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INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS 1967

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS are often much worse than they need be. The spectre of the nineteenth century still haunts the latter half of the twentieth. The following picture of a hypothetical company by no means unique in practice indicates the root of much trouble which, with sound humanistic thinking and action, could be avoided.

Twitson & Bloggs Co. Ltd. are manufacturers of the Bloggstwit range of branded goods. The original Mr. Twitson died many years ago but he hangs in Reception and is cleaned religiously every day. Mr Twitson expended so much energy in building up his little empire that his production was entirely industrial and he left no progeny to succeed him. Mr Bloggs was not so improvident and today his great-grandson, Harold, rules as Chairman of the Bloggstwit organisation. Another of the directors is Harold's son Henry, who had a private public school education and passed two 'O' levels. Were he not his father's son, or more precisely his great-great-grandfather's great-great-grandson, he would more likely have a job such as Jones, the man who cleans the brass fittings on the directorial swing door.

There are, apart from the above-mentioned swing door with the well polished brass fittings, two entrances for personnel. Each is clearly marked with a large sign, which looks as though it has been there for a good many years. One is marked STAFF, the other EMPLOYEES. The former entrance is rather clean, the latter rather dirty. Through the first entrance go the white collars and the clean dresses, the people who, as staff, consider themselves middle class. Through the second go those who, whatever they may wish to consider themselves, are considered by

staff and directors as 'the workers'—definitely, unquestionably working class.

When the directors arrive at 9 o'clock they pass the brass-rubber and say, "Good morning, Jones". Having been thus honourably addressed, Jones replies with due deference, "Good morning, Mr Harold", "Good morning, Mr Henry", and, to the other directors, "Good morning, Sir", all the time rubbing the brass fittings with a fervour expected of one so privileged to come into such close daily contact with such exceptional people. Jones has been there for five years. When he has been there for ten, the directors will start calling him Tom. Apart from anything else, using his first name and smiling a little will save them giving him a ten shilling rise.

At 10.30 coffee is served. The directors have theirs brought in a coffee pot by their secretary and poured to individual liking into directorial quality china cups. The 'staff' have theirs brought round on a tray in inexpensive cups which are sometimes slightly chipped. The 'employees'—the dirty workers—queue up to get theirs in paper cups from a vending machine.

10.30 is also the time when most use is made of the washrooms, inclusive, that is, of lavatories. There are three types of washroom. The first is for directors and the sign on the door says, appropriately, DIRECTORS. The second is for 'staff'. Here there are two doors facing the corridor. One is marked LADIES. The other is marked GENTLEMEN. The third set is for 'employees', the workers, not, on no account please not, to be confused with the 'staff'. The 'employees' also have clearly marked doors. One reads MEN. The other reads WOMEN.

Bill Smith has to use the washroom marked MEN. He is one of the 'employees'. He has worked for Twitson & Bloggs since he was fourteen. Now he is sixty-one and in four years he will retire. As he sees so many of his mates who have also worked there for many years being declared redundant, some of them in their late fifties, he feels fortunate that he has been allowed to work for the firm for so long. He goes to work even when he is so ill he ought to stay at home. He must keep his job for another four years. Then, when he retires, Twitson & Bloggs will give him a pension of twenty-seven shillings a week and will present him with a clock with a specially inscribed plate in recognition of their employee's fifty-one years' faithful service.

It does not surprise me that industrial relations are as bad as they often are.

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Harry Lamont

Speaking Personally

ALL MY LIFE I have been interested in dreams. Every morning I consult an esoteric book to ascertain what my nocturnal cerebral activity denotes. But there is one dream that baffles me. Three eminent psychologists suggest different interpretations, so I ask my readers to give their views on the matter.

I dreamt I was dead. Like a flying saucer I whizzed aloft, through a trapdoor and into heaven's waiting room, a vast structure, holding about 5,000 persons. Every seat was occupied and queues had formed in the aisles. Next to me sat a ruffian who had operated a brothel in Soho. He was a Catholic and kept telling his beads, until he crooned:

"I do believe, I will believe,
That bugs are bigger than fleas,
And that on the wall they play football,
Without a referee."

Hardened sinners looked glum. They had led wicked lives and were about to pay the penalty in eternal damnation. After I had waited about 15 hours my name was called by a scribe and I stepped forward, to proceed to judgment between two tall powerful centurions with helmets, breastplates, swords and daggers. We walked along various corridors until we reached the judgment room. The light was so bright it blinded me. On a gleaming throne of gold, studded with emeralds, rubies, pearls and other precious stones, sat the Big Boss with a halo, effulgent beard and ornate robes. I bowed low until a clout on the backside from a sword warned me to straighten up again.

The court was packed. Although they were only whispering, the cumulative effect was like a swarm of bees. The Clerk of the Court read out my name and *curriculum vitae*. I was accused of numerous crimes, including scepticism.

"Why did you not believe in Me?" asked God in a tone that struck terror through my heart.

"Well, Sir, I examined the evidence and it failed to convince me," I replied humbly.

"Mental arrogance," he boomed. "Give him 500 of the best!"

My two escorts led me to the punishment room. I was stripped to the waist, strapped to a triangle and flogged until I yelled for mercy.

Back in front of the *Supremo* I had to answer further questions. I was asked why I refused to get saved in the Sketty Moravian Chapel which I attended as a boy.

"Because it seemed all nonsense to me, Sir," I muttered. "Still suffering from mental arrogance," He roared. "Give him another 500 lashes."

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VISION OF HEAVEN AND HELL

"Oh Sir, have mercy," I howled. "There is a limit to what one can stand. I'm sure another 500 will kill me."

"Very well, let him off with 50," thundered God, in high dudgeon. So again I was flogged until the blood ran. I fainted. They revived me with a bucket of cold water over my napper.

Back in the judgment room I stood at attention and gazed at the vast audience of about 50,000 in tiers. The saved used to derive much pleasure from attending daily to see the sheep separated from the goats. Many were called but few chosen. Ninety-nine per cent went down to hell. Heaven is a most exclusive club.

My case lasted 27 hours and 40 minutes. The reading of the verdicts took 4 hours and 35 minutes. I was castigated as a wicked wretch quite unfit for paradise. My sins were enumerated at great length and my transgressions stressed. Finally a parachute was strapped to my back and I was chucked overboard.

I fell 50,000 miles and landed in the waiting room of hell, among 1,753 others. I waited 63 hours before two devils marched me in the presence of Satan, tall, thin, austere and dignified, who greeted me very civilly. He wore a fine Saville Row grey suit, Old Etonian tie and highly polished brown shoes.

He offered me a job as valet on condition I wasn't too fussy about morals. I indignantly refused such a suggestion, whereupon seven cherubim appeared, chanting benisons and wafted me up to glory. In celestial realms I was given a crown of gold and a harp of platinum studded with diamonds. All day and night we sang hymns, chanted prayers and praised the Lord. Occasionally we cast down our golden crowns upon the glassy promenades, picked them up, dusted them and resumed our devotions.

I stuck it for 50 thousand million years. At intervals I incurred minor punishments for laughing during prayers, failing to clean my accoutrements and forgetting to tune my harp. But the time came when I could stand the sanctimonious atmosphere no more. I rebelled and received another 500 lashes, plus a one-way ticket to hell. "I had grave doubts about your suitability for heaven in the first place," said God, "but against my better judgment I gave you a chance. This time the condemnation is irrevocable. You are to be damned to roast in hell for ever, world without end, amen."

So back down I went. To my amazement Satan failed to recognise me. He gave me a job as road-sweeper, with prospects of promotion if I showed zeal and performed my duties with enthusiasm.

I had spent 75 thousand million years in hades when he asked me if I would like to be his secretary. Of course I jumped at the chance. The job was really a sinecure. One day my boss remarked:

"I wonder what they think of me on earth?"

"Do you want the truth, Sir?"

"Of course."

"Well the Christians consider you to be a terrible scoundrel, always tempting people to be bad, so that they will go to hell."

"Wouldn't you like to return to heaven?"

"No, not really. The climate is all right, but the holy atmosphere got on my nerves. I stuck it for 50 thousand million years, but then I had to quit or the pious humbug would have driven me mad."

STATEMENT BY THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

WORKING PARTY ON SOCIAL SECURITY

A WORKING PARTY on Social Security was convened by the National Secular Society with the object of relating the case for improved family benefits to the issue of population growth. Oral evidence was submitted by Tony Lynes, Secretary of the Child Poverty Action Group and co-editor of *Poverty*, and by Brunel University lecturer Jack Parsons, and written evidence by Dr. D. M. C. MacEwan, Hon. Secretary of the Conservation Society. The Working Party was fully briefed by Mr Lynes on the various forms of family-related social security now available and the changes proposed by the Government for October and April.

Poverty tends to be a self-perpetuating condition. It leads families into slum areas with low rates and consequently poor educational, recreational and cultural facilities, and brings strong pressure on children to go to work as soon as possible so that they lack proper qualifications and are the first to suffer in recessions. Their poor prospects reduce marital opportunities and they tend in their turn to rear another generation of deprived children. While poverty may be the result of laziness or fecklessness, it more often results from illness or other misfortune; and though there are outstanding individuals who have risen above adverse early circumstances, the majority of rich or poor children largely reflect the conditions of their upbringing.

It is clear that the present situation in Great Britain has the following disadvantages:—

(1) There are still millions of unskilled workers either outside trades unions or in poor unions with low bargaining power whose wages will barely support themselves and a wife, let alone children;

(2) It is iniquitous that a breadwinner and his dependants may receive less while he is working or 'temporarily' ill than if he were recognised as permanently unemployable and the family's needs assessed on a cost of living basis. If he then loses his employment, under the 1966 Ministry of Social Security Act, his supplementary benefits are wage-stopped so that he does not then receive as much as those never able to work;

(3) Under the present system of low cash benefits combined with income tax allowances for children, poor families are getting less benefit than those paying a standard rate of income tax;

(4) The child of the unsupported mother is in particular economic and emotional difficulties.

There is thus a case for investigating the desirability of fixing a minimum basic wage based on cost of living, as exists in some countries. Clearly in the present political and economic circumstances in Great Britain there is little likelihood of implementing this proposal, and as such a minimum rate is usually fixed on the basis of a couple with two children, this will not of itself provide for the needs of large families.

The working party was appalled by the figure of half a million deprived children living stultified lives through no fault of their own, and recognised an urgent need to assist

them. This raises the question of whether some form of means test should be imposed so that really poor children will gain a benefit of such a size as the country could not afford if spread across the entire population. This solution might however mean that many families which qualify would through oversight or pride not apply, and could also cause political difficulties. The working party was inclined to accept the view of the CPAG that a more congenial and efficacious solution would be to raise family benefits all round and eliminate tax reliefs for children. At the level of benefit proposed:—

Age of child	Family allowance	
	First child	Each subsequent child
Under 11	18.0	24.6
11—16	22.0	28.6
Over 16	26.0	32.6

the abolition of tax relief for middle and upper income families would largely finance the overall scheme.

The Child Poverty Action Group is not concerned with the population question at all, and anyway believes that the latest figures suggest a levelling out in this country. But the Government Actuary's Department forecasts that the population of the United Kingdom will be 72,059,000 by the end of the century, and the figure of 70,000,000 is generally accepted. Most members of the working party considered that this increase would be disturbing, and it was unanimously agreed that if the population continued to rise in the next century and if the increase to 70 million were accompanied by the present tendency to urban sprawl, drift to the south-east, deterioration of public transport, uncontrolled increase of private transport, inadequacy of schools and hospitals, and inroads into agricultural land and other natural resources, the situation would be grave indeed.

So concerned is the Conservation Society about this question that most of its members voted against family benefits to all children on the assumption that they would encourage larger families. Like Dr MacEwan personally, the working party was aware of no objective evidence that family benefits of themselves encouraged couples to have more children than they otherwise would, but it considered that any proposals to increase benefits must be accompanied by a big campaign in the schools and media of communications on the hazards of unchecked population growth nationally and internationally. The NSS is proud of the pioneering role of its founder Charles Bradlaugh in the birth control movement, and the working party considered that the Government and local authorities should make all forms of contraception and voluntary sterilisation free and freely available, expand domiciliary family planning for those not sufficiently aware of existing facilities, and educate everyone in responsible citizenship. One of the greatest social problems of the individual family, as of the nation, is the unwanted child, and the elimination of this sad phenomenon would increase general welfare and happiness as well as reduce the population growth. The working party emphasised that a strenuous birth control programme would not only be socially desirable but would more than pay for itself in the reduction of welfare costs

NEWS AND NOTES

THE Board of G. W. Foote announced last week that Mr Karl Hyde had been appointed full-time editor of the FREETHINKER. He will take up the appointment next month, and be responsible for the November 3rd issue.

Mr Hyde, who is aged 37, is married with one child. He has been active in the movement for several years. He joined the Richmond and Twickenham Humanist Group shortly after its formation and was Vice-Chairman and Chairman on two occasions and eventually became secretary of the group. He also served on the Ethical Union (later British Humanist Association) Council. Mr Hyde joined the National Secular Society four years ago and is now a member of both the BHA and NSS Executive Committees. He has had much experience as an organiser and speaker, and has always firmly stressed the secular aspect of Humanism.

Newspaper for Serowe

THE Swaneng Hill School *Newsletter* announces plans to establish a weekly newspaper for Serowe, primarily to promote literacy and to encourage development. It was originally intended that a duplicator would be used, but during Patrick van Rensburg's visit to Britain in January he discussed the project with representatives of War on Want. One of them donated an off-set lithograph machine which has now been delivered, and the first edition of the paper should appear later this month.

Affiliations to NSS

IT was announced at the National Secular Society Executive Committee meeting last week that there had been a good response by Humanist groups to the offer of annual reports, pamphlets and leaflets. Groups in various parts of the country had ordered substantial quantities of NSS leaflets for distribution at meetings during Humanist Week. Several group officers were enrolled as members of the NSS, and applications for affiliation from Stoke-on-Trent and Ealing Grammar School Humanist Groups were accepted. The Executive Committee also approved the formation of the new West Kent branch of the NSS.

School religion

ONE of the arguments used by those who defend RI and acts of worship in state schools is that parents have the right to withdraw their children. The "conscience clause" of the 1944 Education Act seems to be a fair and democratic arrangement but in fact it is almost impracticable. For most teachers—particularly those in the early stages of their career—refusal to participate would be an act of professional suicide; if parents exercise their rights it often means distress and embarrassment for the child.

An investigation is taking place at Ilford (Essex) where it is alleged that a teacher called an eight-year-old girl a heathen. Mrs Rita Singarayer told the local newspaper that her daughter, Naomi, was sitting in the corner of the classroom when the teacher asked her why she sat out of the lesson. She said she had no religion and the teacher is alleged to have said: "You are a heathen. What will you grow up into?"

The headmaster is reported to have said that the incident took place just before assembly. When asked if the girl

was called a heathen he said: "The word heathen was mentioned. But I can't tell you how". The child has been placed at another school.

Book service

KIT MOUAT, former editor of the FREETHINKER and organiser of the Humanist Letter Network, is now running a Postal Book Service. If you are interested in buying or selling freethought literature, send a 6d stamp to Mrs Mouat. Address: Mercers, Cuckfield, Sussex.

E.A.

Flashback

(Extracts from 'Thoughts on Education' by J.G. [Miner].)

TO supply the lack of early education is not an easy process, and working men who are really desirous of storing their minds with useful knowledge find it up-hill work. That every member of the community *ought* to be educated is a generally acknowledged fact. I say *generally* because there are those among our parsons, peers, capitalists, etc., who say that working men ought *not* to be educated, that as soon as they are educated they begin to grumble, and so on. The latter allegation may be quite true but we (the working classes) fail to see the force of the argument. The fact is, we think we have a right to grumble; and we have not the remotest intention of gratifying the vanity of our "superiors" by pledging ourselves to submission, or by professing contentment. Working men are beginning to discover the barriers which oppose their progress, and among other obstacles, they find that the salaried parson is one of their greatest foes notwithstanding his professions to the contrary. Some of the parsons pretend to be greatly interested in the education of the working classes, but it is folly to suppose that *they* will ever enlighten us as to the true causes of poverty, overwork, and other social evils that we are cursed with.

The parsons, it is true, have some influence among certain classes of working men, agricultural labourers for instance, and what do they teach them? To be contented with their own station in life, to believe that they ought to be grateful for the privilege of being permitted to work twelve hours a day for twelve shillings a week, to honour the king, to respect those whom God has seen fit to place above them, to lift their hats to their superiors, and a great deal more of the like trumpety nature. But the agricultural labourers are beginning to find out that they must not look to the parsons for education . . .

We want to discover why it is we have to work so hard for a bare livelihood; why kings should have the power to murder thousands of their fellow creatures and then be lauded to the skies as heroes; why a few should be born to inherit high sounding titles and heaps of wealth, while others drag out their existence in miserable degradation and want; why some should be millionaires and others paupers; why a corrupt priesthood should absorb more than ten million pounds a year. This is the sort of education we want, and when working men get to know the why and the wherefor of all these things, they will not be long in effecting such reforms as shall elevate themselves, and extinguish the race of drones, the lazy, dying, cheating rascals who plunder us daily, and who are so anxious that things shall remain as they are.

(*The International Herald*—August 3rd, 1872.)

FREETHINKER FIGHTING FUND

THE FREETHINKER is the only weekly Secularist-Humanist paper in the country. It is still only 6d. How much do YOU care how many people it reaches? To advertise we need money, and our expenses are ever-increasing. Whose copy are you reading now? Have you got a subscription? Couldn't *you* contribute something to the Fighting Fund, say 6d or 6s or £6 or £60? How much do you really care about Freethought and helping other people to hear about it? Do, please, help if you can.

The FREETHINKER, 103 Borough High St., London, SE1

FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH: IV

A. C. Thompson

The New Reformation

THE churches today are on the eve of a new Reformation. Modern theologians are themselves aware of the truth of the contentions presented by Secularists and Humanists: that the existence and nature of a supposed cause of the universe are unsolved mysteries; that the Bible is not a work of a God, nor inspired by a God, and is not infallible nor even reliable; that there is little justification for belief in an after-life; that morality is not based on the wishes of any unseen spirit, but rather upon logical and natural imperatives necessary to the preservation of man and of society. It can be said with fair certainty that the world of tomorrow will not have the sort of religious worship that is prevalent today, worship which is becoming more and more unsuited to an age of continual scientific advance and which will inevitably be regarded by our more sophisticated children and grandchildren as most ridiculous superstition. But both the clergy and many laymen are aware that the church fills a need in society. It fosters a morality above and beyond law in domains which law cannot reach, it inspires ideals of unselfish service to humanity, it exerts a personal influence on the individual, counselling, guiding, uplifting, heartening, comforting. In many ways, the work and influence of the church should be not restricted but widened. The church is an institution with vast potential: it can bring a philosophy of social morality into the private lives of individuals, it can accomplish a tremendous amount of social adjustment. The church must continue, for there is nothing available to fill its place.

It is regrettable that churches are daily losing their members, that so few students aspire to the ministry that theological schools can scarcely remain open, and must in fact consider admitting women. It is regrettable too that so many people today have no moral principle except hedonistic pursuit of pleasure, that so many of our young people are turning to promiscuity, drug-addiction, frivolity, recklessness, aimlessness, delinquency and crime. It is regrettable too that so many men hate and fight men of other races, nationalities and beliefs, and that they are securing, with advancing scientific research, ever more violent and effective weapons with which to destroy and kill. Regrettable also is that so many men of good will, including clergymen, are torn with the mental anguish of realising that the beliefs they have lived by can reasonably be held no longer.

The first Reformation, the Protestant Reformation of the early 16th century, aimed to correct abuses of stagnant tradition into which unchallenged societies so easily fall. The reforms affected practices more than doctrines, the great bulk of Christian teaching about the son of the Hebrew tribal god, Yhwh, coming to earth to make himself a human sacrifice to appease the father god for the first man's disobedience of eating a forbidden fruit being accepted whole. The new Reformation of our day will be of far deeper significance than the first, for it will go to the very basis of man's moral and social life; it will question the fundamental assumptions; it will uphold no dogma except that of free inquiry, of intellectual liberty. This new Reformation may be called the Second or Ethical Reformation; it might be called the Secular or Humanist Reformation, if the National Secular Society or the British Humanist Association were to take a leading part in it.

It will embrace not only the Christian Church, but will extend to all creeds of all nations, and will reach especially the agnostic and the atheist.

The chief feature of religious change which the modern age demands is rejection of dogmatism. The scientific achievements of the past few centuries, and increase of emphasis on science in the education of youth are disturbing the unquestioning acceptance of the word of the clergyman so prevalent in our parents' day. It may be that people do not think for themselves any more today than they did in the past, but they are transferring their blind faith from religion to science and are thus imposing on the man of religion a duty of justifying reasonably whatever he offers for belief. In all disagreements between science and religion, science has invariably won in the end and as long as the logical methods of science and religion differ, science will doubtless continue to win, and the faithful must inevitably come to distrust the claim of the church to possess divinely revealed eternal truth. It must necessarily be admitted that at least some religious beliefs are false for they contradict from one faith to another. The Catholic Church even now faces the necessity of going back on what it has long declared about contraception, that it is infallibly known to be contrary to the eternal will of God. The Church repeats a promise of Jesus that he will be with her all days to the consummation of the world and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against her, but the ordinary man today believes that science has a better chance of being here to stay than religion has.

If the Church wants to make good Christ's prophecy, it would be well advised to adopt whatever lesson it can learn from the methods of science. The starting-point of the scientific method of inquiry is free-thinking. One who compares the modern age of science with the Middle Ages must conclude that Mediaeval scholars did not lack intelligence, or diligence, or curiosity, or persistence, or any other trait of mind or work of today's scientist. What they did lack was intellectual freedom: they were not permitted to depart from declared dogmas. The Church today must abandon its Mediaeval method of establishing truth by authority and free the minds of its members to think for themselves. It must stop imposing ready-made doctrines and instead encourage free reasoned discussion and argument. The Church should no longer be a Christian Church, or a Hebrew Synagogue or a Moslem Mosque; it should simply be the Church. Jesus will still be in the Church, with his teaching of brotherly love, but not the Jesus cult; he will share place not only with Gautama Buddha and Confucius, but also with Socrates, Epicurus, Grotius, Hume, Spinoza, Kant, Hegel, Bentham, Mill, Russell, Ayer, and all others who through the history of mankind have contributed to understanding of humanity. All doctrines will be introduced for impartial examination and appraisal, so that he who seeks truth to live by may shop round and make a best choice. The Church should not lapse into "chains of competitive salvation supermarkets each advertising that its own spiritual detergent washes whiter than any of the others"; it can be instead an academy of free-thinking. Those who see reasonableness in the concept of a first cause of the universe must be respected as much as those to whom the hypothesis is superfluous. The Bible can be accepted as the commendable literature of a nomadic people at the dawn of history, just emerged from bar-

barism and settling on the fringe of a desert, and it can have an honoured place in the Church's library of the world's great books.

The main reforms which are demanded in the modern Church are therefore abolition of the two traditional practices. (a) faith; and (b) worship. Faith, defined by the small boy as "believing what you know ain't so", is a repudiation of (God-given) reason and right to think. Faith reduces rational men to the status of babies, who helplessly and dependently trust in someone who will care for their needs and regulate their lives so that they may sleep in contentment and peace. The cleric who says, "Peace came into her heart and her life when she accepted Jesus as her personal saviour" is recommending complete extinction of reason as a motive for belief. The Church should not ask us to admire the ignorant centurion of the Bible ("say only the word") who knew no reason except authority. Worship is an outward manifestation of the willing subservience of mind and body which authority demands as evidence of faith; it is ridiculous to believe that a supposed great cause of the universe enjoys himself by tuning in to programmes of hymn-singing and prayers one day a week.

Far more important to modern man than faith, worship or religious indoctrination is a rational code of ethics. It is extremely necessary for man to know the true basis of morality. Religion is an obstacle to moral progress, for it holds that fixity of social mores is desirable, in fact, ordained by God. Since ethics must be based on an ethical principle, which can identify right and wrong, it is necessary to introduce to churchgoers the world's great ethical theories, which the churches now ignore. Here, it would surely be advisable to present to the congregations the newest theory that ethical conduct depends on the survival of one's society—the theory of "Securitarianism" as it has recently been called. Since the first announcement of this theory, no one has ever yet been able to detect a flaw in the logical *a priori* or *a posteriori* arguments by which it is established, or to point to a single area of human moral behaviour to which it does not apply. Nevertheless, this theory is not to be taught as a dogma; it is certainly to be offered as no more than a hypothesis for fair consideration and test with complete freedom of thought. Here intrudes, of course, the perplexing question, if there can be complete freedom of ethical thought, can there be complete freedom of moral practice as well? Securitarianism does have a reply for this question, as for the other ethical problems which have troubled philosophers.

The New Reformation can be accomplished only with a valid ethical principle; without this it would fail. The Church's foremost duty is to be the arbiter of morality. If it forsakes this duty, it is of no more value than any ordinary social club. One thing that is most sorely needed by men in all places and in all ages—here, in our own day, not less but more—is a moral code accepted in their human dealings by all the members of society, indeed by all the peoples of the world. Such an ethical code is necessary for achieving the goals in which Christianity and other religions have failed. For in important respects Christianity has failed: after being tried for nearly 2,000 years, after being the universal faith of the known civilised world of the Mediaeval centuries, it has never stopped war or hatred or prejudice, it has not restrained crime, it has never produced understanding among different peoples, it has been rejected, in spite of centuries of missionary zeal, by most of the peoples of Asia, it has split into competing sects, and it now faces dissolution for its inability to support its dogmas. Men who still cling to religion in desperation in

spite of the experience of centuries, because they have known no other hope, must now find an alternative.

It is necessary for the Church to preach the ethical relationships among men over the whole earth which are a solution to the problem of world peace. Man may be evolving towards world peace, but if this natural evolution must proceed in spite of man's ignorance of its true nature, peace may be accomplished eventually only at the price of blood and tears. A clear understanding of the necessary course which this evolution must take can enable man to shorten its course by proceeding directly and deliberately, without blundering. What Securitarianism suggests on war and peace has been briefly summarised in four articles which appeared in the FREETHINKER on March 31, April 7, April 21 and April 28, 1967. It is necessary for the Church to address itself to practical understanding and competence of race relations, prejudice and tolerance. On this subject also Securitarianism, the Social-Survival principle of ethics, is able to suggest an explanation and to offer guidance on advisable practice. The Church must abandon the age-old conception of evil as the work of Satan and his devils, a superstitious doctrine believed by Jesus, and recognise the true nature and origins of wrongdoing. Securitarianism, not less than modern psychology, affords enlightenment on this point which the Church might do well to consider. Very important in the personal life of everyone is a rational code of sex conduct: suggestions which Securitarianism offers have appeared in the FREETHINKER, March 10 and 17, 1967. It cannot be declared that Securitarianism, by its mere existence, can stop war, race prejudice, intolerance, illegitimacy, and other social evils, but it can be maintained confidently that if it can contribute to understanding of these evils, it can provide a proper basis and point out the right direction for their solution. It should be obvious that without true understanding, effective ways of alleviating these ills of society are not likely to be undertaken.

What will be the service in the Church of the New Reformation? Dogma and ritual will be absent. There will probably be a lecture on an ethical topic, followed by open discussion. The clergy should release their captive audiences. Instead of requiring their faithful to hear a sermon in silence with no chance to inquire or to contribute, they should permit discussion. Forbidding discussion is evidence of the dogmatism which so distinguishes the methods of religion from those of science, the chaining of the mind which strangled natural inquiry through the Middle Ages and which even in recent times has sought to stifle the progress of knowledge. Our sacred music may be retained with new lyrics—rewritten with new words which inspire high ideals of character and virtue—and sung to one another in mutual harmony and fellowship rather than to a supposed spirit. Eulogies may be spoken at marriages, births and deaths. The work of the ministry may be extended: probation work, for example, may be peculiarly suited to the clergy, who may be given special training courses in such work.

Tomorrow's society may favour religious education for children, but not religious indoctrination. Religious education, in other words, will be free of the two traditional practices, faith and worship. It may well consider the fundamental mystery of the origin of the universe and the possibility of an intelligent cause. It will surely portray the influence which religion has had upon the making of the modern mind and culture. But the children will be intellectually free. Any child who logically concludes that there

(Continued on next page)

PREJUDICE OR OPPOSITION?

Elizabeth Collins

VIEWS expressed on the above subject (FREETHINKER, August 11th) by Adele Paul suggest a resurgence of religious intolerance of which there seems to be little evidence in this most tolerant country today. Especially bearing in mind the degree of apathy apparent towards religion and the Churches generally. Would Mr St John Stevas's activities concerning a Bill before Parliament have been allowed to proceed undeterred had he been a Protestant in a Catholic controlled country such as Spain? I think not.

What is frequently alluded to as antagonism to the Roman Church is often enlightened opposition or informed criticism. Prejudice is surely the wrong word to apply today, opposition would be a far more appropriate and realistic one. For it should be understood that many people are beginning to realise that the Roman Church is an anachronism in the modern world. An opposition has the right to object to policies and judgments which it deems to be wrong and unjust, and with which it strongly disagrees. This is *not* prejudice but ordinary honesty and common sense. The Catholic ruling body has only itself to blame if, over the centuries, it has repeatedly stirred up such opposition which is, or should be, directed against the *system*, not individuals personally—they are its victims.

Moreover, the Catholic Church needs no championship by any member of the NSS to whose aims and objects it has consistently been obstructive. Having evolved a worldwide political organisation (though this is subtly concealed) of immense power and wealth, it has always allied itself to, and upheld the most reactionary regimes—Franco, Mussolini, Hitler, and certain Latin American dictatorships. How then can it hope to escape adverse criticism from those holding more liberal ideas and points of view? In this country there is decidedly less prejudice and a more tolerant attitude than is exhibited in most Catholic countries towards non-Catholics (Spain, Italy, Malta and others). Also I hardly think anti-Catholic feeling here amounts to what Adele Paul calls "alarming". There is certainly objection by many people to the retrograde step of allowing these islands to fall under a measure of Catholic control via ecumenism and the unity so much canvassed, not least by the Anglican hierarchy. That may be styled 'prejudice' for propaganda purposes.

Freedom of religious belief or non-belief is one of democracy's basic freedoms, and one which no freethinker or anyone with liberal ideas would wish to challenge, but a Church which enters the political and social fields trying to control the judgment of its adherents in matters of education, foreign affairs, and social hygiene, besides becoming involved in gigantic commercial interests, becomes in effect a political Power and should be so treated.

It is well recognised that the Roman Church is such a Power in the world today, claiming obedience from its members in all spheres of human activity. At Papal coronations the "divinely instituted" claim is made that the Pope is above princes and "Governor of the World", in other words a spiritual totalitarian dictator claiming blind obedience from everyone! And always relentlessly hostile to liberal ideas, civil liberty, secularism, and to any government practising a really democratic way of life. The recent ecumenical appeals and talk of unity with non-Catholic Christians were, quite possibly, undertaken with a view to the ultimate absorption of the latter. Owing to this ecumenical idea the voice of Rome is now clearly heard through all media in most Western countries—in Parlia-

ments, Press, and on Radio. The one exception may be Northern Ireland where there certainly is antagonism. Everywhere else it appears to be given prominence with the one object of furthering Catholic Power in face of receding Protestantism, and the ever-present alleged menace of Communist atheism.

In every age since Constantine mistakenly sanctioned it as the recognised State cult, Christianity has been a persecuting religion avid for power, and during the first seven centuries of its existence so terrorised its opponents (even though at times they retaliated) that certain antagonisms remain more or less as a folk-memory, having their roots in past persecutions. In some areas of Europe that feeling can actually be sensed in the country itself today.

That there are clearly discerned cracks in the Vatican facade today is to be welcomed, the more so as these are due to the recognition within its ranks of the urgency for extensive and very necessary reforms. This can only be helped by friendly criticism and advice, not by stifling adverse comment.

I do agree with Adele Paul that the teaching of history in schools is slanted, but state schools are not the only culprits; denominational schools would be just as guilty depending upon opinions of teachers and books used. Until religion ceases to be a controlling factor in the educational field, and history books are written without regard to national prestige and with some concern for truth, this state of affairs is likely to continue.

FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH

(Continued from previous page)

is some superior spiritual being and spontaneously feels that he can speak to him should be by all means free to do so, but he should not be urged or taught to do so. Teach the child by all means that there is a divine-creation theory of the world, believed by many people, and also that geologists have proposed alternative hypotheses. Teach by all means the supernatural theory of morality; but alongside this theory, teach the ethical thought of the world, impartially. Teach also the ethical theory of Securitism, with its *a priori* and *a posteriori* proofs and its applications to the whole of human relationships. But let every child be free to think for himself. What a wonderful educational experience for a child to hear all views and to decide for himself on his philosophy of living!

The path of the New Reformation will not be smooth and it may have to be fought for at every step. If the Secularists or Humanists undertake to lead it, they face a tremendous task. What would be most needed at the start would be people to spread the word. The movement would require meetings, conferences, publicity. But the eventual accomplishment will be a world of reason, of freedom, and let us hope of peace. Sooner or later, the Church must and will undertake a Second Reformation, if people now outside the Church neglect to do so. Let some clergyman be the first to nail the 95 theses to the church door, and in that hour the Secular Society and the Humanist Association will be finished, for they will have nothing more to say.

(Concluded)

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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 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, Platt Fields, Sunday afternoon, 3 p.m.;
Car Park, Victoria Street, Sunday evenings, 8 p.m.

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

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

INDOOR

Havering Humanist Society (The Social Centre, Gubbins Lane,
Harold Wood), Tuesday, September 26th, 8 p.m.: HANS
BRANDLER, "Private Practice or National Health".

Lincoln Humanist Group (Eastgate Hotel, Lincoln), Tuesday,
September 26th, 7.30 p.m.: DAVID TRIBE, "World Peace—a
Secularist Charter".

Redbridge Humanist Association (Wanstead House Community
Centre, The Green, London, E11), Monday, September 25th,
7.45 p.m.: MICHAEL LINES, "Living Without God".

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red
Lion Square, London, WC1), Sunday, September 24th, 3 p.m.
Annual Reunion. Guest of Honour: Professor Hyman Levy
who will speak on "The Technological Explosion and its Social
Cost". Folk songs by Unity Singers, speeches by representatives
of other societies, tea. Admission free.

Tunbridge Wells Humanist Group (The Centre for Art and Educa-
tion, Monson Road), Sunday, September 24th, 8 p.m. Debate,
"The Evidence for the Resurrection". Speakers: Rev. McLellan
and David Tribe.

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

Worthing Humanist Group (Morelands Hotel, The Pier), Sunday,
September 24th, 5.30 p.m.: FRANK MARYFIELD, "Humanism in
Relation to Christianity".

LETTERS**Peter Crommelin replies**

IN REPLY to some criticisms of my article by Lilian Middleton
I would like to say that by compulsory atheism I mean the mind
control attempted by atheist dictatorships in communist countries.
The kind of atheism associated by persons of my age with such
names as Hitler and Stalin. As far as 'freedom of thought' is
concerned there was nothing to choose between the 'national
socialism' of Hitler's Germany and the 'communism' of Stalin's
Russia.

I have called atheism 'dangerous' precisely because it can gener-
ate a hatred of religion quite as fanatical as that generated by
religion for heretics or unbelievers. I think the people most likely
to become fanatical atheists are those who have been most sub-
jected to ecclesiastical authority. I am not opposed to the revolu-
tionary spirit, but I am opposed to the hatred of any human being
for any cause, secular or 'sacred'.

Lastly I do *not* identify God with the 'Supernatural'. According
to my monotheism there is nothing more natural to the universe
than the creator of it. I believe in God because I identify God
with existence, and I believe that there is an aspect of existence
that can be expressed by such words as God or the divine or the
eternal.
PETER CROMMELIN.

Drink and drugs

YOUR ADMISSION of ignorance concerning drug-taking in
No. 33 may cause many to ponder. They will see that you err,
and Truth may emerge.

The C of E magazine of 16.7.1853 was right. Alcohol is a
dangerous drug. It impairs the judgment; hence the current
exhortation—**Don't drink and drive**. Hazrat Muhamad successfully
proscribed alcohol. In Kashan in 1908 my ferrash Najaf Ali was
badly bitten by black scorpions, and the English doctor prescribed,
inter alia, a tot of brandy. The old man adamantly refused it. "If
Allah wishes me to die," he said, "so be it. I will not appear
before Him with breath smelling of alcohol." That is the usual
muslim attitude. Keep as far as can be from "The Marquis of
Granby".

Starch eaters should be sent to prison for medical aid.

W. E. HUXLEY.

PRIVATE ADOPTION

BABY (due September 27) will be available for adoption
by suitable Freethinking parents. Mr F. J. Corina will act
as confidential intermediary. Inquiries to—

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