to tell him to stop pestering her. Finding the address on a cigarette packet, the boy-friend is told it belongs to her parents and turns up to plead his suit. The businessman and wife imagine the two young people are each other's current lovers. One is fascinated at the way Alan Ayckbourn spins so tiny a cocoon into so long a thread. Though the joke is growing perilously thin by the end, laughter still flows from an engaging script. The action takes place in a blaze of light and colour and business devised by director Nigel Patrick, who on this occasion does not perform himself. With the exception of cool, urbane Celia Johnson, the cast (she and Richard Briers, Jennifer Hilary and Michael Hordern) have a line in gesture that will make opera glasses unnecessary even for the most myopic.

The Shadow of a Gunman (1923) was O'Casey's first play and **A Pound on Demand** (1936) appeared at the height of his powers. A casual spectator might assume the opposite. The **Pound** is a featherweight sketch about a drunken Irishman trying to withdraw from his PO Savings Bank account, but is an excellent vehicle for director Abraham David and the improvisations of Barry Keegan, Shivaun O'Casey, the dramatist's daughter, Elizabeth Begley, Dermot MacDowell and Jack MacGowran as the drunk. In the **Gunman** we have a tragi-comedy of real feeling and poetry. Admittedly it creaks rather badly. The story covers the height of the IRA-Black and Tans troubles in 1920, as it concerns the residents of a tenement and a friend who leaves a suitcase of bombs for safe keeping. Not only does most of the action take place offstage to be transmitted, ritually, by loud voices in the street, but neither the script nor Jack MacGowran's production conveys the atmosphere of martial law and the terror of the Tans remembered in Dublin to this day. But O'Casey has a richness of humour and tenderness that is unique, that makes even a libel of the Irish—shown as a grotesque band of liars, poltroons and *posseurs*—convincing and sympathetic. The best performances come from doubling-up by the **Pound** cast, especially MacGowran as a seedy, literary, commercial traveller and Elizabeth Begley who greases "God and the holy angels" with Irish-thick uncton. Brian Phelan as a stoic, harassed poet, offers a nice foil for the lunacy around him.

LETTERS

Correction

WE ALL experience from time to time that minor failure of memory which, for instance, makes us say or write "Whitcomb Street" while what we have quite clearly in mind is "Whitfield Street". That is just what happened when I was writing the article on Censorship which appeared on April 7th. The reference on page 110 to "the Badge Boutique (in Whitcombe Street)" should read "the Badge Centre (in Whitfield Street)". BARBARA SMOKER.

The blend of Judaism and Platonism

BY RAISING the question of the almightiness of God, Nicholas Teape has raised an age-long question in Christian theology which is scarcely resolved by Michael Gray's reference to other people as "hypocritical". The real problem is occasioned by the blend of Judaism and Platonism which has taken place in the historical Christian idea of God. The God of the Second Isaiah was Judaic through and through, personal and highly transcendental—"I make light and create darkness". Practical problems of existence led the later Jews to seek to limit this absoluteness by the need to explain sin. Christianity, faced with Europe, turned away from Palestine and adopted Platonism as its philosophy. Hence, to Clement of Alexandria, the personality of God had a very different meaning to that which it would have possessed for the Jew whilst almightiness became conditioned by conceptions of divine immanence with their obvious limitations upon personality and deity. The clash goes on through the patristic period, appears in some writers of the Middle Ages and is seen again in the contrast of Calvinistic and Armenian views. Its real importance lies in the difficulties which it suggests for Christian theism as a whole. Again, this theology is restated by the Bishop of Woolwich. It has been restated in terms of contemporary cultural values in each age simply because it possesses no intrinsic and self-enclosed culture of its own. The interest of the bishop lies in his valiant attempt to restate Christian theism in terms of "depth psychology" and the extent to which his efforts become emeshed in an age-old prob-

lem. For many, the problem will be purely academic simply because no form of theism supplies the answer.

It is true that the World Council of Churches have set aside the radical sex report which caused so much controversy. But I have yet to learn that they have expelled the authors who are presumably Christians. Does not this fact justify Mr Teape's remarks upon this point which, if I understand him aright, referred to some Christians and not to official ecclesiastical expressions? F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT.

Alpha and Omega

IT WOULD SEEM that the arguments of Christians about the origin and end of Life are not fully carried to their logical conclusions.

On the *origin* of things, the old argument by analogy of God as a Watchmaker who designed us all, suffers from a defect, apart from the absence of design and beneficence in Nature. It is assumed that because we are able to make watches, and since our own selves are more 'wondrously made' than any watch, that therefore there must be a Divine Watchmaker who made us. But Evolution shows us to be made by a long, fortuitous, process of natural selection from material elements, and with no other agency involved. Hence, are we to assume that the Divine Watchmaker is Himself a product of a Materialistic Process?

Considering the *end* of things, it is one of the Christian's first questions when confronted by an Atheist—"But if there is no Eternal Life, then what is the Purpose of Life, and why bother to go on living?" Apart from the gratuitous assumption that 'Life' has a 'Purpose' rather than that living things have many purposes, the argument is not, once again, carried to its logical conclusion. For if this life is not sufficient unto itself but merely a testing ground in which to qualify for some better life, then what is the purpose of the better life? Once we have gained Eternal Life what then? Shall we merely be floating around singing hymns and playing on harps for ever? Or shall we be in Paradise—as visualised by the Moslems—and free to indulge in all the sensuous pleasures regarded as sinful here? Assuming the complete absence of pain and satiety and the presence of continuous happiness in either case, then again, what is the purpose of it all? Why could not the Almighty have made it possible of fulfilment in this life? But is it not merely arguing by analogy once again? We have the instinct of self-preservation, therefore we wish to live forever. We have purpose, therefore Life has a purpose. We like praise when we liberate the oppressed, therefore a God would like the same. We find sensuous pleasure desirable, therefore it must be part of an ultimate End-in-Itself. But just as all these factors serve ends more than themselves, surely the 'Purpose of Life' as vaguely summed up in them by the Christian must also serve other ends—and so *ad infinitum*.

The conclusion of the above is a return to the Materialism from which we started, and with the Big Questions still unanswered—if indeed one is entitled to proceed, by analogy, from ordinary questions to Big Questions in the first place. D. L. HUMPHRIES.

Right to cohabit

I WAS very interested in A. C. Thompson's article on the Sex Problem. He has some very good ideas but I do not agree on all points.

A man and a woman should be allowed to live together without any social or moral stigma and only if they both decide that they wish to have children should they be allowed to marry. This being merely a civil registration saying that they are able and willing to look after the child and take the responsibility.

I did not like that expression "Obtain the right to cohabit". No-one has to obtain it from anyone. It is an inherent right of every human being. It is a private and personal matter which has nothing to do with the State, except where there are children.

LILIAN MIDDLETON.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

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

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

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

OUTDOOR

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

Manchester Branch NSS, 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

Havering Humanist Society (The Social Centre, Gubbins Lane, Harold Wood), Tuesday, April 25th, 8 p.m.: Tape recording, MARGARET KNIGHT, "Humanism and the School".

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, WC1), Sunday, April 23rd, 11 a.m.: LORD SORENSON, "Aden and the Yemen"; Tuesday, April 25th, 6.30 p.m., "Synthesis on the Social Services".

South Place Sunday Concerts (Conway Hall, London), Sunday, April 23rd, 6.30 p.m.: London String Quartet. Gwynne Edwards, Mozart, Dvorak. Admission 3/-.

Worthing Humanist Group (Morelands Hotel, The Pier), Sunday, April 30th, 5.30 p.m. Speaker: David Tribe (President, National Secular Society).

LETTERS

"Existence"

G. L. Simons, in "A Reply to Mr Quiogue" is really arguing about a dubious word—existence.

Presumably Professor Broad, in the passage quoted, is speaking of meaningful propositions—if that is not a tautology. Many people would disagree that the sentence "God exists" is such a proposition. (Doubters are invited to try their hands at "Muggle-wuzzy exists".)

I would join these people in saying that "existence" is not something over and above the other attributes of the subject of the alleged proposition. The word "exists" in the sentences above adds nothing to our knowledge of the subject. In more famous words than mine, "existence is not a predicate". If the attributes of the subject in such a sentence are denied, you are eventually left with nothing—for existence, in itself, is an empty concept, like the "substance" of the physicists.

It might have been an interesting exercise for a mediaeval metaphysician to try and discover when the idea of existence entered into the concept, like trying to discover when the soul enters the body, but we should do better to abandon the misleading language involved.

The sentence "x exists" is a short-hand way of saying—x is this, x is that, x is the other. To prove the truth of the subsidiary propositions, we look for Professor Broad's "observable evidence" which we think there should be in order that the claimant of x's thisness, thatness and otherness could have made his claims at all. The claims demand the evidence and if that is not there we are entitled to dismiss them and call the propositions untrue, and the shorthand statement false and its contradictory true. "X does not exist".

K. UNSWORTH.

Should we abolish royalty?

MOST PEOPLE pay lip service to the idea that all men are equal yet they still think we should keep the royal family and royalty in general. Royalty encourages snobbery and the class system, and both will continue to exist as long as royalty exists. The royal garden parties are attended almost exclusively by the upper classes who boast afterwards that they had been specially invited.

The monarchy has gradually been stripped of its power until today it is merely a figurehead that does no good and wastes money. Most countries have realised that royalty is useless and have abolished it.

The Queen is paid £475,000 per annum, tax free, yet she is one of the richest people in this country. This money could be used to build 237 houses costing £2,000 each, £9,135 each week is too much for anybody and should be reduced to a more reasonable figure or stopped altogether. The other members of the royal family are paid tens of thousands of pounds and many thousands are wasted on royal tours and ceremonies, one example being the redecorating of disused railway stations because the royal train was passing through them. Also Princess Margaret received £47,000 for redecorating her house. This is a complete waste of public money.

The monarch is always the Supreme Governor of the Church of England, so it is too bad if he or she happens to be an atheist. At the coronation the monarch has to promise to maintain and preserve inviolably the settlement of the Church of England. The monarch has very little personal freedom and has to do what he or she is told and deliver political speeches that they obviously disagree with, such as at the opening of Parliament. It would benefit both the monarch and the country if royalty were to be abolished. It has definitely outlived its usefulness.

ROBERT HALSTEAD

Stop messing

I SEE that J. A. S. Nisbet, the Scottish Nationalist, is making a fuss over the Synod of Whitby.

The Synod of Whitby took place in 664 AD, according to Bede. One thousand three hundred and three years ago. And J. A. S. Nisbet's Nationalist ideas are about one thousand three hundred and three years out of date!

We should not be messing about with Nationalism now. We want World Government

I. S. LOW.