

FREE THINKER

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THE UNFAITHFUL BRIDES OF CHRIST

this is the first time that I've seen her
black garbed
shoes sombre
almost silly you might say
unstockinged feet inside
closed mind
pale face
sweet voice
poor past behind
so sad to see such beauty lost
she's seen the Father to the door and wished him well
he's off on holiday to Spain
too hard he's worked
they've taxed him so with this and that
they've sinned you know
and every day
but still they pray for purity
he'll come again and they'll confess
how good of him
she looks at me as she turns to return to her astringent room
where Christ is standing on the mantelpiece
with Mum and Dad
she loves him so
but looks at me and stays awhile fixed by my gaze
I say good morning sister I have come
then stop and watch her mind lost stare
her lips are lax
in mental loss she dimly sees our earthly life
but not for long
her fingers on the rosary move one two three
she's out of me and into spiritual perplexity once more
oh yes
she slowly moves
then brisks away with humble dignity
and leaves me with my dreams
of what she might have been but for her Lord

"SO you want to divorce Christ?" the Mother General asked. "What draws you out? The world, the flesh or the devil?"

Thus, reports the American women's magazine *Journal* (April 1967), was Judy Christopher answered when she told her Mother General that she wanted to leave the order. Another sister had advised her to quit, no matter what the Mother General said. "Mother has intimidated at least ten other sisters into staying," she told Judy. "She will call you ungrateful and selfish and mean." Judy was called "ungrateful and selfish and mean", but she stuck to her guns and left. However, it is clear that many nuns—how many one cannot say—who feel they want to leave their order are persuaded, 'pressurised' would perhaps be a more appropriate word, to remain.

Nevertheless, *Journal* reports that last year, 'according to reliable estimates, at least 3,600 professed sisters left their convents for good. These were not uncertain novices or postulants, but mature women who had taken their vows and served the Church for years'.

"Being a sister is great when you are young. But once you start observing the older sisters, you begin to see where it all leads. I started to wonder how long it would take me to become as bitter as some of them."

Some sources estimate that a third of nuns who leave eventually get married. *Journal* interviewed one such ex-nun, Jane O'Leary of Minneapolis. She left her order seven years ago, at age 25. She admitted that probably she should never have gone into the religious life. "I wish that the sisters who taught me in elementary school and high school had given marriage its due," she said. "I grew up believing that virginity and perfection were synonymous. I'll always be grateful to the young man who asked me for a date after I left the convent. My hair was too short and I felt undressed. The wind was blowing on my legs and I kept looking around thinking, 'What has happened to my skirt?'"

Jane is now married and candidly admitted that she enjoys the physical side of marriage. She made a significant comparison of the duties, obligations, responsibilities and burdens of nuns and housewives which, one suspects, is not made by many teaching nuns to the teenage girls in their educational care. "It may not be glamorous, being a housewife, but it gives me more chance to do for others than I had as a nun. You can't be selfish if you have a husband and three children, but it's easy to be selfish as a sister. It isn't hard to go into a chapel and meditate for an hour. It shows a lot more love to get up at night with two sick babies and walk the floor with them."

The experiences of ex-nuns should be made more widely known, especially to the vulnerable teenagers who are

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nurtured in Catholic homes and Catholic schools. Only three weeks ago here in England, Cardinal Heenan opened a Vocations Exhibition at Bingley Hall, Birmingham. The exhibition was called "Challenge '67". But the great challenge is not so much to the teenagers, too many of whom are readily allured to the religious life through religious conditioning and miseducation. The challenge is to the Roman Catholic priests and nuns to be honest about the deficiencies of some of the traditional religious vocations and the unhappiness which can be incurred by the individuals who enter them.

There are 180,000 sisters in the US, and the dropout rate—a mere trickle just a few years ago—seems to be swelling. Few of the mothers general and provincial superiors are willing to open their personnel files. Still, through a careful though unofficial survey, the *Journal* was able to determine that 3, 4, 5, 6, even 7 per cent were

Harry Lamont

Speaking Personally

FOR MANY YEARS I was fond of addressing audiences on various topics, mostly literary. Possessing what is called the 'gift of the gab', I enjoyed my success. Applause gratified me and I kept newspaper reports of my talks, particularly the adulatory ones.

But gradually I tired of such activities. I felt that many persons came out of idle curiosity or because the entertainment was free. I reasoned that those really interested in the subject could read books about it and master it thoroughly. So I began to refuse when asked to speak to a room full of people who merely wanted to be titillated.

The motive that prompted me to orate was vanity. While pretending to deprecate it I relished praise.

Audiences varied enormously. The best in my opinion were those composed of working men. They wanted to learn and no nonsense about it. The worst were society women, all gush and cheap swank.

Which reminds me that Einstein was due to give a lecture in Paris on relativity about half a century ago. The meeting took place in a great hall of the University, packed with fashionable women anxious to display their furs and jewels. They chatted like magpies. Einstein's French wasn't very good and I found many of his explanations completely beyond me. But at the end all the gushing blockheads praised the lecture to the skies. When I examined all the newspapers next day I found that the only two reporters who confessed their inability to understand were the Professor of Philosophy and the Professor of Mathematics.

Many years ago in Oxford some students decided to hoax the public. They hired a hall and had placards printed announcing that a famous German Professor would lecture on the new psychology. A student who knew some German and a smattering of psychology was introduced to the audience. He wore a beard and dark glasses. He held forth very eloquently. It had been arranged that an accomplice should turn off the lights and the meeting would end in disorder, but this part of the plan miscarried and the speaker had to carry on to the bitter end. He talked absolute tripe, but very convincingly. At the finish of his oration there was great applause, and a hearty vote of thanks by the Mayor was seconded by three eminent citizens. A local newspaper praised the lecture in fulsome terms. But there were some red faces a few days later when it leaked out that a hoax had been perpetrated.

reported leaving provinces from California to Massachusetts, and that new vocations were down by as much as 50 per cent.'

In England all taxpayers, including Secularist ones, make a considerable monetary contribution towards the maintenance of existing Roman Catholic schools and the building of new ones. It is one of the follies of our time that the State should continue to pay for religious and superstitious beliefs to be inculcated in the young. If Roman Catholic parents want their daughters to be taught in special schools under the sole control of religionists that virginity and perfection are synonymous and that marriage to Christ and lifelong habitation with him in a secluded convent are more worthy than marriage to an Earthman and possible subsequent motherhood, that is their affair. But, in the name of common sense, let them pay the bill for such foolishness themselves.

LECTURES

In Preston (Lancashire), I was asked to give a talk on the philosophy of religion. I demurred because of the aridity of the subject, but the Secretary pleaded so earnestly that I gave way. It was a bitterly cold evening in December when I drove to the hall, in which about a score of gloomy people had assembled. On my return home my landlady asked me about the lecture. "It was moving, soothing and satisfying," I replied.

"What do you mean?" she cried.

"Well, it was moving because soon after I started half of them walked out. It was soothing because of those who stayed most went to sleep, and it was satisfying because when I finished I heard an old man growl: "Well we've 'ad enough of that silly blighter, anyway".

In another northern town I was speaking on "Did miracles really happen?" when an ancient labourer at the back stood up and yelled, "Speak up lad ah can't 'ear thee".

"Tha's missing nowt", roared a gnarled artisan at the front.

On one occasion Lloyd George was addressing a crowded meeting when an irate harridan stood up, waved her broolly and shouted: "If I was your wife I'd give you poison".

The statesman stared at her fixedly for a moment and replied: "If I were your husband I'd take it!"

In my salad days I lectured on the evils of strong drink. One of my gimmicks was to produce a live worm which wriggled quite happily when plunged into a glass of water, but gave up the ghost when dropped into the spirits.

"Any questions?" I asked dramatically at the conclusion of the experiment. "Yes, mister, what sort of whisky's that? I got worms", yelled an ancient.

Frequently lecturers attempt to prove the truth of religion, but they are wasting their time. Most arguments about religion produce more heat than light.

For many years I derived tremendous amusement from watching and listening to the orators in Hyde Park. Many of them appeared to be mentally deficient, particularly those who quoted incessantly from the Bible.

I have heard many rabble-rousers, the greatest of whom was Hitler. The first time I saw him (in Munich), he wore an old raincoat and looked like a seedy commercial traveller. But soon after he began his tirade people fainted

(Continued at foot of page 151)

CAUTIONARY TALE

Kit Mouat

AS A YOUNG BOY Charles Noghall was taught that apart from the seven deadly sins there were two more which were nearly as lethal. The first he didn't manage to avoid, but of the second he remained innocent to the end of his life—or so he would have insisted, had he been given the opportunity. It was his Anglican mother who taught him that 'on no account must we ever attack anyone's faith'.

The first profound experience of Charles' life occurred when he heard his friend David telling another boy that there was no such person as Father Christmas. Charles realised, with all the God-made fibres of his being, that David was wicked. When he got to the bit '... it's only your father dressed up who fills ...' Charles went into the attack. "You have *no* right to tell him that," he shouted, punching equally hard with his right and left, "I know that he's four years older than you are, but ..."

David bit him. "You know jolly well it's true. He just won't admit it. Lay off, won't you? It's time he grew up ..."

That year Charles was confirmed into the Anglican Church, and four years later into the local branch of the Conservative Party. So far as Charles knew, there were no gentlemanly alternatives in either religion or politics.

One day at Marble Arch he joined a crowd at Speakers' Corner, only to hear an attack on his political beliefs such as he had never heard before. A young woman next to him was looking completely shaken, as well she might. Charles felt the blood thudding in his temples. He elbowed his way to the front of the crowd, and with one lurch he sent the speaker sprawling backwards from his box. While everyone clustered round to watch, Charles managed to slip away. Headlines were not for him. He was content to remain anonymous. That night he dreamed of the girl for whose faith he had struck a blow (actually she was a Communist, but he never knew this); he woke quickly however when she appeared before him wearing one of those transparent plastic dresses.

That Sunday Charles went to church and wished that he had not stayed away so long. The text of the sermon was "... he that believeth not shall be damned" Mark 16, 16). The vicar described the sort of obscenities and blasphemies which he said could be seen every night on the television. Charles decided that he must get a set after all. This sort of corruption had to be watched or it could bring a whole nation crashing down. "In Humanism today," the vicar went on, "we can see the modern Anti-Christ; Satan himself is at work amongst us. The rising figures for crime and illegitimacy, the overall decline in morality, the spread of VD and juvenile delinquency, are without doubt the direct result of godless unbelief. The whole country today is wallowing in sex ..." For a moment the vicar raised his head and covered his eyes with his hands. Then, in a trembling voice, he continued, "But this, my friends, is still a Christian country. Never before has mankind been more in need of instruction in Christian love and ethics". And he quoted St Matthew's Gospel chapter 23, with a fine flourish ...

Charles knew what he had to do; he must go into the ministry. Only the day before he had been told at the bank that his work was not up to standard. Providence was showing him the way.

Charles was ordained in due course. Every Sunday he told his congregation just what they wanted to hear about

their fellow-believers having saved the world from pagan darkness, and how the Dark Ages had really been the Ages of Light as well as of faith; the sort of faith that could even yet save the world. Charles Noghall knew it all. He was even on *Dialogue with Doubt*, and the women of Lower Sheepfold offered to darn his socks.

Not so long ago just by being an Anglican priest Charles would have ranked next to the aristocracy, and in Charles' view the situation had not changed. He took up beer-drinking and cricket. The fact that he had never liked either made this exercise in practising the "common touch" all the more rewarding. Every dreaded gulp and yawning afternoon was like the scar on the face of a pre-war Heidelberg student.

The sermon Charles gave about the necessity for compulsory religion in schools was, he thought, his best. It was also his last. While the congregation were bowed in silent prayer, a man rose from a back pew and walked quietly, almost reverently, up the aisle. Those who were already looking about them and groping for their umbrellas, saw him move slowly towards the vicar, who now stood facing the altar and was absent-mindedly smoothing his hair in the reflection of the brass crucifix. Unbelieving at last, they saw the man plunge something into Charles' back and then disappear through the vestry as the vicar fell to the ground.

Thomas O'Duffy, free-lance journalist, was caught and charged with murder. When asked why he had killed the Rev. Charles Noghall, Thomas said that although he was an atheist like his parents, his grandmother had been a very devout old lady. She had taught him something he could never forget. The judge asked him what it was. "She said to me over and over again," Thomas replied, "on no account must we ever attack anyone's faith ... I suppose it is true what Christians say, we cannot escape our Christian inheritance. I very much admired my grannie. I heard the Rev. Noghall speak on television. Time after time I heard him attacking my convictions and denigrating intellectual enquiry. 'Without doubt,' he kept saying, but what he should have said was 'without evidence'. I heard him recommending blind faith, and prayer, which is, I suggest, sir, no more than do-it-yourself brain-washing. I heard him appealing for more censorship; as if we haven't got enough! I tried writing to the Christian Advertising Department at the BBC, but they only wrote back to say how many thousands of letters they had had praising Mr Noghall. I have never been a violent man, sir, but when I came into St Mark's to get some copy for a series on local architecture, and saw his name and recognised his voice, I felt as if my grandmother were standing at my side, urging me on. It was, I suppose, a sort of mystical experience. 'I come not to bring peace but the sword ...' she used to chuckle, and there in my pocket was the boy scout's knife she gave me. This man had attacked everything my parents and I believe in, sir, and all those people were just kneeling before him ..."

The judge gave an explosive sigh. It was bad enough the accused refusing to take the oath, but this sort of rubbish was adding insult to murder.

Thomas O'Duffy got life imprisonment. The last I heard of him was that he had been reported seen in both Aberdeen and Bognor Regis within the hour. They'll catch him again, of course. What he needs, is some good straight talking to by the prison chaplains.

NEWS AND NOTES

SUPPORT has been expressed in many quarters for Mr Eric Heffer's bill to abolish coursing with live hares. As Miss Alice Bacon inadvertently 'talked out' the bill in the House of Commons last week, perhaps it is not too much to call on HM Government to do what it should have done at the start, sponsor the bill itself. It has never hesitated to introduce controversial legislation at the behest of its military and financial advisers or the churches, and it is an extraordinary thing that it becomes so sensitive about the individual consciences of MPs only on reformist and humanitarian issues. This is not to say that it must impose the whips, which are used far too often anyway.

During last week's debate Mr Marcus Kimball described the anti-coursing measure as the 'thin edge of the wedge'. We certainly hope it will be. Stag and fox hunting, falconry and the like, with all their attendant pagan rituals and brutalising excitements, come in the same category as bull and cock fighting, bull and bear baiting, which an enlightened community cannot sanction. With consummate hypocrisy the hunting fraternity often pretend that this is the only way to keep down rural pests; but there is desolation whenever the local supply of 'game' runs out and it is well-nigh certain that if this happens new animals are introduced. Whether they are running after the eatable or the uneatable, the whole brigade is certainly unspeakable.

If we wait long enough some backwoodsmen will try to persuade the House that the hares really enjoy it all.

Cathedrals

I OFFER no apology for returning to the subject of State aid for cathedrals and churches, as several revealing comments have been made in the House of Lords. The Bishop of St Albans, Dr Michael Gresford Jones, said in a recent debate: "I hope the Government would be willing to consider both a capital grant and an annual contribution to supplement money raised locally for cathedrals—say on a pound-for-pound basis, or on a different basis if a cathedral faces particularly heavy expenses". He was supported by Lord Jellico: "I would favour a system of matching donations, on some fifty-fifty basis"—without the cathedrals passing into public ownership.

Lord Kennett, a Government spokesman offered en-

couragement; if ever an approach was made, the Government would receive it "with an entirely open mind". Unless Secular Humanists are on guard, I think there is every possibility that the Government will receive requests not only with an open mind, but with an open purse.

Centenary

ONE Sunday in the spring of 1867, a group of Milwaukee citizens met to form a German Freethought society. It was the second attempt to establish an organisation which would provide a platform for progressive ideas in this mid-western community.

The Freie Gemeinde is still flourishing, and Freethinkers everywhere will congratulate the organisation on its centenary. It was founded at a time when the battle between science and theology had moved to America. During the last hundred years it has played a conspicuous rôle in the affairs of the community, and many distinguished men and women—including Robert Ingersoll, Margaret Sanger, Emma Goldman and Clarence Darrow—have addressed meetings in the Freie Gemeinde Hall and Jefferson Hall.

At a time when Milwaukee was subjected to a pro-Nazi propaganda campaign, the Freie Gemeinde stood solidly against totalitarianism. During the next hundred years there will be an even greater need for such organisations in the United States.

The address of the Freie Gemeinde is Jefferson Hall, 2617 West Fond du Lac Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53206, USA.

Going down

THE annual statistical report of the Presbyterian Church of England reveals a further decline (1,432) in membership. The decline started five years ago and has averaged 1,000 losses annually. The present membership of 66,187 is the lowest this century.

Humanist Film Society

THE first presentation by the HFS in London was the award-winning film from Czechoslovakia, "Jan Hus". It is brilliantly acted and directed, and even the limitations of the 16 mm. screen did not lessen the impact of the more spectacular scenes.

The National Secular Society which initiated the film society would like to hear from anyone willing to assist with the arranging of future shows.

Well done, Willis!

DESPITE a last-ditch stand by the Bishop of Lincoln, the Sunday Entertainments Bill went through its final stages in the House of Lords last week. Congratulations and thanks to Lord Willis who promoted the bill.

The same yesterday, today and forever

A VATICAN press officer made this enlightening statement about the Church's attitude to birth control and the work of the commissions set up to study the question: "The teaching of the Church is now in a state of certainty. After the Pope completes his study of the matter, the Church will then move from one state of certainty to another state of certainty".

Now we know.

E.A.

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MORAL GROWTH AND RELIGIOUS VALUES: I

Dr Ronald Goldman

Dr Goldman is Principal of Didsbury College of Education. He is author of several books, including Religious Thinking from Childhood to Adolescence. This is the first of a series of three articles which formed part of a speech made by Dr Goldman at the North of England Education Conference, 4th January, 1967.

Human Development

OF ALL living organisms, only man is moral. Certainly glimpses of moral behaviour can be seen in a mother goose giving her life to the fox to save her young, but only humans appear to develop a system of values which they articulate and by which they try to live.

Even so a child appears to be born a-moral, in the sense that he is born a-political despite Gilbert and Sullivan's pro-labour assertion that he is born 'a little Liberal or a little Conservative'. Genetically a child appears to have no system of values transmitted at the moment of procreation. A newly-born child has been defined as 'an organism with a great deal of noise at one end and no sense of responsibility at the other'. A child has no particular sense of right and wrong innately fixed. It is true, we all very early acquire specific values—political, religious and moral—from our environment. We should be no more astonished that the Surrey stockbroking belt produces a disproportionate number of young Conservatives than the fact that India produces large numbers of Hindus, and in France all children seem to speak French fluently from a very early age. Acquiring intelligence, language, beliefs and morals is part of the plasticity of human nature. Yet the acquiring of values and their outcome in behaviour is a very complex and elusive process about which we know very little.

There are some theoretical objections, raised by the religious and psychologists alike, to the proposition that children are a-moral at birth. Freud's concept of the evil destructive Id is just as harsh as the Calvinistic doctrine of Original Sin; a curious confluence between a nineteenth century atheist and a sixteenth century theologian. Yet both Freud and Calvin are saying in their different ways, that man is prone to error because he is imperfect and that there is a destructive, evil capacity in every man, the fear of which makes society today, and even modern schools, invoke repressive sanctions. This is still part of our attitude to children. One student of mine, carried away by the heat of examinations wrote that "some children can be so difficult, I would retain, as a last resort, the use of capital punishment in schools". A little harsh perhaps.

But any doctrine of tainted human nature does not invalidate the a-morality of a new-born child, and the acquiring of specific values. The responsibility for passing on specific values, for the formation of character, is that of the whole of society, not only schools. Schools can easily be blamed for what goes wrong, rather like the friend of mine who took up golf. Whenever things were going well, the pro would say, "Our drive is doing very well today". But whenever things were going badly, the pro would say, "Your backswing is really shocking today, sir". No section of society can contract out of its responsibility, the purveyors of mass media, no less than the churches. It is important to note that values and the behaviour associated with them are mediated primarily by

personal relationships. The child initially spends more time watching his parents than television programmes, more time watching and assessing his teachers than reading books. For this reason, and for other developmental reasons, I am dubious that moral education should ever be a curriculum subject to be taught in schools. Yet moral education should be a major task of any educational institution, from the family to the school.

Where basic personal relationships go wrong, especially in a child's early years, the growth of moral values, the exercise of conscience and normal feelings of guilt are weakened. Sometimes affectionless children, those deprived of warmth and love from an early age become psychopathic personalities, men who can commit the most terrible crimes without a sense of shame or compassion. It is probable that a fair proportion of violent criminals and the hard core of the recidivist prison population are psychopathic or borderline psychopaths.

For the vast majority of children, a developmental process comes through social life, in personal relationships, experimental trial and error which continues into the post-adolescent years. A young child is incapable of self-consciously choosing, analysing or even identifying a system of values on which to base his behaviour. He merely behaves and learns from experience, intuitively accepting or rejecting certain kinds of conduct, until they harden into habit. There appear to be four stages in this experimentation and only in the last stage is there the possibility of a true value system developing. All stages are dependent upon interaction with other human beings.

First there is the morality of fear. It is wrong to put your finger in the fire because it hurts. This is often termed 'prudential' morality with obvious overtones of insurance. Then there is the morality of respect, mainly for the authority of adults, especially parents, teachers, policemen, priests who appear to the child to be vested with particular powers. It is right or wrong because the authorities say so. These two moralities of fear and respect, are what Piaget calls 'moral realism'. The child has discipline imposed from outside himself, and because the imposing powers are seen to exercise authority, the child behaves accordingly.

The remaining two stages emerge as the child begins to be more than a series of conditioned reflexes and develops social sensitivity. Peer morality, or the morality of social pressure, seems to emerge in the middle to late junior school years. What is right or wrong depends not so much upon the reactions of one's adult authorities but more upon the reactions of one's equals. The final stage, if it is ever reached, is that of personal morality, where behaviour is judged right or wrong by personally held values, which may be at odds with authority or peer group pressures. These last two stages can only occur when the child understands reciprocal relationships. There then emerges, what Piaget calls 'autonomous morality', imposed, not from outside, but from within a person by himself.

The most autonomous morality is perhaps best illustrated by a philosopher's definition that 'morality is what a man is in the dark'. I well remember as a boy walking home one night to find a van toppled over in a ditch, the contents of the van scattered on the road; the driver had had a crash and had gone for help. Large cases had burst open and the treasures of Aladdin were there before me, five pound boxes of Cadbury's chocolates. Character is

what a man, or boy, is in the dark when there is no fear of being found out, when the authorities are not watching and when no one can exercise group pressures. I will not tell you the outcome of this incident lest it weakens my case but men serving in forces abroad, visitors to distant cities where they are anonymous and unknown know what this experience is. It is daily becoming familiar to all of us, as institutions and cities grow bigger and anonymous, undetected behaviour is more possible. The television series *Our Man Craig* may often be inaccurate in educational matters, but this is a constant theme in its programmes, the bad behaviour and how it can be dealt with in a large comprehensive school.

The four stage developmental structure is, of course, too neat an analysis and many have criticised the clear distinction made by Piaget between moral realism and autonomous morality, particularly Bronfenbrenner. It is too cognitive a structure, assuming that what the child understands he will emotionally apply to his behaviour. There is also the naive idea, some have, that once you have acquired certain values and are behaving autonomously you have arrived at a high level of responsible living. But the facts of life are that some get to the level of personal values and frequently regress into moral realism because they fear their boss or losing chances of promotion. Yet others do not even get to the last stage at all but live at an opportunist level of mutual back-

scratching, social morality, or of respect for authority. It is safer that way and many choose to be less than fully human in so doing.

All this illustrates the needs of the young to be morally challenged by adult examples, moral models if you will, to lead them on towards autonomous values. It is in personal and group relationships that true moral education occurs, and everything depends upon the quality of adult life to which the young are exposed.

Perhaps we can see this in the ways by which conscience is developed in the child. We still cling to the old view, says Roy Lee,¹ that "conscience had to be educated by reason and authority to stimulate its proper functioning". The depth psychologists have given us much more insight. Conscience is now seen as twofold. It is composed of the super ego—the voices of past authorities, especially parental figures, still speaking to us, to warn us against impulses which might lead to destruction. It is also composed of the ego ideal—the picture of what we want to become, a composite picture of all the hero figures we have ever encountered and internalised. The superego is essentially negative. In some it can be harsh and overdemanding. In others it is weak and relatively unexacting. The ego-ideal is more positive and constructive, but even the ego-ideal can be too harsh, simply because the goal is unrealistic and unattainable. On the whole, family life is the most potent force in forming the superego, simply because parents are the strongest influence in the early years, and always remain a part of every grown man and woman. Educators would do well to build up realistic ego-ideals in the young rather than impose restrictive and negative sanctions which strengthen the superego.

The ego-ideal is another way of looking at the value systems of a person. Values are not, for most people, held to as abstract rational principles, but are embodied in the individuals we have known and admired. And because we are humans, prone to error, we internalise other person's as value system inconsistently. In a classical but controversial study some years ago Hartshorne and May² compared what secondary school pupils believed in terms of values, devising tests in which the pupils gave their responses to imagined situations, where moral choices had to be made. The same pupils were then observed in actual situations in school and community, without their knowing they were observed. What they believed in theoretically was frequently not applied in real situations; their value systems when applied to behaviour were only partially applied and were often contradictory. Common sense tells us that this is our everyday practise. We believe in honesty as a value, and may well be honest with all with whom we deal in face to face situations. But when we deal with an impersonal company or corporation, or where we think 'dodging the customs' is a game, the moral value of honesty is inconsistently applied.

We have now looked at various generalisations about moral development. They would seem to apply as much to children who have religious parents as to children who have parents indifferent or antagonistic to religion. In the next article I shall consider the difference which religion makes.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

Register Office Hall,
64 Lower Ormonde Street,
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SATURDAY, MAY 13th, 7.30 p.m.

PUBLIC MEETING

THE NEW FRONTIER OF FREETHOUGHT

DAVID TRIBE (President, NSS)

B. J. BARNETT (Chairman, Merseyside Humanist Group)

A Speaker from
Manchester University Humanist Society

Chairman: WILLIAM COLLINS
(Hon. Secretary, Manchester Branch NSS)

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¹ "Contemporary Movements in Psychology" in *Religious Education* 1944-1984, ed. A. G. Wedderspoon, London. Allen & Unwin, 1966.

² *Studies in Deceit*, New York, MacMillan, 1928.

(To be continued)

THEATRE

David Tribe

Fallen Angels (Noël Coward), Vaudeville.
Macbird (Barbara Garson), Theatre Royal.

IF Noël Coward did not invent the drawing room comedy, he brought it to a pinnacle of sophistication and professionalism. As with Viennese waltzes, few people write wholly in this idiom today but revivals of the masters take place to near-universal satisfaction. **Fallen Angels** (1925) has all the traditional ingredients: a comic domestic; social snobbery; luxurious living; marriage saved from the rocks; comedy of manners sufficiently bland to escape the damning label "satire"; almost every fashionable, theatrical, middle-class prejudice you care to name. But Coward constructs his plays so beautifully and writes such elegant dialogue, especially for women, that our critical faculties dissolve away in a champagne supper of bubbling laughter. In this revised production, director Philip Wiseman and designer Carl Toms make full use of the stage, and Worth creates some gorgeous gowns. Maid Ann Lancaster is delightful as a female Mr Belveder. Joan Greenwood and Constance Cummings, two of our most distinguished comedy actresses, are both lovable and hilarious as the angels with a past that they try not too hard—to live down.

It was inevitable that **Macbird's** blaze of advance publicity should be followed by a critical first-night response. Whatever the Theatre Workshop production was like then, it has settled down into a highly entertaining and mildly thought-provoking evening at the theatre. Barbara Carson's American script has been heavily revised, mainly in the interests of pace. The Texan vulgarity of the Johnson circus is an easy enough target, but I was agreeably surprised by the subtlety of attack on the New Frontier. Jack, Jackie, Bobby and Teddy polished up and polished off the Kennedy legend with fine synthetic smiles and epic clichés. In the retinue were Marilyn Monroe, Marlon Brando, Chief Justice Earl Warren as a coronation archbishop, Stevenson as the Egg of Head, Harvard professors grubbing material for potboiling histories, Cardinal Spellman and the PR boys. As they pranced processionally round the stage, American liberalism and intellectualism never looked seedier. The acting of a largish caste was engaging if lacking in professional polish. Bob Grant was suitably genial and gross, pious and rapacious, as Macbird (Johnson, if anyone has missed the ballyhoo). Ed Bishop both looked and sounded like Kennedy as John Ken O'Dunc, and it was therefore a pity that he doubled up without paint as a negro revivalist in the second half. Originating from a slip of somebody's tongue in Barbara Garson's hearing, whereby Ladybird Johnson became Lady Macbird, the play lacks sufficient resemblance to either current and recent history or Shakespeare's text to make it great satire; but producer Joan Littlewood, making a comeback to Stratford East after many years, is to be congratulated for defying the Lord Chamberlain and putting on this entertainment—accompanied by a classic French mini-farce—as a club event.

Finally, a word must be said about a splendid **Evening of Poets, Playwrights, Pleasantries and Personalities** at the Arts Theatre recently with Richard Ainley. He had given a similar evening last year at the Hampstead Theatre Club, and it is to be hoped that ways can be found to give this choice pot-pourri of reading and reminiscence a wider audience in this country and a launch on the American universities circuit. There were excerpts from the memoirs of Eddie Southern (famous as "Lord Dundreary"), George Burns ("Burns and Allen"), Frank Harris and Bertrand Russell. Among "subversive" American writers featured were Upton Sinclair, Margaret Abigail Walker, John Milton Hayes, St Claire McIlroy and Lawrence Ferlinghetti. There are few actors who can match Richard Ainley's fullness of *timbre* in verse recitation and negro realisation.

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LETTERS

Unrealistic proposals

RARELY have I come across such an ill-founded and unrealistic set of proposals as those put forward by A. C. Thompson in his article "A Solution to the Sex Problem". He begins by saying that marriage cannot be a contract because members of the same sex cannot legally marry—which amounts to saying that the possibility of persons of the same sex entering into marriage contracts that are not legally recognised prevents all marriages from being contracts at all, whether legal or illegal! A double *non sequitur*. Of course marriage is a social institution, but every marriage is also a contract. And the welfare of children is only part of its *raison d'être*. What about companionship and the domestic stability and security of the parties themselves? Certainly divorce should be made easier, and certainly easiest of all for childless couples, but it horrifies me to think of wives being put aside "without any court trial or other formality" when they have probably given up their careers and are past the age for resuming them or for attracting new partners.

But even worse than this lack of security is the authoritarian way in which Mr Thompson proposes to make an engagement or trial-marriage notifiable to the town hall. He also assumes, very erroneously, that contraception can always be relied upon; and he even lays down what shall be considered morally wrong and socially undesirable, as though public opinion were both uniform and static.

BARBARA SMOKER.

Life of Foote

IT was good to see Bernard Levin's column on Freethinkers and freethought literature mentioned in a recent issue. Referring to Chapman Cohen, Bernard Levin said he could not "think why nobody has written a biography of this extraordinary and splendid man . . ." Let us hope someone well qualified to do it will give us that in due course. We must not, however, overlook the fact that Cohen himself wrote *Almost an Autobiography*, an excellent work I always thought.

We have a splendid *Life of Bradlaugh* by his daughter, of which the movement can be proud. These things are by the way. What I wish to emphasise is that no *Life of G. W. Foote* has appeared. To me, it has seemed for many years a matter of extreme regret that this essential material is lacking. After all, Foote was the founder of the FREETHINKER. He was in turn President of the NSS and a society talking about the next hundred years cannot afford to lose sight of one of its principal monuments. Could not the Secular Society Ltd. arrange publication of Foote's life and fights before it becomes too difficult to chronicle his many and varied activities? I was under the impression that such an account had been written years ago but "shelved" on account of expense.

HAROLD I. BAYFORD.

LECTURES

(Continued from page 146)

in the audience and were carried out on stretchers. He roared that Germany had never been beaten in battle, but had been stabbed in the back by the Jews and the Communists. They needed living room and would establish a hegemony that would last for a thousand years. Hitler had a harsh voice and an Austrian accent. Goebbels (with his club foot), spoke a more polished German. I liked to listen to him for the purity of his diction. At his best I enjoyed the speeches of the late Aneurin Bevan, who called his opponents vermin. When my Tory friends cursed him I replied: "He is one of your greatest assets." "Why?" they asked. "Because he frightens people. He scares them so effectively that they vote for you to keep him out."

Lloyd George could also be very eloquent. At his first election he opposed an old landowner who provided indoor sanitation. In one dwelling the benefactor found a toilet set missing. It hung in the sitting room as the frame for a photo of Lloyd George.

Lloyd George said the Welsh are a funny people. "They pray to God on Sunday and prey on their neighbours the rest of the week."

FREETHINKER

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

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

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

The Cosmo Group, East Devon Branch (Church Hall, Rolle
Street, Exmouth), Saturday, May 13th, 3 p.m.: Rev. RONALD
ADKINS, "Censorship and You".

The Progressive League. Arts Weekend at Braziers Park, Ipsden,
Oxon., June 2nd-4th. Painting, Play-reading, Music, Poetry,
Discussion, Dancing. Fee £5. Details: Miss Terry Gabriel,
9 Russell Gardens, London, NW11.

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red
Lion Square, London, WC1), Sunday, May 14th, 11 a.m.:
H. J. BLACKHAM, "The Pursuit of Happiness".

LETTERS

Church and State

ANY criticism (April 14) offered by F. H. Amphlett Micklewright
in the field of constitutional history, where he is an acknowledged
authority, deserves the greatest attention. I can appreciate why he
found the paragraph on the medieval establishment in the NSS
submissions to the Archbishops' Commission on Church and
State (March 24) exiguous in the extreme, and had a scholarly
paper on the subject been required I should certainly have asked
him to write it. The position is certainly highly complex. As well as
being agents of popes, the bishops were "grandeers to princes" with-
in the Norman feudal system. In England, as in France, the Gallic
conception of monarchy modified the usual relationship of kings
to pope throughout Western Christendom, and canonists still de-
bate to what extent Roman canon law applied in England. Mr
Micklewright points out that it is also debated whether there is
linear descent from the Roman to the Anglican establishment,
though I should have thought that the substantial continuity of
church personnel and fundamental theology after the English
(pre-Marian) Reformation was a *prima facie* argument in favour
of a continuing establishment. But the submissions were con-
cerned with the Church of England and only indirectly with what
went before, and I do plead that, though they might seem in-
adequate to a scholar, they were in fact correct.

I shall be interested to read the general response to Mr
Micklewright's second point. He is certainly right in asserting
that in high theory the Roman *codex iuris canonici* is in conflict
with the British constitution. But so in high theory are the philo-
sophies of Marxism-Leninism, anarchism, the Exclusive Brethren
and other fundamentalist Protestant sects, Nazism and other
ultra-Right anti-democratic parties, republicanism and the Com-
mittee of 100. Mr Micklewright has himself argued that, despite
Bowman v Secular Society Ltd., a theoretical case of this sort
can be made against atheism (under "blasphemy"). Where does
it stop? Can it really be said that because a person for sacra-
mental or mystical or family reasons calls himself "RC" he is
a presumptive traitor, any more than a "Communist" is neces-
sarily fomenting revolution or an "Anarchist" manufacturing
plastic bombs in the basement? Surely the important things is
that a candidate for high office should take the necessary
affirmation/oath. After all, a real traitor is likely to pose as an
Anglican Conservative.

DAVID TRIBE.

Pope's thinking erroneous

YOU commence your editorial of April 14, 1967, by declaring
that few Humanists, if any, would disagree with the Pope's views
as you quote them. Please consider me one of the few. With the
present state of international ethics, the Pope must be utterly
stupid if he does not see that expenditures on an armaments race
are logically imperative. Let us face the truth honestly, for we
get nowhere by idealistic pretence: it would be suicidal for any
nation not to spend on armament. The Pope employs a deceitful
epithet in calling it "ostentation"; it is truthfully security and
survival, and it is indeed more essential, with present world
morality, than feeding the hungry, relieving destitution, unsteep-
ing ignorance, or building schools, hospitals and homes worthy of
the name. I maintain that the situation will not, absolutely not,
be corrected by the Pope or anyone else deploring it. Nobody,
and I mean absolutely nobody, with any sense of responsibility,
in any government of the world, is going to stop maintaining
armament, and the Pope or anyone else is deluded if he thinks
otherwise. It will be better for us if we have the courage to look
the truth in the face. War is caused by ethical necessity and a
frank recognition of the true nature and source of war must be
the indispensable first step towards any successful prevention of
it. Look around the world today and say whether our traditional
conceptions of war, peace and morality are succeeding in pre-
venting war. Do they stop the war in Vietnam? Can they stop
it? The Pope's sort of thinking is erroneous, as the world should
already have learned to its sorrow many times; put your faith in
it instead of recognising the truth about war, and you'll end up
being propelled into space by a hydrogen bomb.

A. C. THOMPSON.