

Freethinker

Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper

Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

VOLUME 90, No. 6

Saturday, February 7, 1970

Sixpence Weekly

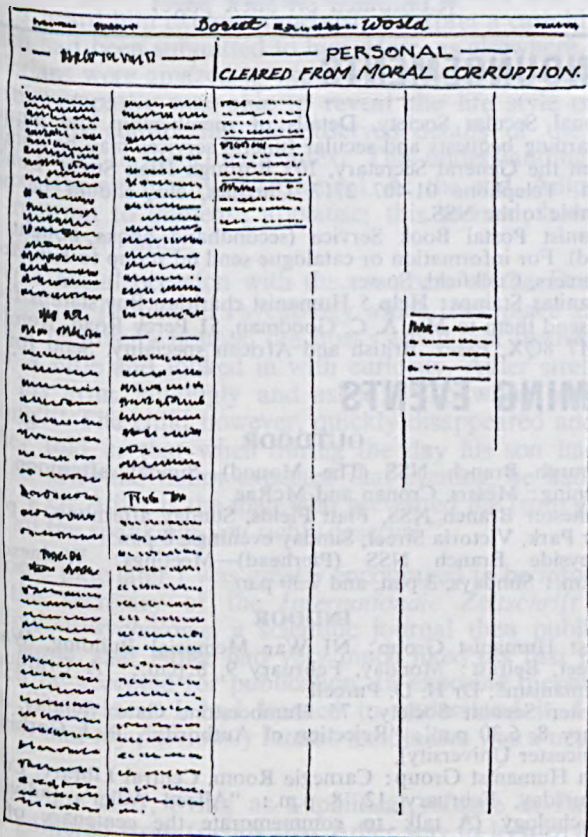
CONSPIRACY

THE DIRECTORS of *International Times* are at present remanded pending trial on a charge of conspiring to corrupt public morals. Nothing can be said about the case itself at this point because it is *sub judice*. In a recent press statement however, David Tribe, the President of the National Secular Society, drew attention to the anomalies which are promulgated by the law of conspiracy as it stands at the moment:

"In the first place, the whole law of 'conspiracy' needs to be revised. Often a conspiracy charge is brought when no other charge seems feasible, or to make the offence a graver one bearing a heavier penalty. In the case of personal classified advertisements, the notion of "corrupting public morals" seems absurd when the only conceivable response to such advertisements is a private one. It is particularly deplorable when the behaviour which might result from this response is itself legal. But there are broader questions of the freedom of publication.

agent or publisher in the country safe from the absurd charge of conspiring to corrupt public morals?"

For all I know one of the meetings advertised on this page may be in some kind of code. I may be inadvertently advertising a necrophiliac orgy. As the law stands I could be prosecuted. Even staid publications, like *The Times*, carry a number of advertisements, which advertise something the true nature of which is unknown to *The Times'* editor. Is he responsible for any which may corrupt morals? Is he therefore to check each advertisement individually? If so *The Times'* personal column will suddenly become very empty and very impersonal.



WEALTH ACCUMULATES AND MEN DECAY

THE EIGHTY-SEVENTH *Year Book of the Church of England*, published on January 30, reveals that the numbers of clergy and the numbers of confirmed Anglicans continue to fall, while the finances of the Church continue to improve. Picking one's way through the complex amalgam of statistics one finds that of 10,071 parish clergymen only 27 are under thirty. There are however, 1,035 assistants to the parish clergy below that age where hope customarily becomes despair. There are 51 parish clergymen over 80, the oldest of whom is 92. The *Year Book* concludes that by the end of 1971 there will be 2,949 too few clergy.

The figures for confirmation in 1968 showed a drop of almost 10,000 over the previous year, falling to 124,987, which figure is over 31,000 lower than the confirmation figure for 1964. Figures are further provided, which enable us to see what proportion of church membership is made up of people, who are confirmed as children or teenagers and are for the rest of their lives counted as full members of the church. 82 per cent of all males and 76 per cent of all females were under the age of 21 when confirmed. Two thirds (i.e. 66.6 per cent) of all confirmations occurred before the age of 16.

The most common age for an individual to take confirmation vows falls between 12 and 15, though the youngest do it at the age of 7. It would be interesting to know how many of these young people undergo confirmation of their own free will, and how many of those who themselves passionately desire confirmation in their early youth have given up religion by the time they are adults. It would be even more interesting to know how many

How can newsagents be expected to know what may or may not be advertised in journals which they sell because the editorial material is of general interest (in distinction, say, from the *Ladies' Directory*, which was solely concerned with advertising)? How can editors who advertise public meetings know what may or may not be advocated at events they are unlikely to attend? If the present case should go against the accused, is any bookseller, news-

Freethinker

Published by G. W. Foote & Co. Ltd.

Editor: David Reynolds

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people would be confirmed were a minimum age of, say, 16 imposed.

For this is surely what should be done. Society recognises that children and teenagers must be protected from such evils as 'obscene' literature and films, too much work, sexual intercourse, and the responsibilities of driving motor-cars and making financial contracts, yet permits a young person to take vows of a religious nature before he is old enough to think for himself.

That this situation continues to be tolerated is a measure of the extraordinary attitude, which society now adopts towards religion in general and the Church of England in particular. On the one hand society treats religion with a degree of sanctimony, which causes legislators to consider religion as something above the law, and *Times* leader-writers to write: "Publication of the *Church of England Year Book* has become an annual occasion for gloomy (my italics) reflection on the condition of the Established Church in particular and religion in general". At the same time society seems to regard religious vows as something quite unimportant. When a young girl became involved recently in the rites of modern-day witches, there was a not inconsiderable outcry. Yet that young children take vows in the Church of England is, in many ways quite rightly, considered not of enough consequence to warrant any fuss.

Thus, setting aside the psychological consequences of young children being instilled with religion and in many cases virtually forced by tradition, school-teachers and parents to undergo the awesome ceremony of confirmation, the only really tangible injustice lies in the way in which by accepting the vows of minors the Church enables itself to claim a degree of support far in excess of reality.

Despite the dwindling numbers of priests and full members of the Church, the income of the Church Commissioners and the Parochial Church Councils are increasing, as are parochial bequests and legacies. The latter, of course, represent income derived from the wills of people recently deceased and naturally their wishes are to be respected. The rest however, is money accumulated from land and properties acquired over the course of many centuries—assets given to the church by the then rulers of England for the use of the people of England. That these assets have increased a great deal, while the use made of the Church by the people of England has decreased, gives weight to the opinion that the Church of England should be nationalised. The *Times* leader-writer wrote of the Church as revealed in the *Year Book*: "Wealth accumulates and men decay". The National Secular Society proposed a scheme recently whereby the churches become the property of the nation to be used primarily for adult education purposes, and are hired by the Parochial Church Councils for their ceremonies.

The statistics to be found in the eighty-seventh *Church of England Year Book* attest to the fairness of this scheme.

SURVEY ON ABORTION

AS REPORTED in last week's FREETHINKER on February 13 Mr Godman Irvine, MP, is to introduce a Bill which will seek to restrict the workings of the Abortion Act. A survey of electors throughout Great Britain was conducted by National Opinion Polls between January 7 and January 12 this year. It revealed: that over 60 per cent approve all the grounds for abortion contained in the Abortion Act; that 40 per cent think the Abortion Act should be left as it is while 15 per cent think the Act should be altered to make legal abortions more easily obtainable; that 62 per cent think that the National Health Service should make special arrangements in the areas where the attitudes of local doctors make abortions hard to come by; and that a majority of Conservative, Labour and Liberal voters support the Act, as do a majority of all religious groups save the Roman Catholics, 53 per cent of whom want to reduce the legal grounds for abortion.

Of these findings Mr David Steel, MP, the principal sponsor of the original Abortion Bill, has said:

"This survey is of particular significance at a time when another attempt is being made to restrict the working of the Act. It shows that the public agrees that the proposals now being made, by people who have always opposed abortion reform, would only have a damaging effect on

(Continued on back page)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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, SE1. Telephone 01-407 2717. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to the NSS.

Humanist Postal Book Service (secondhand books bought and sold). For information or catalogue send 6d stamp to Kit Mouat, Mercers, Cuckfield, Sussex.

Humanitas Stamps: Help 5 Humanist charities. Buy stamps from/ or send them to Mrs A. C. Goodman, 51 Percy Road, Romford, RM7 8QX, Essex. British and African speciality. Send for list.

COMING EVENTS

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: Messrs. Cronan and McRae.
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.

INDOOR

Belfast Humanist Group: NI War Memorial Building, Waring Street, Belfast: Monday, February 9, 8 p.m.: "A Critique of Humanism", Dr H. D. Purcell.
Leicester Secular Society: 75 Humberstone Gate; Sunday, February 8, 6.30 p.m.: "Rejection of Authority", P. J. Corbishley (Leicester University).
Luton Humanist Group: Carnegie Room, Central Library, Luton: Thursday, February 12, 8 p.m.: "Alfred Adler's Individual Psychology (A talk to commemorate the centenary of his birth)", Paul Rom.
Nottingham and Notts Humanist Group: Adult Education Centre, 14 Shakespeare Street: Friday, February 13, 7.30 p.m.: "Thomas Hardy and the Visual Arts (illustrated with colour slides)", Professor Alistair Smart (University of Nottingham).
South Place Ethical Society: Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1: Sunday, February 8, 11 a.m.: "A New Look at Aldous Huxley", T. F. Evans, L.L.B. Admission free. Tuesday, February 10, 7 p.m.: Discussion—"Moral Education in the Secondary School", Mrs E. Dunford, Admission 2s (including refreshments), members free. Humanist Forum—Sunday, February 8, 3 p.m.: "Squatting makes sense", Jim Radford.

MEMORIES OF AN INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGIST

PAUL ROM

On the Centenary of Alfred Adler's birth
7th February, 1970

By THE END of the twenties, every literate Central European had read about "Individual Psychology". This theory, and especially its practical usefulness, had won over to Alfred Adler's teaching many psychiatrists and educators as well as democratic politicians and even ministers of Christian churches.

I had acquired in private sessions the theory and practice of this "Science of Living" which helps to overcome the inferiority complex. Adler could rightly say that he was the father of this concept. In September 1930, as a young teacher I was happy to go to Berlin where the Fifth International Congress for Individual Psychology took place. The congress was a decisive event in my life.

I was impressed by the simplicity and concreteness of Adler's opening speech to the part of the congress which dealt with difficult children and education in general. And again I admired his modesty and candour when, to an intimate circle of Berlin students, he spoke about his recent visit to the USA where, he said, he had planted the "flag of Individual Psychology". But he quickly replaced the proud word "Fahne" (flag) with "Faehnchen" (little flag).

A year later, at a meeting of health workers near Dresden, I heard him extemporaneously interpret a case history which had been submitted to him. Here, as elsewhere, non-Adlerians were amazed to experience how Adler with considerable empathy was able to reveal the life style of the patient, by considering the observed details of the case immediately in their total context. This understanding suggested efficient means of treatment. At the end, Adler left the rostrum to immense applause; this seemed, however, not to concern him.

At a social occasion with the members of the Dresden Society for Individual Psychology which took place at one of the member's houses, the host's small son opened the door a little and looked in with curiosity. Adler stretched out his arms invitingly and asked: "To whom do you belong?" The child however, quickly disappeared and the father told us that when during the day his son had inquired after the visitor expected that evening, he had told him: "Dr Adler is the man who prevented me from giving you all the spankings you richly deserve!"

Some time later I was greatly encouraged to be informed by the secretary of the *Internationale Zeitschrift fuer Individualpsychologie*, a scientific journal then published in Vienna, that Adler had very much liked my first paper which he accepted for publication. In exposing therein my own life-style as I had learned to understand it, I had shown that my previously fanatic teetotalism was a neurotic trait.

In May 1937, living as a political refugee in Paris, I had gathered from friends that Adler was to lecture at the Cercle Laennec. I rang him up at his hotel, just to say how-do-you-do, and did not expect he would have much time for me. However, he invited me to see him and I spent a beautiful hour with him and his wife who freely joined in our conversation. When later Dr H. Schaffer joined us and Adler had presented us to each other, we exchanged visiting cards. To my surprise I saw that my new acquaintance lived in the same Latin Quarter as myself. I said to Adler: "You had to come from New York

to Paris to bring two men together who are practically neighbours!" "Yes", he retorted in his Viennese way of speaking German, "during all my life it was my endeavour to bring people together". These words would be the finest epitaph for the man and savant, whose sudden death in Aberdeen, only ten days after our conversation, was a shock for all the world.

Adler had left Austria to become Professor of medical psychology in the US. He died two years before Freud, who was by fourteen years his senior. When reading the two volumes of the *Minutes of the Psychoanalytic Society in Vienna 1906-1910 (1962-1967)* we can appreciate the honest wrestling of those two men and their colleagues for a better understanding of neuroses. Adler and a few friends seceded from this Society in 1911 to form a new school. He could no longer accept Freud's view that instincts determine human behaviour. He had come to understand the whole individual as a unique organism in his concrete social interrelationships and in his striving to overcome the difficulties inherent in his very existence. The words for this "striving to overcome" have changed from "aggression drive", "masculine protest", "striving for power or superiority" to that of "striving for perfection"; but unchanged remains the insight into the process of compensating and overcompensating inferiorities of body or status. When directed co-operatively towards the community, the compensation striving will be socially valid and will serve both survival and a better human culture. Personal failures, however, were shown to be the result of a vain striving for personal superiority without usefulness. This process begins in early childhood when a child is pampered and discouraged.

The therapy which Adler and his followers developed consists in replacing the "I-centered" goal of the human misfit by a more "We-centered" one which will slowly transform the total individual life style into one directed to be healthy and happy as a good friend, worker, and parent.

The number of men and women who knew and worked with Adler naturally decreases every year; but the School of Individual Psychology was revived after the war and is now flourishing in many countries. My acting as the provisional secretary and my founding, in 1959, the *Individual Psychology News Letter* were instrumental for setting up, in 1954, in Zurich, a new International Association of which the IPNL became the official organ. Subsequent congresses were held in Holland (1957), Vienna (1960), Paris (1963), and Salzburg (1966). The congress due in 1969 was postponed to 1970 to fall together with the centenary celebrations and will be held in New York.

Besides the IPNL as link between Adlerian groups and individuals everywhere, national bulletins are published in various countries of the world. The academic semi-annual *Journal of Individual Psychology* is edited by Professor H. L. Ansbacher, University of Vermont, USA.

There are well-established training institutes in New York, Chicago, Amsterdam, Tel-Aviv; and smaller ones in various other places, including London. The Adlerian Society of Great Britain, besides monthly public lecture-discussions, holds study courses as well as an annual week-end school and maintains a child guidance clinic. Most books by and on Adler, including several biographies, are on the market.

BARONESS WOOTTON

Interviewed by DAVID REYNOLDS



REYNOLDS: *Why are you a humanist?*

WOOTTON: I think because in my student days I came to see that the Christian dogmas were intellectually completely incredible.

REYNOLDS: *Did you have a religious upbringing?*

WOOTTON: I had a moderately religious upbringing. That is to say I was normally taken to church, although I don't think my surviving parent was really very profoundly religious. I went through quite a religious phase in my adolescence and then I gradually woke to see that it really was, as I say, incredible. And in those days the church and the exponents of the church really believed all the Christian dogmas—the virgin birth, the resurrection and so forth. They didn't do what they do so commonly now, continue to profess them and at the same time treat them as not to be taken seriously.

REYNOLDS: *Why do you think the new theology has emerged?*

WOOTTON: I imagine it's because intelligent people really cannot believe this extraordinary story and all these miracles. They're so totally inconsistent with what we know of the world and life, and I think what has happened to a lot of people who have gone into the church in a religious frame of mind is that gradually the scales have dropped away from their eyes and they have found themselves in a very awkward situation. One has sympathy with them

because many of them depend for their living on their profession as priests. It's true that unless they're bishops they don't get very much living, but nevertheless it may be all they've got, and so they feel that they have to come to some kind of compromise. I personally think that such compromises are in most cases intellectually dishonest.

REYNOLDS: *But if they are intelligent men, why do you think they can't throw off the whole thing? Is it because they've been indoctrinated in their childhood?*

WOOTTON: Well, it's very difficult suddenly to throw up your whole philosophy, especially when you have committed yourself professionally to it. This is the difficult thing. If you haven't committed yourself professionally you can tear it up and start afresh, but it's not so easy when you've committed yourself.

REYNOLDS: *So you wouldn't condemn any of them as out and out hypocrites?*

WOOTTON: I think they are hypocrites, but I think they're hypocrites because they're in a very difficult situation. Yes, I would say that they are hypocrites—particularly when they are bishops, and in a much more influential position than perhaps some unfortunate parish priest who has lost his faith.

REYNOLDS: *Would you describe yourself as an agnostic or an atheist?*

WOOTTON: I don't much mind. You can use which you like. I'm quite prepared to be called an atheist but I suppose that intellectually one *ought* to say agnostic since there is no proof either way as to the existence of the deity. Still I would be greatly surprised to find out I was wrong as an atheist. I once said to a bishop that I thought the real unfairness in life was that if he was right, then, after death, he could turn round and say to me, "I told you so", but if I'm right I can't, because death will be extinction. Incidentally, the conclusion I came to was that he really shared my view, about the finality of death!

REYNOLDS: *Have any particular philosophers or writers influenced you?*

WOOTTON: I have an immense admiration for Bertrand Russell. If anybody's influenced me it would be he. I don't think, though, that I would really say that I'd been consciously influenced in forming my own opinions. One has read a lot and had contact with people and all this process helps to form one's opinions but I wouldn't name any particular person unless perhaps it was Bertrand Russell.

REYNOLDS: *What do you think should be the main object of the Humanist movement?*

WOOTTON: I think the main object of the Humanist movement should be to prevent religious dogmas being thrust down people's throats. By that I mean that we should strongly oppose and try to get rid of religious instruction in schools as it now is. I don't in the least object to religious teaching in the sense of informing the young about the various religions of the world and letting them discuss these and form their own opinions. But I think we should try to get rid of compulsory religious instruction in schools and of the continual propagation of religious dogmas on radio and television. I certainly think there should be a place for religious broadcasting for people who

want it; but it's really a minority interest. It's a minority of people who are Christians and, while they should have their rights as much as anybody else, the rest of us who have no religious belief should have equal rights, which we do not have.

REYNOLDS: *What do you think of the plans that are being put forward at the moment for moral education?*

WOOTTON: I think this is important. At the moment there is a vacuum. You see, at present moral education is tied up, in schools for instance, with the religious dogmas, and this happens also in places like prisons. So if you cease to believe the religious dogmas you are in danger of throwing away the moral baby along with the Christian bathwater. I think there is a very real danger that this is happening. Therefore I would like to see *secular* moral education and discussion to take the place of the moral education based on religious dogmas.

REYNOLDS: *Do you think the Humanist movement should be involved in politics?*

WOOTTON: No. Not otherwise than in the kind of topic that I've mentioned such as trying to get rid of compulsory religious instruction. You know the fascinating thing about the Act of 1944 is that it says that every day there must be an act of worship, but it doesn't say worship of what.

REYNOLDS: *Should the humanist movement have any part in questions such as the abolition of capital punishment?*

WOOTTON: I think that *possibly* you might say it was involved in that, because a humanist, who believes that this life is all that we have naturally attaches even greater value to it than somebody who believes there's another life coming afterwards, so it wouldn't matter so much if we lost this one. But I think the Humanist movement as such should not take part in politics generally. If you want to go into politics then choose your political party and attach yourself to that. I believe that we are likely to lose our distinctive contribution if we attach ourselves to an all-embracing political programme, which is what the British Humanist Association have done. This is why I left them. When I look at their political programme it seems to me that they have virtually borrowed the programme of the Liberal party and they might as well all be Liberals.

REYNOLDS: *But should we keep right out of matters like abortion law reform, euthanasia and so on?*

WOOTTON: As a movement, yes. No doubt most humanists will take certain views on these topics, but I don't think that they should make it part of the Humanist movement.

REYNOLDS: *And would the same go for something like protesting against the war in Vietnam, as a Humanist movement?*

WOOTTON: Yes. I don't think we should as a Humanist movement. But I wouldn't be too rigid about this, if there's some vital issue like the war in Vietnam and humanists want to protest against it. I mean if we are admitting that they should protest against capital punishment they might well protest against all war if you take the view that life is —well I shall borrow the word and say—sacred.

REYNOLDS: *Presumably on abortion humanists are really going against this principle?*

WOOTTON: Well, in my view they are, but I'm in a very small minority of humanists there.

REYNOLDS: *Do you think religion will eventually die out?*

WOOTTON: In the Western world, yes, and I dare say in the rest of the world afterwards. I suppose its dying pretty fast. On the other hand there are very large areas of the world where there are strong religious beliefs still, if you take the whole of the Indian continent, for instance.

REYNOLDS: *Could you put a date on when you think it will die out in this country?*

WOOTTON: I shouldn't think it will be a very effective force in another century in this country. By then it should be confined to quite a small minority. In the world at large the process may take a good deal longer.

REYNOLDS: *Would you agree that as humanists we are trying to build a world that is ruled by reason?*

WOOTTON: By reason up to a point, but I would rather say by regard for humanity. You see if you have any moral principles at all you can't in the last resort defend them by reason. Whatever your moral principles, if you go back far enough, you come to something which is an absolute, for which you cannot give any reasoned argument. If you are a Christian you say that you must not commit adultery because it is a sin, and it is a sin because it is against the will of God, so you come back to the absolute of God. If you are a humanist you say you must not commit cruelty because it creates misery and is morally repugnant. If you are asked to give the reason why cruelty is to be condemned you can't give any reason. You just say that it is to be condemned. So you come back to an absolute in either case. What I think we have to do is to build a code of morals, which is based upon the principle—the good old utilitarian principles is as good as any—of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. However, some philosophers, who are rather more precise, say we should not so much try to increase happiness, because happiness is a slippery concept since there may be different kinds and values of happiness, but that we should rather make it our aim to diminish misery. This is less exciting but perhaps more practical.

REYNOLDS: *But presumably we are becoming more and more ruled by reason than by superstition?*

WOOTTON: Well, I hope more by reason than by superstition. I'm not sure that we're ruled more by reason than by irrational emotion.

REYNOLDS: *But if we were to become more ruled by reason than by irrational emotion, how do we avoid approaching Aldous Huxley's Brave New World or something of that type?*

WOOTTON: Because we have moral absolutes: because we do have moral absolutes: because as humanists we think that every living human being is a uniquely valuable personality and therefore we would be repelled by the idea of having some who are virtually robots. We *must* have some moral absolutes.

REYNOLDS: *If, for instance, the recent Euthanasia Bill had been passed, or a similar Bill is passed in the future, then how do we draw a line? At this point in time it seems a good thing for a certain number of people to be allowed to be mercy-killed. Then in twenty years it might seem reasonable to kill a different category of people.*

WOOTTON: In twenty years' time we won't agree to that. That's all.

REYNOLDS: *You don't think there's a danger of a slow erosion . . .*

WOOTTON: No, I think you've got to be very careful about mercy-killing, but there's no reason why you shouldn't be careful. After all have we not had a recent law about homosexuality in private consenting adults? You could argue equally that this was the thin end of the wedge and presently we should legalise homosexuality in public between adults and juveniles. I see no prospect of that. I think we should always be opposed to that, and equally we should be opposed to extension of euthanasia, if it meant putting people out of the way merely because they were a nuisance.

REYNOLDS: *Do you think the permissive trend, as it's called, is a result of the decline in religious belief?*

WOOTTON: Well, some aspects of it are. I think sexual permissiveness is.

REYNOLDS: *And then would you say that was a bad thing?*

WOOTTON: No. I should say in general that it was a good thing.

REYNOLDS: *Would you prefer a teenage son or daughter of yours to take cannabis in moderation or go to church?*

WOOTTON: On the whole I should prefer them to go to church. I don't think going to church would do them any permanent harm. There are certain risks that cannabis would. We don't know the long-term physical effects, and as things are at present cannabis is illegal. This I regard as of great importance. It means that in order to smoke cannabis they would have to go into circles which are deliberately breaking the law, where they might be exposed to other temptations which are much more dangerous. If cannabis were legal I shouldn't be nearly so disturbed at their taking it in moderation.

REYNOLDS: *Would it not also worry you if your children went to church?*

WOOTTON: I shouldn't much care whether they went to church or not really. I regard that as their business. I don't think it's for me to say.

REYNOLDS: *Wouldn't it affect you in any way?*

WOOTTON: I should be sorry if a son or daughter of mine became religious. I should think it showed at the very least a lack of intellectual perception, which I should regret, as I should be sorry to have a stupid son or daughter. Perhaps this would be one of the signs of stupidity. But I shouldn't really distress myself over either religion or cannabis, except for the illegality of cannabis, and that I should be disturbed about because by smoking cannabis they would unavoidably risk getting into circles where some very nasty doors might be opened.

REYNOLDS: *To get back to permissiveness in sex . . .*

WOOTTON: I can never understand all the fuss about sex really. I think that as long as people are careful that they do not irresponsibly create new lives, it really is their private business what they do. I used to find this very difficult when I was chairman of a juvenile court, and we had girls of sixteen, who had become mildly promiscuous and who were brought before the court as being in moral danger and in need of care or protection, as I never could think of any sound arguments to convince them why they shouldn't do what they were doing.

REYNOLDS: *And would you say this is a healthy result of the decline in religion?*

WOOTTON: Yes. I think so.

REYNOLDS: *So previously religion was exercising influence in a sphere where no influence was needed?*

WOOTTON: Yes, I certainly think so. I suppose that perhaps a vast amount of sexual activity in a promiscuous way is not easily reconcilable with an ordered life, or even perhaps with a creative life in a wider sense, but I cannot see that there should be the kind of inhibition that the Christian churches have imposed for a very long while. And I would be particularly in favour of premarital sexual experiment. I think before you settle down to say you're going to live with somebody permanently you'd better find out how you get on with them sexually, even if you don't regard marriage as entirely a permanent institution. If you still draw a distinction between a relationship in marriage and a relationship not in marriage, then when you marry you are presumably thinking of a more lasting relationship and perhaps also the propagation of a family. This is a serious undertaking and before you do that you'd better find out how you get on sexually; and perhaps you'd better find out how you get on sexually with more than one person. I would regard that as a good idea.

REYNOLDS: *You're advocating what Christians would call promiscuity.*

WOOTTON: I'm not *advocating promiscuity*, in the sense of rushing round sleeping with every other person that you meet. I see no point in advocating that, but I'm not advocating chastity. At most I'm advocating pre-marital unchastity.

REYNOLDS: *With more than one person, so one gets a . . .*

WOOTTON: I'm not advocating it. I'm simply saying that I think it's very often a good idea and if people want to do it they should do it without any sense of guilt.

REYNOLDS: *You said just now that a distinction between marriage and living together while not being married can be drawn. Do you not think marriage has any particular value?*

WOOTTON: I think it's supremely important from the point of view of creating children. You've got to contemplate some relationship that you hope is going to be lasting if you are going to bring up a family. If people are married and have no children then I would say that marriage makes no difference; but if people have children then there is a new responsibility. I regard marriage simply as an institution for the care of children.

REYNOLDS: *Do you think there's anything in the current clamour from hippies and other people, for society's existing in communes rather than in small families of three or four people?*

WOOTTON: Well, if that's what they want, they're quite entitled to have it. I wouldn't take a strong line about that. I think there's quite a bit to be said for it.

REYNOLDS: *But you wouldn't think that either policy is better than another?*

WOOTTON: In itself no. I'd be all for experiment. Communal life has certain advantages. It has great advantages for baby-sitting. This is practical. I mean a lot of young people—three or four couples together—can make communal arrangements. It is more like the kibbutz.

REYNOLDS: Part of the object is to give children more than two parents.

WOOTTON: Yes. That may well be a good idea. There's much to be said for giving children more than two parents. It increases the chances that they might like two of them. You can get landed with two parents you detest.

REYNOLDS: Finally, Lord Raglan said in a recent FREETHINKER interview that he agreed with your view that in certain circumstances infanticide would be preferable to abortion.

WOOTTON: Yes. The only circumstances in which I think it's preferable is the case where it is found that a woman has a fifty-fifty chance of producing a very gravely deformed child. On the other hand if its fifty-fifty, it might be a perfectly normal child. In that case I think it's a pity to destroy the embryo because you might be destroying a normal child. If the child is actually born, you know which it is, and on those grounds I would hold that infanticide is to be preferred, because I don't want to destroy a good life and in the present state of genetic knowledge you can never say beforehand with a hundred per cent certainty: "this child will be an idiot or terribly deformed". At best you can sometimes forecast a fifty per cent probability.

Book Review

NICHOLAS GRIFFIN

Loving on Principle: E. W. Trueman Dicken (Darton, Longman and Todd, 21s).

Loving on Principle is in some ways a respectable though rather an old fashioned book. By this I mean that Dr Dicken sometimes takes the care that the difficult arguments with which he is concerned deserve. Indeed he has a very sharp mind when he wishes to use it. It is only when considering the credentials of his own views that his intelligence becomes somewhat blunted. To take good things first: his critique of Situation ethics is convincing, and his attack on psycho-analytic determinism (p. 10) is the neatest formulation of an old idea that I have seen. Generally, when Dr Dicken is on the offensive we may expect careful reasoning; unfortunately, however, the arguments he advances for his own views will not withstand the sort of critical pressure that he exerts on those of other people. A number of his arguments are slipshod or outright mistaken but there is not time in a short review to deal with more than the essentials.

He begins by criticising secular moral theories which he divides into two groups: the first, analytical, intellectual and scientific and the second, irrational and existentialist. Although Dr Dicken is concerned to refute them both, his preference is clearly for the latter. It is not a preference I share, simply for the reason that I find existentialism largely unintelligible. Dicken's attack on what might inaccurately be termed 'scientific morality' is largely based on the claim that scientific determinism, if true, will remove the whole point and purpose of morality. This is not so. If every action is determined by the situation in which the agent of the action finds himself, moral censure and praise could still, nonetheless, be part of that situation and hence play an important role. Thus moral judgment is not entirely irrelevant even in a mechanistic universe. Moreover, Dicken doesn't believe that scientific determinism as a programme can be carried through (for non-moral reasons) hence it seems that all morality (including 'scientific morality') will be left just as it was before. Dr Dicken accepts Christian determinism ('God has controlled and brought about whatever situation we may be in . . . ' p. 118) and also free will. This seems a little confused.

Dr Dicken's own starting point in morality is, improbably enough, *The Naked Ape*, and Desmond Morris's claim that man always seeks to minimise distress and that uncertainty is a source of stress. This seems altogether reasonable and acceptable to people as diverse as psycho-analysts, behaviourists and eighteenth century associationists. Dicken now claims that obedience to moral laws will enable people to predict our actions and thus reduce their own uncertainty (and thus distress) concerning what we will do. Because prediction is part of the business of reason, Dicken claims to have found a rational basis for morality. He concludes:

' . . . Desmond Morris's analysis of human behaviour should have sufficed to convince us that there are certain built-in patterns of human behaviour which we can . . . regard as normative. . . . We are all free to depart from these norms; but if we do, we shall predictably cause distress by disturbing the predicted pattern. . . . If . . . I say that my neighbour "ought" to do this or that, I am predicting his behaviour and admitting that it will cause . . . us distress if he behaves otherwise. I shall blame him "morally" if he chooses to do so.' (pp. 62-63).

Dr Dicken's argument seems to be leading him towards the most scientific of all 'scientific moralities', utilitarianism. But he shys off from this conclusion and seems to consider only the suffering caused to people by others not doing what they were expected to do. This view seems outright confused. Cruelty is expected of some people, is it therefore moral for such people to be cruel? If we are to make distress the touchstone of morality why consider only some types of distress? Doesn't the distress caused by being predictably cruel matter? Isn't it in fact more distressing to be able to predict your own murder than to be an unsuspecting victim? Moreover, if moral laws enable us to predict people's actions so do immoral ones. I cannot believe that the passage I've just quoted from Dr Dicken is anything more than a tissue of confusions.

The doctrine that moral imperatives are somehow 'built-in', in Dicken's term, to certain biological situations deserves further consideration. It is an attempt to overcome the old problem of deriving an 'ought' from an 'is': a problem still important in moral philosophy as the recent Institute of Philosophy lectures on the subject shows. On this issue Dr Dicken is regrettably vague. There is a case, I think, for holding that certain ends have 'built-in' imperatives; as, for example, 'If you want to get on you must work'. Here doing a certain action is necessary to achieve a certain end. But the imperatives are not so much moral as prudential and any moral question which might be raised about them is likely to be raised about the end to which they contribute. So that instead of asking 'Ought I to work?' we would ask 'Ought I to get on?' Unless there is an 'ought' in the end there will be no 'ought' in the imperative. This applies equally to utilitarianism and to Dicken's curiously restricted version of it. If we would reduce distress we ought to do certain things. But ought we to reduce distress? I agree with Dicken that prediction is part of the business of reason, but I do not believe that the predictable (even if it were always less distressing than the unpredictable, which it isn't) is logically always good.

So far Dicken's ethics have proved to be wholly secular and can perfectly well do without God. With this Dicken is not content. From the doctrine that certain biological situations have 'built-in' moral imperatives he moves—without justification—to the doctrine that the universe has 'built-in' moral imperatives. Then he insists that there could never be a moral order without a Moral Orderer (one feels obliged to use capitals for such an exalted being). Hence God is reluctantly dragged in to shore up the whole creaking edifice by an argument from moral design. This is argued only be analogy with the traditional argument from design which Dicken accepts. Anyone who believes that the argument from design contains anything but confusion should read chapter 3 of Antony Flew's excellent book *God and Philosophy*. Even granting Dicken's improbable assumptions I doubt if the argument from moral design will do any better.

However, this doesn't seem to be important for Dicken. Having constructed a system which he mistakenly calls 'rational' and 'realistic' he henceforth pays it very little attention. In subsequent chapters he gives his views on many problems but scarcely pays even lip service to his ethical theory. Instead he pays excessive attention to what he calls 'traditional Christian teaching', by which he means orthodox Catholic moral theology, notably the *Summa Theologica* of Thomas Aquinas. It is perhaps partly this that gives the book its old fashioned air, although the whole concept of a natural moral order is distinctly eighteenth century. Dicken defends a God of the gaps, he resurrects old and discredited arguments. Even the language is at times antique: sexual intercourse is 'possessing a woman'. Indeed Dicken's views on sexual morality are fiercely puritanical.

In the end, so far from defending an eccentric brand of utilitarianism, Dicken adopts a moral position that must have motivated Torquemada. We see exactly why Christianity has been such an atrociously evil force in the world. 'The Christian', Dicken writes, 'has every reason to know that the sufferings of the present time are by no means the worst of evils. The destruction of the physical body is far less a calamity than the disruption of our relationship with God, as our Lord affirmed' (p. 119). No reference here to the reduction of distress. 'Better', said Calvin, 'that we all perish a hundred times than that the name of God should be subjected to infamy.' It's as well to get our priorities right.

SURVEY ON ABORTION

(Continued from page 42)

the working of the law. There have certainly been some problems since the Act came into force, but that was to be expected. The Secretary of State for Social Services, Mr Crossman, has undertaken a Departmental Review of the working of the Act and it may be that the Ministerial Regulations will have to be changed. But it is to be hoped that Parliament will not amend the Act itself unless the change would clearly help it to work better. None of the changes proposed so far would have that effect—they would only deny legal abortion to many women, with the inevitable result that the criminal abortion rate would rise.”

STOP THE TOUR

THAT THE APARTHEID POLICY of the South African government is an evil to be expunged as quickly as possible has long been the belief of humanists throughout the world. The means of influencing the South African government has on the other hand been a subject of much controversy. Sport has provided one of the chief methods of influence. There have long been those who have advocated that all sporting ties with a racist regime should be cut. Others have thought it more expedient to maintain sporting contact but to endeavour to influence the touring South African sportsmen, and through them the South African public and sporting authorities, and ultimately through them the South African government. A point in favour of this policy was that to have broken all ties would have offended the South African government to an extent which would serve only to strengthen their resolve to practice apartheid—better to do things slowly than to provoke a reaction.

However, the recent protests against the Springboks Rugby side have had such an effect on the South African public that to declare a complete break would surprise them far less than it would have done a year or two ago. Recent developments have further illustrated the immediate practical advantages of such a policy. Mr David Tribe, the President of the National Secular Society, in a press statement apropos of the proposed South African cricket tour, writes:

“There comes a time . . . when international exchanges cause more harm than good, especially when politics is injected into the exchange itself. By its recent refusal to grant visas to Arthur Ashe and an international cricket team solely on the grounds of their colour, the South African Government has demonstrated its fundamental misunderstanding of the principles of sport.

In the D'Oliveira affair the MCC showed themselves weak and spineless men who by their vacillation gave the South African Government an excuse to claim that the British authorities were determined to embarrass it. With the disturbances likely to result if the proposed South African tour goes ahead, the MCC is likely to cancel it in midstream. This would give South Africa and its friends the excuse to say that intimidation had worked against them, while the mere fact of extending the invitation would offend most Commonwealth countries. In all these circumstances we urge the MCC—or the British Government if the MCC takes no action—to cancel the proposed tour now.”

LETTERS

Film categories

I HAVE READ your leading article about the revisions to the film category system.

In reply I want to make only one point. On several occasions in the last few years I have stated publicly, at meetings and on television and radio, that this Board does not consider itself a moral guardian of adults, although it does consider that it has a responsibility of this kind in dealing with films to be seen by children. The new category system, which will come into operation this year, will go a long way towards meeting the points made in your article.

JOHN TREVELYAN,

Secretary, British Board of Film Censors.

Manchester Public Speakers' Site

BY THE END of March we should know if Manchester is to have a permanent open air speakers' site, so ending my own personal battle with the City Council. Last year I contacted the head office of the National Council for Civil Liberties, who put me in touch with the local branch. The result was that Mr B. Hancock, a member of NCCL, The Reverend Willetts, a member of the Protestant Truth Society, a member of the Catholic Truth Society and myself met officials of the corporation on November 14 last year. The City Council have instructed the Town Planning Committee to find a site by March. I will be very surprised if we get offered a central site, because the police, in particular, do not want any crowds to gather, and behind the scenes the council back them up.

Will all Manchester members please write to their MPs with a request that a permanent site be granted. The site we want is facing Woolworths in St Mary's Gate, Manchester. We are told it is not safe due to the state of the existing turf. If the corporation will provide materials, we will provide labour free.

VINCENT J. WOOD.

CAXTON HALL, LONDON, S.W.1.

(St James's Park Underground)

Thursday, March 5th, 7.30 p.m.

Profile on

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IN THE SEVENTIES

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