

# FREE THINKER

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## RECORD YEAR FOR BIBLE SOCIETIES

THE British and Foreign Bible Society needs an additional £250,000 as working capital to maintain an increasing amount of work, the Society's overseas general secretary, the Rev. John Watson, said on Wednesday, May 3rd at the annual general meeting in London.

Dr Watson pointed out that the Society's annual spending on production had increased from £100,000 to £1,000,000 over the past twenty years. Last year the Society contributed 20,000,000 copies of the scriptures towards the record total of 93,000,000 distributed by Bible Societies throughout the world during the year.

The British and Foreign Bible Society was formed in 1804. In 1821 there appeared a lengthy, precise and authoritative work called *An Analysis of the System of the Bible Society throughout its various parts, including a sketch of the origin and results of Auxiliary and Branch Societies and Bible Associations: with hints for their better regulation (interspersed with practical observations and a consideration of some popular objections)*.

The author was C. S. Dudley and in the 600 pages of the book he covers all the details which lead to the effective establishment and efficient running of a Bible Society. Part of the book's importance today rests in the light it throws on the motives of those who supported the Bible Societies in the nineteenth century. In the chapter on Ladies' Bible Societies, Dudley writes as follows:

"The circulation, by means of the Collectors, of an Address to the Mistresses of Families, on the formation of a Ladies' Branch Society, has been attended with considerable advantage, in every point of view.

The specimen subjoined will sufficiently explain the nature and design of such a document, which should be prepared at the primary meeting of the Committee:

"MADAM,—We have the pleasure to inform you, that a Society has been recently established, denominated 'The Ladies' Branch of the Plymouth, Plymouth-Dock, and Stonehouse Auxiliary

Bible Society', which, by a division of the towns and neighbourhood into districts, and the formation of an Association of Ladies in each, proposes to unite the exertions of all Females, whose benevolence may dispose them, to supply every individual who is destitute of the holy scriptures, with copies of the Authorised Version without note or comment, by collecting their subscription of one penny or upwards per week, according to their circumstances. Two Ladies will regularly call for these subscriptions.

"It is hoped that many important advantages will result from this plan of regularly visiting the labouring classes of society: their real condition will be thus correctly ascertained, and opportunity afforded of recommending habits of order, cleanliness, and frugality. **But it is to its advantages, with respect to domestic servants, that your attention is more particularly solicited: much of our comfort depends upon this class of society;** and surely it is of importance to furnish them with those sacred records, which, if seriously perused, **will insure their good conduct,** while they promote their present comfort and guide them to future happiness. It may be said, that **most servants are furnished with Bibles by their masters;** but it has been very generally observed, that Bibles thus provided are not so justly valued as those which are purchased by themselves, and thus become a part of their individual property.

"These observations are respectfully presented to your consideration: and if you approve of them, you are solicited to speak to your servants upon the subject; the regulations of this society not permitting any collector to apply to a servant, except through the medium or by permission of her mistress. If your servants become subscribers, their subscriptions will be called for, either quarterly, monthly, or weekly, at your pleasure; and in due time, Bibles and Testaments will be delivered to them, either at or under the cost prices, and considerably cheaper than they could be purchased at a bookseller's.

"Donations and free-subscriptions will be thankfully received by the collectors, in order to enable the society to deliver Bibles at reduced prices, or gratuitously to those who are unable to pay the price.

"Should a consideration of these suggestions, which are respectfully submitted, induce you, Madam, to favour the society with your personal co-operation, as a member of one of the District Associations, your name will be gratefully received. More than 10,000 British Ladies are now engaged in this important and interesting employment, which requires the appropriation of only one hour in the week. **Many Ladies of the highest rank and station take an active part in the proceedings of similar societies; and the practical results have more than surpassed the most sanguine anticipations of those connected with the institution: habits of order, sobriety, cleanliness, decorum, and loyalty, have been acquired by the labouring classes; and the general welfare of society has been sensibly and essentially promoted, wherever a Ladies' Bible Association has been established.—By order of the Committee, A.B., C.D., E.F., Secretaries."**

That the Bible Societies were financed solely by the altruistic pious is certainly a delusion of the naïve. Appendix No. VII to the book contains *The Advantages of Distributing the Holy Scriptures Among the Lower Orders of Society, Chiefly By Their Own Agency*, written by the Reverend W. Delaty. Here are a few illuminating extracts:

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'Let it be granted, that by any means the holy scriptures are perused with diligence by every poor man who is able to read them;—What would be the consequence? **Is it too much to hope, that the noise of tumult and disorder may be hushed in peace? That men may be taught to fear God and to honour the king—to do unto others as they wish that others should do unto them—and to discharge with fidelity all the duties and relations of life? . . .**

'And why should you doubt of success, in attempting to interest the poor upon the most interesting of all subjects? Have they not senses, feelings, affections, passions like ourselves? Are they not influenced by the ordinary motives of hope and fear? **Shall the ebullitions of folly, and the harangues of democracy, awaken their enthusiasm for earthly liberty, even in cases when they can complain of no oppression, and can urge no wrong; and shall they be utterly insensible, when called to contemplate that heavenly liberty which makes them "free indeed". . .**

'To men of humbler condition it may be observed, in addition to the arguments already adduced:

'Although, for reasons best known to infinite Wisdom, the Almighty has withheld from you rank and opulence, yet has he given to you the privilege of conferring benefits on others, and of conferring them in the highest degree. The facilities which

you possess for discovering the wants of those immediately around you, may be considered as an intimation of Providence, that, according to your ability, you should seek to relieve them. Silver and gold you may have none to give; but you can give that which is better than rubies. You cannot, indeed, raise your poor neighbours above the pressure of the times, or remove those afflictions which are especially incident to his condition; but you can furnish him with a remedy for all: **you can present him with those oracles of wisdom which will enlarge his views and brighten his prospects; which will teach him that this scene of trouble is but the pilgrimage of a day; that he is but the tenant of an earthly tabernacle, which shall presently be dissolved; and that the disembodied spirit shall then seek its everlasting home, shall ascend to that "building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens".'**

In 1967 the antiquated machinery grinds on, its continuing success a continuing reminder of continuing credulity.

#### Correction from the Editor

THE reference (page 137) to 'Ferdinand Bauer' should read 'Bruno Bauer'.

Harry Lamont

## Speaking Personally

WE OFTEN HEAR it said that childhood is the happiest time of one's life, but I can affirm that mine was on the whole a period of appalling misery. We were seven children and my father was frequently unemployed, but too proud to seek what was then known as parish relief. There was no dole in those days before the first world war, so we had to endure extreme penury with the short commons it entailed. Hunger was my constant companion.

Another source of unhappiness was my propensity to argue, which exasperated my mother. I must have been a thorn in her flesh, for she alleged I would argue the hind leg off a donkey.

As a child I suffered frequently from toothache, probably because we could not afford to consult a dentist. When the pain was severe my mother allowed me to smoke a *Woodbine*, which infuriated my father, who alleged I was only shamming in order to enjoy the fragrant weed.

I also became a confirmed hypochondriac and imagined I suffered from all sorts of diseases. Reading in a newspaper medical column that those who had contracted TB breathed in a husky manner and their finger nails turned dark, I locked myself in the lavatory and soon convinced myself that I was afflicted with the dread disease, so I wrote to the paper, describing my symptoms. The answer came pat. It was that a boy of twelve should not read the medical columns of journals.

Another time I read about a man who had an animal in his stomach through drinking dirty water. I drank frequently from a Sketty stream, and at once imagined I harboured a strange interloper in my guts. I could feel it move. Driven nearly barmy by worry I consulted Doctor Teddy Morgan (who scored the winning try for Wales against New Zealand in 1905), but he laughed me to scorn and sent me away with a flea in my ear.

On another occasion I hadn't had a motion of my bowels for about a week, but I felt too inhibited to mention the matter to my parents. The topic wasn't considered *nice* by conventional religious people in those days. When I could stand the suspense no longer I began to cry on a Sunday

## MY CHILDHOOD WAS HELL

afternoon. My mother gave me Epsom salts, Senna pods and a horrible concoction called Gregory's Powder, but all failed to produce the desired result. My brothers made ribald jokes *sotto voce*. In the evening I had to ask James, the chemist, for a black draught that made me run for a week. But I got no sympathy. The rest of the family merely considered me a pestiferous nuisance.

It seems odd I should have become a teacher, for as a child I hated school with a fierce intensity. It was torture to stew in a classroom when the sea, sands, rocks, moors, hills and sylvan glens were just outside.

In the Swansea schools I attended one heard clearly the sirens of ships as they left the docks for long voyages, and I found it quite impossible to concentrate on the lesson. My thoughts were far away. I was afflicted with a very powerful *wanderlust*.

But what poisoned my childhood and youth at the source, more than anything else, was my parents' piety. A sense of sin pervaded the house. I refused to get saved, and my obduracy distressed them exceedingly. They took me to special services in the chapel where the preacher appealed for new converts and backsliders to come forward. My parents peered at me with anguish in their eyes and urged me in whispers to make the great decision, but I had made it. Under no circumstances would I pretend to accept a doctrine for which there was no proof. Nevertheless it appalled me to cause my parents grief, but I could do no other.

Another cause of unhappiness in my childhood were the bullying proclivities of a brother. My parents considered him the genius of the family because he had always possessed mechanical aptitude which has persistently eluded me. This brother was eighteen months older than I, therefore bigger and stronger. So he made my life a misery until I was about sixteen, when I fought him in the living room and knocked him out, our parents being at a watch-night service. Other brats on the stairs, seeing blood all over the place, wailed that I had killed my opponent. But the bullying ceased. My parents blamed my godless state for the affray.

In childhood, little worries seem big ones. For example,



one winter's evening, in the public swimming bath at Swansea, I chased another boy in a game. He fell and struck his head on the stone floor. Later I heard he was seriously ill. I worried so much I contemplated suicide at the age of about twelve.

False accusations can make a child very unhappy. A Sketty market gardener alleged I had stolen fruit from his enclosure. The charge was a complete falsehood, probably fabricated to secure compensation. I confronted the accuser and full of righteous indignation denied the allegations. What hurt me most was that my parents seemed to consider me guilty. They assumed that because I refused to get saved I must be capable of every villainy.

My father was often away for several days—working or seeking work in Cardiff, Newport, Bristol or even further afield. My mother threatened to report our misdeeds to him, but before his return my brothers made their peace with her by doing various little jobs. I remained intransigent in my impenitence and so was the only one to be thrashed.

The brother who bullied me for so many years was very expert at making nasty remarks at the beginning of a meal. They upset me so much that I walked away from the table, so that he wolfed my food as well as his own.

The average boy does not resent fair punishment, but he feels bitter indignation at what seems unjust. For example a teacher I have always considered a religious maniac at the Swansea Grammar School beat me severely because I called one of his pets a fool. That stupid pedagogue told me I was in danger of hell-fire, quoting the appropriate text.

On another occasion, in a Latin lesson, the teacher accused me of gross impertinence because I translated *interdum vulgus rectum videt*<sup>1</sup> by *now and then the vulgar man sees his rectum*. Sloppy Sam rushed at me to box my ears. Naturally I defended myself and a fierce set-to resulted. I seized him round the body. We fell to the floor, his gown tore and the form cheered wildly until the Head walked in. Then one could have heard the proverbial pin drop. Sloppy Sam was summoned to the Head's sanctum. During their absence I felt very apprehensive, fearing dire retribution.

When Sloppy Sam returned I was ordered to the seat of judgment. I gave my explanation. The Head listened patiently, said it was a serious matter and the usher and I must apologise to each other, which we duly did. We were also advised not to mention the shemuzzle outside the school, but of course everybody did, many with wild exaggerations.

At the same school a master who taught maths and subsequently became Head, accused me one day of copying my prep from another pupil. I often did transgress in such a fashion, but that day I was innocent, so that when the master took a swipe at me I riposted and gave him a stinging smack on the chops. A stand-up scrap resulted, the form rising to cheer us on with terrific enthusiasm. The bout of fisticuffs lasted about ten minutes. He felled me at the finish. We then shook hands and were good friends thereafter. He bore no malice and some years later offered me a job.

It was very rare for us younger boys to possess a new suit. Usually the eldest received such garments. His cast-offs went to the next biggest and so on. Which reminds me that one evening a brother was sliding down a tip on

a piece of tin. I called out to him to be careful not to tear his pants.

"Why should you worry?" asked a man standing to watch the fun.

"They will be mine next year," I explained.

On the rare occasions my mother bought me a new pair of breeks they were invariably corduroys with an unpleasant stink.

Until my voice broke I sang in a treble that seemed to please competent judges, and in chapel on special occasions I had to warble a hymn beginning:

"Be thou my guardian and my guide,  
And hear me when I call;  
Let not my slippery footsteps slide,  
And hold me when I fall."

One Sunday evening, as I performed, I saw my pals grinning at me. One varmint held up a banana skin, possibly to suggest sliding. I burst out into what the French so aptly call a *mad laugh* and had to retire in disgrace. It was assumed the devil had entered my wicked heart.

When I was a child it was generally agreed that children should be squashed by adults at every opportunity. If I asked for an explanation I was peremptorily ordered to shut up. There were so many things I couldn't understand and questions were rebuffed, so the world seemed in some respects a very unsatisfactory place.

Of course it would be wrong for me to allege that my childhood was unhappy all the time. There were joyous moments, but over all there seemed to hang a cloud, so that something unfair and terrible could happen any day.

Owing to parental influence (no doubt they hoped it would aid me towards salvation), I was appointed standard-bearer in the Band of Hope, an association at which we promised to abstain from alcohol as a beverage. I held the hymn sheets aloft on a pole, but was demoted for allowing the roll to fall on some nappers in the front row.

When a pupil has not done his home-work and has to confront a strict teacher next day, the child suffers mental anguish out of all proportion to the offence. That happened to me very often. At the Grammar School I did no prep for three years, relying on illicit borrowing of other pupils' work. One had to mind one's step with a strict disciplinarian, but many teachers were no more fit to handle unruly boys than a hen to keep puppies in order. We gave them merry hell. When I became a schoolmaster I allowed no nonsense. The ex-poacher becomes a good gamekeeper. I ruled with a rod of iron, but I always tried to be fair and had a keen sense of humour, so that I think I can claim a certain measure of popularity, although I never sought cheap kudos. My pupils responded well on the whole. Nevertheless there were recalcitrants who needed coercion and I saw they got it.

In the above account of my childhood I have tried to be objective and fair. I claim no merit nor do I apologise. As the resultant of certain forces I had to fulfil my destiny. I am the product of a certain heredity and environment.

I was a harum-scarum boy, always up to mischief. I fought at every opportunity and early discovered that the way of the transgressor is hard.

<sup>1</sup> Now and then the mob sees what is right.



## NEWS AND NOTES

THE National Council for Civil Liberties enjoys a splendid and well-deserved reputation as guardians of citizens' rights, but their efforts on behalf of Servicemen are not so widely known. The publication of a booklet *Reluctant Servicemen* will enlighten many on this point, but of far greater importance is that it has turned the spotlight on one of the scandals of modern times. This is the way in which boys just left school are being encouraged to commit themselves for 12 or 15 years in the Forces without the opportunity to change their minds. As Eric Lubbock writes in his introduction: "Such a system is unworthy of a modern defence force".

Although we live in a period of reasonable employment prospects, wages and security, the fact that many teenagers join the Forces is not very surprising. Orphans join because they are often encouraged to do so by the institutions responsible for them; it can be a way of escape from unhappy family life; sometimes there is a family tradition of Service life, and domineering parents who themselves enjoyed Service life think their offspring should. But all too often, a boy is enticed into the Forces by misleading recruitment propaganda.

A number of case histories of men who tried to obtain discharges are listed. Their determination to escape from what has become a life of hell is remarkable; even more remarkable is the callous and stupid attitude of the authorities towards these men.

The NCCL has put forward a number of proposals which merit the most serious consideration. These include an end to long-term service "contracts" for those under 18; a full inquiry into the present discharge machinery;

the restoration of civil rights to servicemen, including unobstructed access to MPs.

*Reluctant Servicemen* is obtainable from Houseman's Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, London, N1, price 2/-.

### Opening of Crescent House

WHEN Mr Nigel Bruce addressed a meeting of the junior section of Edinburgh branch of the United Nations Association three years ago, Mr William Liddell, Projects Officer of the Edinburgh Humanists, was present as a guest. In a conversation after the meeting they discussed the high sense of responsibility and citizenship shown by the young people in their searching questions, and the idea was conceived of trying to do something for a number of less fortunate youngsters by establishing a Youth Home where the environment might stimulate these particular characteristics.

A committee was formed, and in 1965 Edinburgh Youth Homes Ltd. came into being. The aim was to purchase, reconstruct and equip a house where up to nine homeless or underprivileged boys had the right type of family life, care and respect. A house was eventually acquired at Duddington Crescent, and last week Crescent House was officially opened by the Lord Provost of Edinburgh.

Crescent House will start with boys aged 5 to 18 years. It is a prototype Home for others which Edinburgh Youth Homes Ltd. hope to establish later. The directors (all Humanists) have received much help and encouragement from the Scottish Education Department, the Children's Department of the City of Edinburgh, the International Voluntary Service and Edinburgh Students Charity Committee.

Enquiries: Mr William Liddell, 21 Craigentenny Crescent, Edinburgh 7.

THE Free Art Legal Fund which was launched recently has an impressive list of sponsors including Samuel Beckett, Brigid Brophy, Eustace Chesser, Tom Driberg, Charles Osborne, Joseph Strick, David Tribe and Kenneth Tynan. The fund has been started not only to raise money for defence costs in the "Last Exit to Brooklyn" case. It is the intention of the organisers to establish a permanent legal fund for the Arts.

Hubert Selby's *Last Exit to Brooklyn* was privately prosecuted by Sir Cyril Black and judged obscene by the Marlborough Street magistrate after the Attorney General had, on two occasions, refused to prosecute. The second prosecution was by the Director of Public Prosecutions, under Section 2 of the 1959 Obscene Publications Act. It is being defended in the High Court by the publishers, Calder & Boyars.

The estimated cost of the defence is between £15,000 and £20,000, and if the publishers are to have the best possible legal defence there will have to be an immediate and generous response. The prosecution of "Last Exit to Brooklyn" is the latest of many attempts to censor the arts, and all too often it has been impossible to mount an adequate defence because of the cost involved. The future freedom of writers and publishers may well depend on the outcome of the trial.

Donations should be sent to: Free Art Legal Fund, c/o M. White, 61 Welbeck Street, London, W1.

### Havelock Ellis Society

THE inaugural meeting of the Havelock Ellis Society will take place at Conway Hall, London, on Saturday, May 20th, at 2.30 p.m.

E.A.

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## MORAL GROWTH AND RELIGIOUS VALUES: II

Dr Ronald Goldman

### The Religious Viewpoint

SINCE WE LIVE in a society where the major religion and the values of our civilisation are based upon Christianity, even though Britain is no more than nominally Christian, I shall put forward the views of Christian educators. I cannot claim to speak for all Christians, nor even all Christian educators; since many I know from letters I receive after a broadcast very strongly disagree with me. But the first statement I make would be endorsed by all Christians, when I say that the Christian viewpoint, distinct from the humanist—which is man centred—is that all moral standards, judgments and values stem from God, the creator of men and these are embodied in history supremely in the person of Christ. That God is good is seen in Christ, the manifestation of the supernatural in human life.

The major problem, morally, for Christians is that this value system is embodied in a life, not a set of rules. We are enjoined to love, because love is of God and God loved the world. God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself. How we apply and interpret love is difficult, and frequently Christians cannot agree about specific issues such as the use of force, birth-control, divorce, punishment of murderers, racial equality and even comprehensive schools.

Two statements recently published reiterate this position. One was the British Council of Churches Report on *Sex and Morality*<sup>1</sup>, repudiated by some Christians even before they had read it. The other, a less controversial and more important book by Bishop F. R. Barry, called *Christian Ethics and Secular Society*<sup>2</sup>. Both writers reject the view that Christian values are static. There are no set of rules to be learned and automatically applied in any and every given situation. If love is the supreme value, as seen in Christ, how a Christian will express this love cannot be decided in advance. The general principle may be seen but how and when it will be specifically applied is impossible to predict. This is not an idea peculiar to liberal Christians. Way back in 1937 Emil Brunner, a distinguished conservative theologian, rejected Christian ethics as a code. The once easy way of quoting the scriptures is no answer since modern biblical scholarship has destroyed the naïve belief in the infallibility of the Bible.

We are then forced to ask, upon what authority Christian values rest upon if not upon the accuracy of the Scriptures? Professor Burnaby<sup>3</sup> wrote of Protestant Christians, "If we are content to do without an infallible church and have no longer an infallible Bible to take its place, we can no longer look for guidance to an infallible Christ" (p. 108). Barry agrees with this statement in that we can no longer rely upon the very words of Christ, as reported in the Gospels, as being an accurate record of what was said. "The New Testament", says Barry, "is ethical through and through. Yet it is not a manual of Christian ethics . . . Its primary concern is not with ethics at all, but with religion. The ethics flow out of the religion". Barry honestly and courageously outlines the dilemma of twentieth century Christians time and time again.

He writes, for example, of the Incarnation as "the scandal of particularity" and that "Jesus was a Jew of the first century" with all the limitations of the first century. Once

he has given up reading it legalistically, the modern reader sometimes finds in the New Testament so little that seems to apply directly and immediately to the ethical questions that we have to ask today. "There is nothing here about economics, sociology or race relations, or the urgent questions concerning peace and war".

Despite this, Barry asserts that what is distinctively Christian in Christian ethics is that which derives from Christ Himself. But Christianity as a historical religion has taken into itself, as it was bound to do, "much ethical material from other sources". This is what he calls "the morality of the Christianised West". There is an adaptive process at work continually, for the value of love, as seen in Christ (not quoted from a series of scriptural texts) must be interpreted and applied by every new generation of believers. What is changeless is the fact and imperative of love.

There is one major situational similarity between Christians of the first century and modern secular man. They believed in the Parousia, the second coming of the Lord and the end of the material world. Moral values and behaviour were seen intensely in the dimensions of eternity, for if the world was to end, eternal life was the new dimension. Modern man stands in the shadow of sudden annihilation, a scientific-hydrogen-filled Parousia. The modern Christian too sees ethics within the dimension of eternal life, not restricted to our visible and material world. This is what makes man 'the Great Amphibian' part animal, part spirit and this is the cause of his moral tensions.

Now in all this, Christians can never say, "There is no good outside Christianity". It is not only arrogant and untrue but uncharacteristic of the New Testament. Christians do not and should not have a monopolistic claim on morality. There are other religions and other belief systems which generate moral values. There are some Humanists, some Bhuddists, some Marxists who are more moral and more committed to their values than are many Christians. This is not the issue. The real issue is that we are an increasingly secular society, where many feel they are in a moral vacuum because the old authorities seem to exercise less and less power. If this is happening to the adults in our society, what must we do about the moral nurture of our children? In the next and last part of this series I shall consider what Christianity and individual Christians have to offer a society which is largely indifferent to religion, yet which is in great moral need.

<sup>1</sup> London, SCM Press, October 1966.

<sup>2</sup> London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1966.

<sup>3</sup> J. Burnaby. *God, Sex and War*. London, Fontana, 1964.

(To be continued)

### FREETHINKER FIGHTING FUND

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## I HAPPENED TO BE STANDING ON MY DRESSING TABLE!

Margaret Green

I THINK it is boredom which makes most people nosy. Or to use a kinder expression, inquisitive of their neighbours. But there must be a lot of bored people about. I know someone who prefixes a great many of her sentences with, "I happened to be cleaning the windows/brushing my hair/shaking out the duster" and many more "when I noticed —", and because of this she knows most of what happens in her immediate locality.

One bored person watched from the window as a thief burgled a neighbour's house. She watched the goods being loaded into a car, but didn't go to see what was happening in case the driver thought she was nosy!

We are quite likely to be seen as we walk down the road, or go in the garden, or push the car to get it started, but it can be very annoying to be told we were noticed, or to be told every time Mary falls over or Johnny has a fight. And the only reason we *are* told and people have *time* to tell us is because they have nothing else to do. So with nothing constructive to occupy them, people start doing jobs for the sake of doing something. They find they like working near a window, so that the life outside can be absorbed at the same time. As a result what goes on outside becomes a part of the bored person's life and they are *wanting* to know what is happening. I used to be very intolerant of this inquisitiveness, until I realised it was the result of boredom.

It is very sad to think of the number of people who, once their husband has left for work and the children gone to school, have to manufacture jobs until the family returns. I have heard mothers say that by 10 or 11 o'clock the house is clean and tidy, and the evening meal prepared, so they are saying, "what shall I do now?" Of course there is knitting, sewing and mending to do, but most wives like to do this in the evening when the television is on, or while their husband is writing up his office work. And there is always washing and ironing or turning out cupboards. And in summer months there are jobs in the garden, but if this is kept up regularly time can be difficult to fill.

Yet 'time' is life. And what we do each minute is *our* life. If we just mark time until the family comes home, what a lot of life we are missing, and how much more pleasure and satisfaction could be had by utilising this time more fruitfully. Some husbands (and wives too) still feel the duty of a wife is in the home, but luckily this attitude is very much on the decline. Conversely there are many families who *need* the extra income from the wife's earnings, so there is no problem of boredom for them. But for many wives who don't have to go out to work, finding a small part-time occupation can be a big step to take.

Quite often however, wives don't realise there is a need for an outside interest, until, with time on their hands, they start to get introspective and imagine they have symptoms for 'this' or 'that' illness. Possibly through lack of activity and exercise they may really have slight signs of lassitude and disinterest in life. They may even be putting on weight, through over-eating. Many wives say that when they find there is nothing else to do, they make a cup of tea, or eat a biscuit, or have a hunk of bread and cheese, and gradually the inches are put on! Other wives lose weight because, without the necessity to cook a mid-day meal for the family, they don't bother for themselves. Their dis-

interest in food as a result of lack of activity leads to a further lack of energy. Now is the point when they turn to their doctor for a tonic, and in many cases he advises them to get a little job.

One mother who had suffered a considerable amount of nervous illness, which actually prevented her from swallowing food, was ultimately advised to help with the meals at a local primary school. By supervising the children's eating, and having company to eat with, she was able to master her difficulty in swallowing. She gradually overcame her nervous condition and was able to enjoy her part-time job and home life to the full.

Another mother, with three children, wanted a complete change from children and the family routine, so from time to time she sat up at night with elderly patients, who had been discharged from hospital without hope of recovery. This relieved the district nurse and the patient's relatives, and gave her an interest away from home, plus a feeling of usefulness beyond her family ties. A similar job was done by a mother, in helping out during the daytime at an Old People's Home.

When a doctor advertised for an ex-secretary to do typing and clerical work in her own home, at her own convenience, whenever he had sufficient to warrant it being collected from his surgery, he was inundated with replies. Although this job kept the mother at home, it did give her an added interest and sense of purpose, and could easily be fitted in with her family. One ex-secretary said she would do cleaning or *anything* just to get her out of her home environment for a few hours a day, and to give her this 'added interest'.

Some wives prefer to do voluntary work, so that they can specify the hours most suitable to themselves, which is otherwise not often possible, especially if time off from work is needed during school holidays. There are many kinds of voluntary jobs to do, some pay expenses, while others may leave the volunteer slightly out of pocket, but all are rewarding because of the satisfaction of doing something useful.

One mother turned to a church, hoping to find an interest and a group to join, but this was a 'closed shop' of older members who were reluctant to welcome a new person or new ideas. (But there are many other churches that claim bored mothers because of the social activities they have to offer.)

However, social activities aren't always what the housewife is looking for. True this is important too, but usually one can give and accept coffee invitations to supply an outlet for more than enough socializing, and by joining a regular afternoon or evening group, many social contacts can be maintained.

It is the feeling of doing something worthwhile, something that is of use to a far wider circle than one's own home, which is most often needed. Many people will say that bringing up a family in itself is a worthwhile job, and of course this is right, but from 9 a.m. to 3 or 4 in the afternoon when the children are away at school, the house can seem a dull and lonely place for the mother, with no other interest than her family. A working wife (part-time) can add interest and variety to the family scene. But equally so, a wife who lacks the stimulation of outside contact, can adversely affect her family, for she is the centre



of it, so what frustrates/dulls/annoys her will be conveyed to the other members. It is important as well that the job is fitted in with the needs of the family, and that the mother is home when the children return from school, otherwise the object of the job would be completely defeated.

For the ex-teacher there is no problem, because once her own family is at school, she can return to the job with the added experience of also being a parent. But not many of us are trained teachers, so what else is there? Schools also need Infant Helpers, and in the future more of these will be needed. However at present these jobs seem to go almost before they are advertised. The school meals service needs helpers and occasionally a playground supervisor is wanted. Nursery Schools need Nursery Helpers, but in the main all these jobs are in the minority, and the vacancies very quickly get filled.

So what is there to offer the many, many housewives who would like, and need to have, a small job for a few hours a week? Something that would give them an added zest to life? One answer lies in part-time jobs being moulded around school holidays. But for the employer this could be unsatisfactory. Perhaps one day we will create a system where housewives work during term time and students take over for the holidays.

Unfortunately the government's Selective Employment Tax doesn't encourage employers to use part-time workers to double up on a job. But if this were made easier, more housewives would be able to find an occupation, some working in the morning only, others afternoon only, thus giving them time for their housework and cooking whilst at the same time affording an interest beyond the home.

One thing is certain, we need to have a far more flexible working day to cater for the mass of part-time labour available. And once this is possible, there will be no need for wives to stand by their windows looking out on life for they too will be a part of it.

## REVIEW

Elizabeth Straker

### MOULDING ATTITUDES

*The Potter's Craft*, by Charles Binns, 4th edition, revised and brought up to date by Dean Emeritus John F. McMahon of the State University of New York College of Ceramics. Published by D. Van Nostrand Co. Inc. at 48/-.

In the original work, published in 1910, C. F. Binns appealed to the "artist potter" anxious to master the newly established science of ceramics. The object was: "to erect signposts and occasional warnings rather than to remove all obstacles from the road". Besides its technical information, it has its reflections to impart, gathered from experience of a long life of skilled craftsmanship, for C. F. Binns, before becoming Director of the New York State School of Clay-working and Ceramics was Superintendent of the Royal Porcelain Works at Worcester. The tone is set by the opening sentences of the introduction:

"Many times it has been proved, in the history of the world, that it is not possible to force a reform or a novelty upon an unwilling people. Such things are organic. In order to live, they must grow; and in order to grow, they must live. No attempt will be made, therefore, in these pages to foster an idea or propound a thought which may exist only in the predilection of the author".

The original book was intended to help students, wishing to produce individual work, who were unable to find a skilled craftsman from whom to learn. The 4th edition adds to the basic information it contained, the results of modern discoveries, chemical and technical, covering the effects of heat on different kinds of clay, the melting characteristics of pyrometric cones and the atomic weights of materials. The glossary has a general usefulness beyond that of the student of ceramics, but the list of schools teaching Ceramic Art are all in the USA. There is a useful and detailed bibliography.

The book now is of interest not only as a handbook, though it is clearly invaluable to the would-be potter, but since the making

of pottery is so closely tied to the development and civilisation of man, having been practised for about 7,000 years as an essential craft, there is bound to be something for the general reader in a description of the craft, as indeed there is here. Besides finding out the difference between pottery and porcelain and having the mysteries of the potter's wheel explained, he can read that the primitive Amerindian potters were women, and, by a description of Chinese village potters operating the slow wheel, understand how that essential, influential implement came into use.

Evocations of the processes and language of the potter occur throughout literature and in general speech and ideas. Browning produced a heavenly potter and an enthusiastic climax:

"Thou, heaven's consummate cup,  
What needest thou with earth's wheel?"

This book tells us clearly and simply about those emotions and thought-charged words—clay, moulds, glaze, and many others. It will enable us to comprehend references and similes, often scriptural or religious, such as "being fired in the flames".

For the historian and the archaeologist, this book is a godsend for its clear explanation and diagrams of the processes which produced the raw material of much of their study.

There is interest, too, since potting is of such universal application and the decorated products of the potter have always carried propaganda right into the home, in the attitudes conditioned by a lifelong service to this craft. Although in the Preface it is stated that:

"As far as possible didactic statements have been avoided and the attempt has been made to lead every student to experiment and to think for himself", we immediately come across in the Introduction:

"It cannot be too strongly emphasised that to imitate one material in another is false from every point of view". To this the freethinker will immediately ask "why?", and find himself thinking about plastics and the place of imitation in learning.

If not didacticism, there is conservatism in the declaration "Novelty in itself is no claim to consideration; in fact on being shown some product of which it is said, 'Nothing like it has ever been seen before,' the temptation is great to respond, 'May its like never be seen again.'"

So much for the revolutionary! In potting he is kept to the wheel. Perhaps because:

"there must be a sense of form, a term which includes outline, proportion, structure. There must be fitness to purpose . . . There must be fitness to material",

the members of this historic and numerous craft, with its mass market, unlike the cobblers, have never had a reputation for social innovation, but have exercised a powerful continuing loyalty to well tried forms and beliefs.

## LETTERS

### Women for Disarmament

AS Cynthia Blezard states "it will not be easy to persuade people to face these unpalatable facts but unless they do everything else will ultimately be meaningless". Because I have realised this for many years through meeting women throughout the world, with their problems the same as ours, I have in every way possible tried to get co-operation of women all over the world to study and act together.

I have always maintained that our first studies and actions as women should be world disarmament and birth control. I say for women because up to now through fear and ignorance many women have for different reasons not concerned themselves with these problems. I have never joined any political party because I am sure these urgent problems concern every human being.

I am now working through UNA for "Women for Disarmament", a new committee set up for the representatives on UNA Women's Advisory Council who realise the importance and urgency of these problems, so that their organisations can form study groups and be able to act through knowledge. Yes, it will take time to persuade such people to face these unpalatable facts, especially the women who confuse politics with party politics. Some say they cannot work with us because disarmament is political. Of course it is, and so are the other matters with which they concern themselves. The matters with which they are concerning themselves are useless without disarmament and birth control. World economy is also linked, and other matters of course. This is why women should be represented in UNA who have these special agencies set up. This means that we can get our information from these agencies to a large extent.

KATHLEEN TACCHI-MORRIS.



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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

Coventry and Mid-Warwickshire Humanist Group (Tudor House, Spon Street, Coventry), Wednesday, May 24th, 8 p.m.: Mrs M. L. SMITH, "Man and Environment".

Havering Humanist Society (The Social Centre, Gubbins Lane, Harold Wood), Tuesday, May 23rd, 8 p.m.: Mr WILLIAM DUFFY, "Drug Addiction".

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1), Sunday, May 21st, 11 a.m.: RICHARD CLEMENTS, "Madame Curie—Pioneer Scientist".

Worthing Humanist Group (Morelands Hotel, The Pier), Sunday, May 21st, 5.30 p.m.: Tea Party and Annual General Meeting.

# LETTERS

### Irrelevant statement

F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT considers that the fact that the authors of the 'radical' sex report to the World Council of Churches were not expelled justifies Nicholas Teape's assertion that many Christians do not regard sex outside marriage as sinful. I do not dispute this; I have never disputed that there were Christians with this attitude. However, Mr Teape's object in making this statement was to accuse me of error in stating in my Free Love article (Dec. 2nd) that "Christian 'morality' regards any sexual relationship outside marriage as sinful and thus immoral". Now surely we must take as the Christian attitude that attitude which is dictated by the official ecclesiastical representatives, such as the World Council of Churches—not the opinions of a small (though enlightened) few? Therefore the Council, in rejecting the radical sex report by this enlightened minority, have merely confirmed what I originally stated—that the official Christian attitude to sex outside marriage is that it is *always* sinful and immoral. Mr Teape's statement is therefore completely irrelevant.

MICHAEL GRAY.

### Distinguishing nudes

AS an emotionally mature woman of forty I distinguish between nudes by Renoir, Lely, Michelangelo, Da Vinci, Rodin, Praxiteles, which I adore as glorifying the human body, and the glamour slides in sleazy photographers' windows, which I detest because they degrade the human body. Because I do not equate art with lewdness and obscenity I think a limited censorship desirable and utterly compatible with the freedom of expression (which I read on my pink card long before Gray referred to it). He might make a better use of "freedom of speech" in controversial debate than rude innuendoes and damned impertinent pity. "Le Baiser" is for the mature; Soho smut is for smirking schoolboys. I would die for genuine liberty and freedom; the young and immature so often confuse these with just throwing aside all balanced restraint. No freedom is possible without restraint, either in its personal or social implications.

(Miss) G. HAWTIN.

### Cut out the personalities

MR Michael Gray is certainly emphatic in his personal judgments. Mr Teape was "hypocritical" because he put forward an argument for a limited conception of deity. Now, Miss Hawtin is "immature" because she does not agree with him over free art. One is left wondering whether there is some appropriate epithet which one could apply to Mr Michael Gray. But perhaps it will be enough to point out to him that personal epithets are no substitute for rational argument and merely go far towards discrediting the person who uses them. A little less of personalities and a little more of thought if you please, Mr Gray.

F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT.

### Enlightened magistrate

I AM sorry to see that, in common with most other commentators, E.A. has misinterpreted Mr Otto Shaw's questioning of a young offender at Bearsted Court. Unlike most JPs, Mr Shaw is both genuinely interested in the welfare of those who appear before him and well qualified to help them. With his school for highly intelligent maladjusted boys, he has probably had more success than anyone else in this field. He was no doubt indiscreet to question the boy in this way in open court, but he is so used to taking such things naturally within his school that it presumably did not occur to him that his question might cause embarrassment. Anyway, the main point is surely that Mr Shaw, being satisfied that the offender's relationship with his girl-friend would help to keep him steady, put him on probation. Any other magistrate would have steered clear of such personal questions but would have understood far less of the boy's background and would probably have treated him more harshly.

BARBARA SMOKER.

### Moral Crime

CONGRATULATIONS to Miss Brigid Brophy on her pamphlet on RI in state schools. As a newcomer to the FREETHINKER and the NSS, I found her pamphlet extremely interesting and her facts startling.

The indoctrination of children in schools is in itself a moral crime of the worst possible kind, and should be fought with extreme determination and consistency.

In the 'space age' of today, how on earth can this country expect to produce brilliant scientists and technicians, etc. if, at the crucial years of school age, our children are indoctrinated with such ridiculous religious rubbish.

I look forward to the day when our state schools are rid of anti-progressive religious teachings.

ROY MACKAY (18).