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Coming at Conway Hall

Sunday, June 2

11.00 a.m.—**Sunday Meeting: RICHARD HAUSER** on **The Second Coming of an Ethical Society**. Contralto solos: Jean Robertson

6.00 p.m.—**Bridge Practice** in the Library

Sunday, June 9

11.00 a.m.—**Sunday Meeting: RICHARD CLEMENTS, OBE** on **The Changing Scene in Europe**. Violin and piano: Margot McGibbon and Phyllis Roast

3.00 p.m.—**Forum: Voluntary Workers Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow** with **Geraldine Aves, CBE**.

6.00 p.m.—**Bridge Practice**

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THE ETHICAL RECORD

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The views expressed in this journal are not necessarily those of the Society

EDITORIAL

A basis for morality

IF HUMANISM is about anything, it is surely about our relationships with each other. Where we differ from our fellow-beings who accept irrational religious beliefs is the emphasis we place on these relationships.

The supernaturalists say that most emphasis should be on a relationship or attitude to, some notion of a supreme or extra-terrestrial being, while few Humanists would argue that the emphasis for them is on attitudes to each other.

Most major religions compromise, by saying that attitudes to each other are the second most important parcel of rules by which to live, attitudes to notions of "God" being in first place.

What effect on our human relationships has our rejection of revealed religion? Our spiritually-inclined friends say it has to be detrimental, since only from an external source can we derive a basis for morality. The animal kingdom they say, has no morality, and practises the most abominable behaviour patterns, as well as the beneficial social orders which can be observed.

But if they believe that the animal kingdom has the monopoly of atrocity because it has no worship, they must walk about the human world with all their senses shut down.

For the most part, we say that the rejection of supernatural belief releases the intellect to give more consideration to our fellows. The basis of humanist morality is social responsibility, the behaviour to our fellow based on our own experience of what is right and what is wrong. It is difficult to see why the religious fail to understand this principle.

The responsibility which Humanists have today, when religion is so widely disregarded, is more than ever toward morality. God-based morality has, by and large, been as effective as social morality but for having caused wars, persecution and repression of freedom. Those features can also be seen in non-religious environments and the animal kingdom, too.

So if revealed religion, and its morality, is in decline, we must see to it that Humanism is ready and able to provide a better set of morals. The most optimistic of us would be hesitant to suggest that we are so prepared at the moment.

Far the best method of disseminating our ideas is by the example we set in our lives. We should take every opportunity of declaring our allegiance to Humanism, and show, in our words and in our actions, that the rejection of theology does not mean the rejection of morality. Too many non-Humanists are sure the two go together.

The Ethical Impossibility of War Today

BY

RAYMOND G. HELMICK

THE ESSENTIAL thesis is that a change has come about under modern conditions that made war ethically unacceptable even for one who was not an orthodox pacifist, who for instance accepted the right and necessity of fighting against Hitler.

There are at least four reasons why wars are fought:

(a) for the restoration of justice. This is the classical reason for war that is behind all just-war theory. It concerns a problem that arose historically in the Judaeo-Christian context. If one accepted the decalogue's prohibition of killing and the New Testament command to love not only neighbours but enemies, what could justify war? An alternative form of the question arose only when the basic acceptability had been subsumed: which wars are just?

(b) as an instrument of policy, the "continuation of politics by other means". This as a reason for war sounds cynical and has no recognised place in just-war theory. But after the revulsion of public feeling from the horrors of the 17th century religious wars, which had ostensibly been conducted according to just-war theory, the acceptance of war as an instrument of policy in the 18th century made that period's wars far less horrible than the 17th century's.

(c) as a distraction from the nation's, the government's or the ruler's difficulties elsewhere. This is normally the reason for attacks on scapegoats, and as recently as a few months ago suspicions were voiced that the nuclear alert by the USA during the Middle East war had to do rather with Mr Nixon's Watergate difficulties than with a Russian threat. The only remedy or alternative here is vigilance.

(d) for the sake of a high intensity of living or for the proving of masculine worth (machismo). Low intensity life is simply unexciting, so that the provision of nothing better is itself a cause of war.

War Justification

Traditionally, the classical just-war theory was not always an effort to promote the acceptance of war, though it was at the crucial starting point of its history. Instead it was usually an effort either to eliminate war as a possibility or, more realistically, to limit and temper it. But while this was true at a theoretical level, in practice the leadership of Churches or other sources of ethical teaching, as part of the establishment, has been expected (seldom failing to fulfil the expectations) to accede to State wishes and provide, out of just-war theory, a rationale to justify whatever war the State chose to indulge in. Thus all the religious and ethical forces have quite blandly co-operated with the cynicism that followed the 1914-1918 war. After literally millions of dead had been piled up in most irresponsible fashion, each country simply built an impressive monument to them somewhere—Whitehall, the Arc de Triomphe, Arlington National Cemetery—and called them "glorious".

The Romans and most other ancient peoples, including the "barbarians", had no problem about the justification of war. Their ethics called for obedience to the State, their personalised ideals of manhood, *virtus*, saw war as a proving ground for masculine worth, and their religions had warrior cults. The automatic pacifism of the early Christian community had its bases in the decalogue and the love of neighbour, but was closely allied with all ethical outlooks that proceed from an absolute respect for

human life. It was slowly eroded by two factors: obedience in the Roman context to the bidding of the State and a reluctance to turn away converts from among the soldiers of the imperial armies. The major change came only after Christianity had become the State religion of the Roman Empire.

In the Constantinian order, Church and State were seen as the twin pillars of order, closely linked, with the Church serving as paradigm to the State in defining ideals and ethical imperatives. Constantine's own conversion was explicitly in the context of victory in battle. He and his administrators assumed the rightness of war as an instrument of State policy as a matter of course, and expected divine favour in it. This changed situation of the Christian Church with regard to war was reinforced by the barbarian threat to the existence of the Empire, its order and its culture. Quite contrary to its own internal doctrine, the Church identified its interests with the preservation of the Empire and made its choices on war and peace accordingly.

Augustine was the key man who made the fatal choice for the Christian Church and for Western history. He launched the Just War theory explicitly in order to justify the use of war as an instrument of policy. His problem was, in view of the decalogue and the love-your-enemy teaching, when it could be justified to resort to war. His answer, with the barbarians at the gates, was that war could be the resort in order to defend or restore justice. This is a hard argument to refute, since it treats our responsibility as an imperative.

Five Conditions

The conditions prescribed in the traditional theory can generally be reduced, among the many variants in medieval, Baroque and modern teaching, to five: (1) just cause; (2) necessity, or the exhaustion of all other means; (3) legitimacy, or declaration by a supreme authority; (4) proportionality, i.e. between the means employed or harm caused by the war and the good (restoration of justice) sought; and (5) right intention, which could only be the restoration of justice itself, not vengeance, the humiliation of the enemy, saving of face or any of the other alternatives that are common in practice.

The criterion of a just cause was always the least successful of the conditions in limiting wars, insofar as the decision on what war was just or when justice needed defending was left to the State. In Roman law, the will of the ruler was law, making what the State commanded *ipso facto* just and binding on the subjects. In the modern State too, the citizen who fails to participate in and approve what the "Nation" (a new holy word) has taken as its common purpose in a war effort, or who actively opposes it, can expect small sympathy from his fellows.

As regards necessity as a condition of a just war to claim that all other means for the restoration of justice have been exhausted is necessarily an insult to human ingenuity, imagination, creativity. In practice, people or nations deciding to go to war do not go through a process of exhausting other means: they may go through a process of arguing that they have done so, but in fact they go to war because that is the way they have decided to do it, or that is what they would really enjoy doing.

The legitimacy condition grew up in the context of the Holy Roman Empire idea. The requirement that a just war could only be declared by a supreme authority (modern theory is likely to see this in a difficult-to-define "the people") was a way of providing a suitable and stable alternative to war. If there is only one legitimate supreme authority, he can always arbitrate (this is related to the justice condition) except in those cases in which he must himself declare war to prevent a violation of justice or punish a defiance of his authority. What thwarted this great concept

was the weakness of the Empire itself, the existence of kingdoms and principalities outside its jurisdiction, and eventually the conflict between Papacy and Empire. The idea was periodically renewed later, e.g. by Henri IV of France. Moralists, especially Catholics, of the 16th and 17th centuries, seeing the need for a supreme arbitrating authority, appealed to the Pope. The just-war theory was only viable if there were one supreme authority, a Pope or an Emperor or world government or a strengthened League of Nations. Publicity for the United Nations in its early days made much of this kind of function for the Security Council and its Police Actions. The only serious effort to apply this theory was in Korea, with most unhappy results for the UN; its peace-keeping forces have since limited themselves to standing between conflicting forces while alternative solutions are sought.

Proportionality as a condition for a just war is the burden of the argument that under modern conditions war has become unacceptable even for one who is not an absolute pacifist. However, lest this seem too dry and theoretical as a criterion for judging the humanity or inhumanity of war, we can point to the quite spontaneous revulsion that came from people's common sense—rationally, emotionally and intuitively—at the conclusion of the Thirty Years War in the 17th century. Such carnage, for whatever reason, could not be tolerated again, and the whole approach to war for the succeeding century and a half had to flow into different channels.

The requirement of a right intention as a criterion for the just war, that it be for the restoration of justice and no other purpose, is too moralistic. Actual motivations are never that clear. The other reasons why wars are fought have to be recognised and provision made for the alternative satisfaction of the basic needs they manifest if we do in fact reject war, whether on absolute principle or as a thing no longer viable or tolerable under present conditions. Still the complexity and eventual inextricability of motives in war does eventually produce the same common-sense revulsion as mentioned above. A convenient illustration is in the concluding line of the film, "Bridge on the River Kwai", when the last surviving character cries "Mad, mad!"

Change for the Worse

Our concern, however, is with what has actually happened in modern times to make the notion of a just war no longer viable. We have to recognise that the theory was never more than a reluctant acceptance of war and an effort to temper it. But under present conditions the just-war theory no longer manages either to justify or temper war, and even becomes an exacerbating factor in wars, making them more frightful than they would otherwise be. What has changed?

The level of fanaticism was the first to get out of control. This first occurred in the 11th century Crusades, when for the first time since the "barbarian" invasion of the Roman Empire it was Christendom against the non-Christian world, but under new circumstances that made the religious motivation far more paramount. The religious orders of knights—Templars, Hospitallers, Teutonic Knights, etc. were indices of the new fury. The concept behind their foundation had been in part to tame and civilise the blood-thirsty warrior class of the time, but it was singularly unsuccessful: the religious knights prayed (or preyed) a lot but were no less savage for it. The treatment of the Albigensians and later other heretics rose in their context. It was with the religious wars of the 16th and 17th centuries that the devilsation of the enemy became complete, and any atrocity could be worked on him, but this produced its own revulsion at the end of the Thirty Years War.

Napoleon made the difference that determined our modern pattern. His conscript armies of millions meant a total mobilisation of the popula-

tion and resources of the country, a total claim of the State, the "Nation", on every individual and the whole society to serve the common war goal. The concept is fundamentally totalitarian, and it is the basic modern pattern in the "democracies" as in any other State.

As this kind of war was practised, any moderated or qualified view of the enemy gradually faded. The US Civil War, with its four-years stalemate, gave the much neglected warning of what the First World War would be and produced a tide of hysteria in both sides that has still not receded from American life. The Austro-Prussian War was over too quickly to let popular tempers get too dangerously high, but the Franco-Prussian War left a lasting scar on the *psyche* of the defeated French. Both the First and the Second World Wars produced a full devilisation of the enemy, differing from the situation in the 17th century wars because of the scale provided by full mobilisation. There was a special American contribution to the whole development because of the peculiar messianism of the American "land of liberty". The enemy of a totally mobilised "nation" must, on the never-absent supposition that the war is just, be totally unjust, diabolic deserving of total defeat. Hence directly because of just-war concepts the war is made more rather than less ferocious and total. Unconditional Surrender (an American concept) is essential. War can no longer be fought for limited goals without risking the unbearable disillusionment of the nation's faithful.

Taking Sides

Lip service is still paid to proportionality as a requirement in war. The defeated can be accused of their war crimes as at Nuremberg, but to assume that one's own victorious and just cause could be guilty of war crimes is a blasphemous violation of patriotic duty (witness the treatment of the Mylai massacres, including even the one trial, that of Lieutenant Calley).

In the context of the post-Napoleonic total mobilisation for war, the weight of modern technology gives the last turn to the screw, and this is the basic thesis: it cannot be expected, as a moral possibility, in a war between modern industrialised States, that such restraint will be practised as not to use all the means necessary to defeat the enemy. The same is true in cases where smaller stand-in nations do the fighting in lieu of the large industrialised States, supplied and backed by them. There exists now an oversize capacity for destruction. Always, when defeat threatens, the use of a little more force might make the difference. The stand-in countries provide, further, a convenient laboratory for new weapons technology. It was obvious in the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war that new tanks, anti-tank weapons and ground-to-air missiles were being tested out for the benefit of the great powers. The stocking of poison gas of Russian origin for Iraqi use against the Kurds points the way for the first experimental use of this weapon since 1918, in a discreetly remote situation. The Vietnam war was as much a weapons laboratory as had been the Spanish Civil War in the '30s.

This is a temporal argument against war, of special force today although it has been used before, e.g. at the time of the introduction of the cross-bow. It can be obscured in two ways. One is when it is seen only in terms of nuclear weapons, as it was to a great extent by the Nuclear Disarmament movement. This had the effect of distracting attention from the destruction that can now be caused by the totality of modern technology and its weight and power even in what we choose to call "conventional" weapons, not merely the ABC weapons. This was a *cul-de-sac* into which the 20th century Roman Catholic anti-war tradition fell also. The World War II messages of Pope Pius XII (actually the work of the later arch-reactionary Cardinal Ottaviani) had drawn the conclusion that modern technology made war intolerable. Thomas Merton had taken up this argument,

developing it into a coherent neo-pacifism, and from him had come the likes of the Berrigans. But with Pope John XXIII this Catholic anti-war stream concentrated, like the Nuclear Disarmament movement, so exclusively on the nuclear war threat that the more general argument was lost sight of. That imbalance was largely corrected by the anti-Vietnam War peace movement.

The argument can be obscured also by absolute pacifism, that accepts no exceptions to the decalogue/love-your-enemy/ absolute respect for life priorities. This leaves no room to recognise that anything has changed from previous times to now, or that the question of war and peace is now more serious even than it has been before. The Augustinian argument about the restoration of justice remains an imperative.

What has been said about the unacceptability under modern conditions of war between major industrial powers or their stand-ins applies primarily to international wars. It applies also to the "wars of national liberation" (Chinese term), revolutions, guerilla actions. The use of violent methods even for overturning an actually oppressive system is internally corruptive to the liberation movement, hence self-defeating.

The same proportionality argument applies to these wars. The police or "security forces", the armed might of the State, always have greater physical power and cannot (as a moral possibility) use restraint if they are losing and could win with more force. Hence the liberation movement's use of countering force to the State's violence becomes, in reaction, more and more extreme, corruptive. The same devilsation of the enemy takes place on the basis of just-cause argument in this context. There is the same fundamental frivolity to the argument that there are actually no alternatives to violence that have not been tried. And worst of all, the seeds of fascism are unavoidably laid in the liberation movement in the course of its campaign.

There is no service provided in simply moralising either over the international wars or the internal liberation movements. What we need instead is the creation of new institutions, new social forms which will right the injustices, make possible a fuller life and give scope to the most positive forces of people and nations. Neither efforts to patch up the old injustices and make the old systems appear to work for a little longer, nor a revolutionary sweep to clear away all the old structure and start anew will accomplish this, but only such growth into alternative social forms.

(Summary of a lecture on March 10)

Ritual in Society

BY

H. J. BLACKHAM

RITUALISTIC patterns of behaviour are seen conspicuously in animals, primitives, children and lunatics. They serve three vital purposes: the controlled release of violent impulse, communication; "bonding", the binding together of members of a species or group. In polite society, manners are a form of ritual behaviour that are seen to serve these purposes. A general description of ritual might be: a pattern of behaviour regularly repeated which carries a meaning rather than carries out a purpose, which is highly valued because it is concerned with survival or prosperity. Thus ritual is socially efficient, not technically efficient. It is practical, providing rules for carrying out operations (based on previous success), and

rules for carrying on co-operation (organised relations). The rules have to be exactly followed, because the life and future of society is invested in them. However, in our sophisticated society when we speak of ritual we usually refer to empty forms of behaviour, relics, the cinders of old fires. Just as "myth" is not myth when it is no longer believed, "ritual" is not ritual when it no longer works.

The following are among the typical contents of rituals: dance, song, feast, fast, procession, bathing, combat, ascension, ordeal, robing, sacrifice, unction, fumigation, investiture, admonition, confinement. Those who are included in the ritual and those who are to be excluded are understood, if not specified. What is being done by the ritual act may be an expiation, an attempt to avert something, a release, an expression, a participation (in a natural process, in a social event). What is performed is not a drama, a play; it is thought of as effective action or as re-enactment. Two extreme examples. In a Dionysian rite, a live bull was torn to pieces and eaten by the worshippers who took to the woods in wild and noisy procession bearing sacred objects, accompanied by orgiastic music of flutes and cymbals. (This mob of the peasant underworld, civilised, became the chorus of Greek tragedy.)

Ritual of the Mind

The second extreme example is reported by the psychiatrist R. D. Laing. "A woman patient who has been a patient in a mental hospital for over 20 years, approaches me at the same time each day, curtsies and hands me a piece of cardboard on which is stuck a small effigy. I take it, appraise it, smile, say 'thank you', bow, hand it back. She takes it back, smiles, curtsies, walks away. Almost every day for about 18 months the same scene is repeated". The effigy is made of various excreta of her own body, and the whole ritual is dumb but eloquent communication of an excommunicated and self-rejected human being.

After the Roman Empire went over to Christianity, the Church assimilated the pagan cults, especially around the Mediterranean. They appear, baptised, in the Church calendar. The Elizabethan Settlement which established the Anglican Church showed the social importance of the ritual component of religion, as distinct from doctrine. Men could believe what they liked, if they kept it to themselves and went to church regularly. The three developments which displaced ritual and reduced it to marginal social importance were Puritanism, Rationalism and Industrialism.

Meanwhile, Inigo Jones at the court of James I brought the Renaissance to Britain and in the masque founded a modern version of ritual. The Stuart masque, employing poetry, music, ballet, acting and elaborate scenery, was a pageant enacting the cosmic and social harmony centred in and radiating from the (divine) King. Opera and ballet develop from these beginnings. The Nuremberg Nazi Rally of 1934, filmed as "Triumph of the Will", was an example on the grand scale of ritual at work, expressing the strength of unity, enacting the absolute mutual loyalty of Fuhrer and people. Hitler, it is interesting to know, was an opera writer *manqué*.

The Puritans attacked all ceremonies, symbols, rituals in their wholesale disapproval of anything tending to idolatry, idleness or pleasure. The Age of Reason discountenanced them for other reasons. The article "Prêtres" in Diderot's *Encyclopédie* argues that superstition having multiplied ceremonies, their officiants institute a separate order and create a vested interest outside society, a parasitical class. Abolish ignorance, the argument goes on, and therewith priestcraft. Established rituals no longer served a social purpose. There were 50 holy days in France. All this stood in the way of industrial development.

In the following century, ritual lingered with the habits and the pageantry of the social "seasons". The country house with its settled order was the pivot of Henry James's study of social intercourse. The destructive impact of industrialism made many, like Ruskin, nostalgic for a romanticised Middle Ages. The Romantic movement in general was a rearguard action against "Progress".

Thus modern industrial societies have been stripped of the main rituals which worked, and left with remnants and relics that are merely picturesque like the majesty of monarchy or the ceremonial of the law courts, or quaint like "old fashioned manners". Does this matter? Alex Comfort has suggested that it does, and so in a different context has Geoffrey Gorer. Dr Comfort has argued (*Nature and Human Nature*) that basic religious rituals did provide for non-verbal control and release of powerful emotions, and that with the virtual elimination of non-verbal religion and the increased stress caused by modern conditions of society, humanity is in danger of self-destruction through the build-up of uncontrolled violence. We need a technology for the emotions. We have been warned by Adolf Hitler. Geoffrey Gorer, on a narrower front (*Death, Grief and Mourning in Contemporary Britain*), also argued that we have lost the social habits which enabled us to express effectively controlled grief, communicate and share our loss, reinforce community; and that in consequence of this loss of working ritual we suffer neuroses through suppression.

Three Elements

Apart from the relics of extinct rituals, what are the active ritual elements in our Western societies? Take three, for example. (1) There is a discernible process called by sociologists "sacralisation" by which the values of the society are sanctified and the society is tightened and hardened. This is conspicuous in the communist sanctification of "socialist values", but also in the American sanctification of "success", or "self-help", the American way to success. There is myth, mystique, and ballyhoo in all nationalist cults, which are still working rituals. (2) A great deal of youth culture and pop art is ritualised. There is participation; it is orgasmic: controlled release, communication, sharing take place. (3) The social use of drugs, particularly cannabis, the widespread practise of yoga (multiplying classes are over-subscribed), and resort to occult practices are typically prevalent ways of coping with stress, achieving controlled release, non-verbal communication, belonging. No doubt, a good deal in all these trends is dubious and disquieting. But how in a modern society can the necessary functions of ritual be discharged to better purpose-controlled release of dangerous emotions, non-verbal communication, participation and sharing in the life of the world, social and cosmic?

Such a question has no packaged answer, but it should be divided in two: how to prevent avoidable stress; how to encourage healthy ritual? An answer to the first part begins with child-rearing and education. We know enough to know how to give children the best chance of physical and mental health—which of course does nothing more than say how. The best we can do here, however, is frustrated if society does not offer the adolescent a tolerable life. We know less about satisfactory patterns of work and leisure, but we do recognise that the work scene and the urban scene need to be redesigned if they are to give satisfaction: affluence is not the simple answer. A bridge between providing good conditions and the rituals of a healthy society is the therapeutic work that helps to remedy failure. Particularly, group dynamics exemplify the power of ritual. Within the convention of a therapeutic group, there is controlled release of powerful emotions, with uniquely deep communication and sharing. The ritual character of the act makes this possible.

Little need be said about ritualistic expressions of a healthy society,

for it can be left to the arts. The breakdown of tradition in the arts has made them expressionistic, experimental, improvised, available, popular. Public celebrations of every kind now can be detached from religious monopoly, and restored to secular hands, with all the resources of the arts and the media at hand. This is an untilled field, which begins to be furrowed:

(Summary of a lecture given on March 17)

For the Record

BY

THE GENERAL SECRETARY

THE DEBATE about the future of organised Humanism in this country gets more and more interesting. Years ago *South Place* accepted some responsibility for liaison between the various societies but nothing much happened. The thing was much too subtle for official-type meetings and formal agendas; so for the last three years we have tried working lunches instead and these have been successful. Somehow communication is so much easier when there is food and drink around.

I put up one or two ideas on the most recent occasion. No one bit on the one that seemed to me to be so important. It was an idea stated by Prof Fred Polak of Utrecht in the December/January 1973 issue of *The Humanist* (US) where he wrote: "The decisive struggle will be won in the end by those people who have at their command the most highly charged potential of powerful and persistent images of the future". As a convinced Utopian (in the original Sir Thomas More sense) I accept that and the challenge it involves. But it was the other idea that caught on, Eysenck's "we might even find that modern religion is in some ways an ally rather than foe". That really put the fat in the fire! Last month's "For the Record" went into this subject so I won't go over the ground again here.

The main lesson that I learnt from the exchange is that what humanists have in common is not our common rejection of supernaturalism (this is so commonplace as to be no longer interesting) but that we all, from our different points of view, have a joint interest in the whole religious phenomenon. I was reminded of the situation in Italy where if the discussion ever flags all one has to do is to mention the Roman Catholic Church and the balloon goes up!

Following from what Professor Polak said (above) it seems to me that what we should do as humanists—and not just as *South Place* members—is to ask the big, sweeping question: What kind of England do we want? It will take us a long time to work out any agreement on that but will any lesser question do? If and when we find an acceptable answer to it we shall have the vital clue to the other questions: What kind of humanist movement do we want? What kind of particular association do we need? And finally, what kind of people do we need to be? Then, of course, it is right and proper to ask those same questions in the reverse order.

I don't think we are ever going to be short of things to talk about! If in our various capacities we get some action too, we might make Jerusalem yet!

Conway Galleries

I must say that many of us have been impressed by the May exhibition in the Hall. Jim Faure Walker organised it as usual and the three

young artists, Stephen Sproates, Geoff Edwards and Adrian Postle are phenomenal craftsmen. What has worried me for long enough was, amongst other things, the sheer decline of craftsmanship in so much visual art. People seemed to be slapping stuff on canvas any old how and expecting others to regard it as art! I think they only convinced those who wanted to be convinced. Dare one hope that the age of Andy Warhol is over? What comes out of our exhibition above all is an impression of countless hours of loving care over incredible detail. I am not going to chance my arm on saying what it all *means* because the meaning is visual. It just has to be seen. It works for you or it doesn't. It does, however, call for a vote of confidence in the young and in the visual possibilities of our Hall for small exhibitions of up and coming artists.

Membership

We make a lot of new members at *South Place*, about ten a month, but we lose about the same number through lapses, resignations and deaths so the total is fairly constant around the 800 figure. That is a pretty good number for a small society. The problem (if there is a problem) is not so much to increase the number as to increase the *active* membership and for more of the younger ones to take a hand. We have had quite a big break through on Tuesdays with considerable numbers of new people, mostly young, coming along. There is however one little snag that we have decided to put right. When a member has paid a subscription there is a twelve month period of grace after it expires and during that time, until now, the *Ethical Record* continues to be received. That is a costly thing to do if the subscription never materialises so at the last meeting of the General Committee it was decided that the period of grace should remain at twelve months but that the *Record* would only be dispatched for the first six. A notice to this effect will appear on reminders.

Who's Who in June

Richard Hauser will be here on the 2nd. He has come up with an interesting and provocative title: *The Second Coming of an Ethical Society*. He is firmly of the opinion that problems can be identified well in advance, that people can and should be prepared and trained to recognise and meet problems and that we shall never get anywhere by hitting and missing. He calls it "social planning". Certainly it seems that muddling through is about played out. I think there is something important in what he says although my own predisposition is to what I call "creative stumbling" half way between muddling through and social planning! Richard Hauser is a member of *South Place*, and a man of many parts.

Richard Clements' personal involvement in the European scene goes back to the first World War and its aftermath. I remember that the first meeting I chaired for him he reminisced about those days and it was quite fascinating. He returns to the subject on the 9th.

Harold Blackham will be back with us on the 16th to talk about *Modern Fables*. He has just been elected the new President of the BHA and in his Presidential Address he says: "Humanism has no myth, no transforming message . . . Ye it remains the business of a humanist movement to inspire and sustain human self-confidence without a myth". That is a *highly* controversial statement which makes his choice of subject for his lecture all the more interesting.

For some years now many of us have been watching with almost bated breath as the Catholic Church tears itself apart. We have almost gone silent on the subject. Who, after all, are we to speak when professing Catholics do it with so much more authority? Quite where we are at the

moment, or more precisely, quite where the Catholic Church is will be Hector Hawton's subject on the 23rd.

Over the last few years we have made a major feature of humanistic psychology and the human potential movement and probed the territory between value judgements and the psychological processes. Remember van der Post's conclusion—that the future depended on the discovery of the *anima*, the female principle, in the male? Dr Colin Hamer's subject *Ethical Feeling* has, I think got something to do with this territory. He was one, of course, a Catholic priest and teacher and turned away from it to the practice of psychotherapy.

Forums

There will be no Tuesday Discussions in June but there will be two Forums. In previous years we wondered if we could take on the sun on a Sunday afternoon and win! There was only one way to find out and that was to try it and see. Rather to our surprise we did win, i.e. attendances were sustained and so we meet again this year on Sundays 9th and 23rd.

Miss Geraldine Aves, OBE, is the author of the Aves Report produced some time ago by the National Council of Social Services on *The Role of the Voluntary Worker in Social Services* so no one could be more appropriate to speak to us on *Voluntary Work, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*. Since we are a voluntary society with nearly 200 years of experience behind us this is a good *South Place* subject. Miss Aves told me on the telephone that her grandfather was a member of the Society, and this clearly had some bearing on her acceptance of our invitation. It is interesting that we can pick up a bonus from 100 years ago!

Ron Bailey, author of the Penguin book *The Squatters*, and now the Campaign Organiser of *The National Co-ordinating Committee Against Censorship* will speak on the 23rd on the subject: *The Public's Right to Know*. He is a very forceful speaker indeed and we can expect a lively session when he is with us.

PETER CADOGAN

CONWAY DISCUSSIONS

Communications

WHEN Michael Barnett was first introduced by the chairman he sat in silence for about ten seconds. It was clear that a good deal was happening in that silence. At the end of it, he drew our attention to what was "happening".

Our mode of communication tends to be verbal. With animals it was non-verbal, but it involves the use of sounds, sounds with meanings, but without the shape of words. We learn to speak and the rate at which we master language is the measure of our cleverness. The trouble is that we can place too much stress on language. Children learn also through play in which the use of words is minimal.

We can only too easily have a long discussion and end up where we began because words are not deeds and not *by themselves* very powerful or cogent. They need the re-inforcement of the body. The way we sit, speak and move constitute information often more important than the

apparent context of words. We have known senses and lost senses. We communicate in innumerable ways with a wealth of information manifesting itself outside the verbal channel.

Michael Barnett gave an example of four friends, two men and two women, who tried to sit in silence for five minutes. Their behaviour varied extraordinarily and told each a great deal about the others. One would get up, move about, smoke and shuffle and give various signs of impatience; another would sit in calm and remote repose.

One of our troubles is that we are often conditioned to create an image of ourselves and then try to live up to the image. Its most commonplace expression is the false smile. When people are conspiring to relate to each other through their images rather than through their real selves they are like people on a tightrope with no net below.

The unknown areas of ourselves are very rich and there are avenues of experience therein with which we have lost touch. As children we have capacities that we lose in order to give our attention to the narrow path that leads to socially approved adulthood. So it is that we suspect that there is always more to life than there seems to be in practice—and so there is.

Silent Conversation

At a meeting, Mr Barnett said, we use words and by talking we arrange the furniture in our heads. We do so without entering the darker and lesser-known areas of experience. If we were to sit in silence for three minutes and look at our neighbours we would get a new idea of things. Talking is our runway and we keep to it in the interests of security. The dark areas of the runway can be frightening and beautiful. In a good encounter group people journey further into themselves and change themselves in the process. Through group activity it is possible to get in touch with feelings, release tensions, reach people and really communicate. Resistance, masks and pretences vanish.

Verbal power is powerfully rewarded in our society and to reject it is to be at odds with society. When the encounter group therapy began the first subjects were people looking for experiences. There emerged a group of individuals who, so to speak, learnt the drill and lived double lives. One was their ordinary day-to-day existence and the other their encounter-group life as such. But there has been a change. Today the groups are filling-up with businessmen and secretaries in search of the very necessary relief from pressures leading sometimes to despair arising from their work. Mr Barnett quoted the case of a senior executive who learnt to weep and release tensions, fears, angers, hates, all held back before. The taps we have turned off can be turned on again. The feelings that are locked up can devastate and block the normal rhythm of the body even to the point of inhibiting breathing itself.

Mr Barnett was of the opinion that this kind of treatment may save or postpone coronaries and he is also of the opinion (which he admits he cannot prove) that cancer is a somatic expression of psychological blocking.

We are natural organisms involving processes and energy, but as human beings we are the only animals that actively interfere with our natural processes. On grounds of social conditioning we are allowed, or not allowed, to do all manner of things. We need to find ways of working with others in which we do not stop the working of the potentials that are within us. In practice we frequently collude with one another to sustain our inhibitions.

The speaker was himself a business executive for ten years and found it difficult if not impossible to modify his way of life. He was subject to increased social pressure to stay in one narrow groove and got to the point that he decided to make a clean break. He went off to India to re-

think and start again. He admitted it was very difficult to break out of a stable system and much of psychotherapy consisted of the provision of a "friendly ear". It served as a kind of safety valve to insure ultimate conformity with the system. In group therapy, however, in his experience, people see more of what they are capable of and what they want, although it is then difficult for them to take their new sense of themselves out into the unchanged society. But at least under group conditions individuals can consolidate new positions for themselves on bases on which to build for the future.

The body is the means and the end of direct communication. The body cannot lie. Our reflex actions are potent and informative and this is communication. "Communication is letting you know who I am and letting me know who you are".

P.C.

(Report of a discussion on March 12)

The Primal Scream

DR GLYN SEABORN JONES is a practising psychotherapist familiar with all standard techniques including that of primal therapy. This is an idea and a method pioneered by Dr Janov in the USA. Janov's book on the subject has a "click" quality. It registers immediately with an impact that has been considerable. The trouble is that Dr Janov's enthusiasm has a certain salesmanship quality involving overstatement of claims and understatement of credit to other writers. Primal therapy (Dr Seaborn Jones prefers and uses the name "intensive therapy") is a significant contribution to therapeutic practice, but as practised by Dr Janov, it is not *the* therapy for all neuroses. It is regrettable that it is seen as separate from the main stream.

For thousands of years people have seen the importance of being alone. When we are alone we can be ourselves and not accommodate ourselves to an audience. We are affected by the presence of other people even if we don't speak to them. When we are alone free association can and does take place. Freud's "free association" is a misnomer because it is verbalisation in the presence of the analyst, and the patient, being influenced by his presence, is not free. The subject inevitably selects in order to please the analyst, to escape his censure, to tantalise him, frustrate him, or prove his impotence.

We tend to have dialogues between internalised figures within ourselves, and this is why intensive therapy is difficult on one's own. When we are alone *we are alone in a group* and the group, including an internalised persecutor, is within us. The body is trying to heal itself every minute but it is impeded by the persecutor. Within each one of us there is a conflict between our parent/child selves, our top-dog/under-dog selves, our sadist/masochist selves, etc. How do we get free? How do we silence the persecutor or evade his inhibiting influence? How, otherwise, can we blow our tops? The body will heal itself if we will let it. The problem is how to be free, how to be natural, for that is the condition of health.

Various psychologists use various models of the person—Freud's Id, Ego and Superego is the best known. It would be a mistake to say that one model is right and another wrong. A model is an aid to understanding, and acceptance of one does not involve rejection of the other.

When in the course of intensive therapy an integrating process is taking place between the patient and the therapist the second person can see what is happening, and being less completely involved in it, can take independent steps to modify the direction in a liberating way by refusing

to go along with the masochist or the sadist in the psyche of the subject.

Many people who have revolted against psycho-analysis have done so because of the great length of time involved in analysis; up to seven, even twelve years; but to criticise psychoanalysis as a therapeutic method should not be to reject Freud's profound discoveries. In Dr Seaborn Jones' view very long therapy was as suspect as very short therapy. He agreed with Janov that neurosis was based on traumatic shocks starting with events before birth, continuing through things like a difficult birth, the use of drugs by the mother, removal from the mother and isolation in a ward, difficulties in breast-feeding or finding an acceptable substitute, inadequate physical contact with the mother, leaving the baby to scream alone, and illness in the mother or child. All these things increased the level of frozen pain, i.e. pain not felt actively as pain. The cumulative effect of traumas is that the real self is buried under all the defence mechanisms that the body/mind devises to make living with the traumas possible. One's energies go into creating and maintaining a false self acceptable to other people.

Personality Conflicts

The personality is split by neuroses. Health and strength is spent inauthentically in suppressing the real impulses. The situation is comparable to that of a baby locked in a soundproof room where its screaming will eventually give way to sickness. Intensive therapy is the reversal of the process of the suppression of the real self. For the first three weeks of treatment Dr Seaborn Jones asks his patients to isolate themselves from all the usual distracting influences, work, the family, friends, reading, the radio, TV, films, alcohol, cigarettes and other drugs. This helps the patient to move from the deliberate to the autonomic. The only human contact is long daily sessions with the therapist.

At this point the speaker stood up and gave a convincing and rather alarming display of what a man shaking and shuddering with fear looks like. His whole body shook from tip to toe (one could see how people used to believe in demonic possession!) but then he switched off just as he had switched it on).

One cannot fake autonomic activity, he said, it just takes over; and the discharge of fear is a good example. It was much the same with madness. A pupil of his (a French psychologist under training) had expressed a fear of madness, of himself going mad. So he was told to repeat the words: "I can go mad". There was a short pause and he *did* go mad, went into a fit, threw himself on the ground, foamed at the mouth and for ten minutes was quite uncontrollably crazy. He then regained consciousness and described the incredible sense of relief he felt. He had lost control and suffered no more than minor grazes. We can go mad—for a few minutes—and it will do no harm at all, quite the contrary, but it does need the presence of another or others to prevent the subject doing actual injury to himself.

But there are many levels of self-expression short of madness. The discharge of anger by raging, fear by shaking or grief by sobbing and howling is often inhibited by us. We call a doctor, offer sedatives, or in some way attempt to *stop* the expression. What we should do is to understand it, facilitate it. The discharge of fear, for example, is natural and its release is to be encouraged. People have to be *taught* to shake—this is what therapy is for. We have a natural instinct to do it and it is excessive and inappropriate control that prevents the natural discharge, to our continuing detriment.

Also our conventions have it that sounds, loud and unpleasant sounds, are disturbing and to be avoided. A patient may need up to nine months to recover his voice so that he can scream, shout, snarl or sob.

It is useful to consider what happens in the animal kingdom. Snarling, with a threatening posture, is a warning of danger that is nearly always heeded, so fighting is rare. Sound, expression and stance are enough to convey the fact that one means business, and the dispute is settled. One animal then makes an immediately recognisable act of submission, the two animals separate and go their separate ways in peace. We humans, however, express anger differently. We punch, we call a policeman, we go to war. We either suppress our anger because it is not socially acceptable or we take to extremes of violence instead. If we could learn to react with protest proportional to the provocation we would not need to pile up hostility, anger and hatred and suffer either the consequences of the neuroses they produce or their concentrated expression in socially damaging effects later.

In therapy we facilitate minor risk-taking modes of behaviour. Gradually the body begins to express and assert itself and there is no disaster. The treatment is most effective if it is a combination of a period of isolation, individual therapy, group therapy and a phasing-out period with interaction between peers, i.e. between two patients working in reciprocal support. There is no reason why this process should ever end since the aim is not only cure, but continuing growth and development. With experience less and less professional expertise is necessary, but at the outset the individual needs the company of someone who is not afraid, who knows what is going on and will hold the situation. Since the patient has forgotten what he has forgotten he needs help to find the path to remembering.

Dr Seaborn Jones found that he had one or two differences with Janov. He disagreed with Janov's belief that the patient-therapist transference and counter-transference were not important. In his experience they *were* important. He also thought that the follow-up period after the three weeks should be much longer, with much more individual therapy. A patient needed individual and group therapy for at least twelve months. Discharge and integration take time, and people who are in therapy for shorter periods find themselves with "unfinished business" stress.

In an aside the speaker described smoking—a habit likely to be given up after intensive therapy—as a systematic and dangerous attack on one's body leading to many coronary and respiratory ailments apart from cancer. His large audience followed every word. The Library was packed out—117 people, mostly young—leaving standing room only.

P.C.

(Report of a talk given on March 19)

Your Viewpoint

Jesus and Pilate

A Russian study on the origin of Christianity—available also in French (II. Lenzman: *L'Origine du Christianisme*, Editions en Langues Etrangères, Moscou 1961) establishes that proto-Christian communities did *not* arise in Palestine, as popular tradition has it, but in the Hellenistic Jewish trading centres of Alexandria and Asia Minor.

Already a century ago, the Tuebingen circle of F. C. Baur had shown that the principal parts of Revelation were written c.68 AD, i.e. during

and after the Jewish War (AD 66-70) as a hate pamphlet against the Romans. The fact that the Jews embracing the new creed not only refused to help in this national uprising, but did all to prove to the Romans that they were reliable Roman citizens, created the unbridgeable gulf between the Jews and the new sect—at that time not yet generally called Christians—in which the figure of Judas the Traitor was introduced.

Before that, Jesus was merely thought of as the mystical Lamb existing since the foundation of the world. (e.g. John I, 29, Rev V, 12, VII, 17 etc).

O. WOLFGANG

London, W11

Well, is there . . . ?

My father is an active churchgoer. My mother a housebound Humanist—who although active mentally, is unable to find outside interests because of erratic health and the effects of people smoking.

Is there anyone in the Leamington Spa (New Cubbington) area able to visit her occasionally—for discussions, socially etc?

Will be delighted to put anyone in touch. Please write to: 2 Hutchings Road, Beaconsfield, HP9 2BB.

MARGARET SIDDALL

Beaconsfield, Bucks.

★ ★ ★

Jesus C v. Julius C

How on earth can Professor Carrington seriously claim that “the documentary evidence for the life of Jesus Christ is far better than for the life of Julius Caesar?”

To begin with, we have the well authenticated memoirs of Julius, and not a word even allegedly written by Jesus. Certainly, Plutarch lived later than Julius, but the four (or more) evangelists similarly lived later than the alleged lifetime of Jesus. And whereas the many contemporary references to Julius are universally accepted as genuine, the few contemporary references to Jesus and his followers are almost universally dismissed by scholars of the period as fraudulent interpolations. The author of the earliest Christian document, the Acts of the Apostles, apparently had no idea that Jesus had lived so recently as later Christians claimed. Most of the gospel events have close parallels with ancient pagan myths, from which even the very names Jesus, Mary and Joseph, and others in the narrative, were obviously derived.

We even know now, from contemporary coins and sculpture, what Julius Caesar looked like (or, at least, chose to be depicted at), whereas the traditional image of Jesus is a medieval concept.

In fact, the historicity of Jesus soon melts away under the glare of any serious research.

BARBARA SMOKER

London, SE6

● Is it really true—as Professor Carrington says he was shocked to discover—that “the documentary evidence for the life of Jesus Christ is far better than for the life of Julius Caesar?” (As quoted in *ER*, March, 1974). The three “contemporary sources” he names are Josephus, who was born four years after the supposed (and probable) date of the crucifixion, Tacitus, who was born at least 20 years after and Suetonius, whose precise dates are unknown but who must have been even later than Tacitus. So none of these hostile contemporary references (for some reason their hostility is supposed to shore up the accuracy of the much later, but

favourable, gospels) was written within a generation of the execution of Christ. And, as Professor Carrington himself implies, a lot of myth-making can take place in a generation.

Nobody, on the other hand, has ever disputed that Caesar's two works were written—or to be more precise, dictated—by the maestro himself. Tendentious, yes. Whose autobiography isn't? But undoubtedly accurate in the main outline of the facts. There is no reason to suppose that Suetonius and Co were wildly inaccurate either. They confirm that a Jesus myth was widespread in Judaea and known of at Rome by the end of the first century AD. Who would want to dispute this? The basic question is how much of the myth was founded on fact. And this we just don't know.

The argument that Troy, Mycenae and Jericho, which were mere fairy tales a hundred years ago, have now been given a firm foundation by archaeologists merely emphasises the fact that no such foundation has been unearthed for the myth of Christ.

However, few people would want to dispute that some kind of populist leader arose in Judaea in the reign of Tiberius and that he gathered a sufficient following, by appealing to a mixture of nationalism and traditional religion, to cause a disturbance that brought him to the scaffold. Boadicea did exactly the same a few years later at the other end of the empire. The only detectable difference today is that, while the followers of Christ are declining in numbers, those of the druids are, by all accounts, increasing rapidly. Bully for Boadicea!

TONY MILLS

London W2 5DB

The following was specially written by Prof Carrington, in reply to the foregoing correspondence.

WHEN I addressed the SPES on *Myth and Credulity in History*, it was my intention to arouse discussion; and I find myself involved in correspondence over a challenging statement I threw out on the historicity of the Christian Gospels. So complex a subject could scarcely be displayed by the brief summary published in the *Ethical Record* for March 1974. What I said was that "the documentary evidence for the life of Jesus is far better than for the life of Julius Caesar", and the Editor kindly allows me to expand this suggestion. The theme of my address was myth and credulity which occur in all societies; I was discussing the Will to Believe and the Will to Dis-believe. Why is some information easily swallowed even by sceptics while other information is rejected almost without consideration? In the argument that follows I am not criticising the accuracy of particular statements about Christ and Caesar in the standard Lives, but I am referring to the climate of opinion in their day, and to the fortuitous scraps of literary evidence that have come down to us, escaping the ravages of time.

There are many allusions to Julius Caesar in Cicero and Sallust and in the Augustan poets who were his contemporaries, telling us about as much about his life as we learn of Jesus from allusions in the Epistles of Saint Paul, which most scholars regard as the earliest Christian documents. There are also his formal despatches on ten of his overseas campaigns, biased in his own favour like all such documents; they scarcely touch his political or personal life. There is no continuous narrative of Caesar's career before that of the pedestrian author, Velleius, who wrote about 70 years after Caesar's death, giving us, in one paragraph a bald statement of his achievement, a sort of *Who's Who* entry, bones without flesh and blood. The first full, critical, biography is that by Plutarch, on which all later writers depend. We know little of Plutarch's own life except that he was born in

Greece about a hundred years after Caesar's death, and cannot have spoken to anyone who remembered him. A little later, a second biography was released by the gossip-writer, Suetonius, well-informed and accurate but chiefly concerned with court scandal. From Plutarch, the heavy-weight historian, and Suetonius, the light-weight, we get a full and reliable account of Caesar's life and character as he appeared to posterity, three or four generations after his death. This is pretty good evidence, as Ancient History goes. Compare it, for example, with the traditional Life of Alexander the Great. The last new book about him begins with a candid admission that the only contemporary accounts have come down to us at second- or third-hand on the word of the biographer, Arrian who lived 400 years later. Yet no sceptic questions the general veracity of Alexander's life-story.

In these instances we need not regard the accumulation of personal detail as of great historical importance. It would make no difference to the magnitude of Caesar's life-work if evidence turned up that he invaded Britain in 64 not 54 BC, or to the effect of the Sermon on the Mount if it were found that Jesus was born at Nazareth not Bethlehem. It is the deeds of Caesar, and the words of Jesus that count. Great public figures like Caesar and Alexander also leave archaeological remains, which I am not now discussing; Jesus left no material records, only a message. "He was in the world and the world knew him not". All the more remarkable, then that this obscure teacher in a remote colony should be so well-documented. We know far more of him than we know of Buddha or Mohammed.

Spurious Plutarch

The earliest references to the Christians by secular historians are clear and informative. First we must eliminate Plutarch. Though a man of wide learning and a student of comparative religion, he does not mention Christianity in his published works, which is odd but proves nothing. Shakespeare wrote a play about King John without mentioning *Magna Carta*. The two Latin historians of the later first century, Suetonius and Tacitus, both make hostile references to the Christians in much the style one would expect. Suetonius, not caring much about such matters, throws away a mention of a certain "Chrestus" whose followers made trouble among the Jews at Rome, whereupon the Emperor Claudius expelled the Jewish community, a very early notice of Christians in Rome, ten or twelve years before Saint Paul's visit. Tacitus, who regarded Christianity as a "noxious superstition" nevertheless blamed Nero for injustice and cruelty when he charged the Christians with responsibility for the Fire of Rome in AD 64. (The Jewish community must have crept back since the days of Claudius.) When referring to Jesus, Tacitus uses the graphic phrase, "he suffered under Pontius Pilate", which also occurs in Paul's Epistle to the *Corinthians*, enough to pin-point Jesus in History, a man not a myth. These mentions of Jesus in Latin authors are obviously genuine; if they had been interpolations they would have been slanted with propaganda. Not that the text of Tacitus is faultless. He was forgotten for a thousand years and survived only in one ill-written, mis-spelt, almost illegible manuscript of the eleventh century which has been patiently reconstructed by modern scholars, with who knows what insertions and amendments. How unlike the numerous early manuscripts of the Gospels which were so scrupulously guarded from error by generations of devotees.

No other name occurs, at once, of a writer who might have been expected to mention the early Christians except the cosmopolitan, Josephus, by birth a Hebrew, by education a Greek, and by development a patriot who deserted to the Romans when they became the winning side. His Jewish Hellenistic-Roman history of the Jews is a remarkably balanced

performance, in which he made two references to the Christian sect, one of them a conventional allusion to the Crucifixion, the other an interesting account of a martyrdom at Jerusalem, 30 years later. It is tiresome that an unknown editor interpolated an obvious sentence of Christian propaganda into the first passage. Delete this sentence and we have all we want, the evidence that Josephus provided.

We now come to the three "synoptic" Gospels, according to Matthew, Mark and Luke, which cannot be precisely dated (any more than Tacitus and Plutarch can). Most scholars are agreed that they were put into their final form about 50 years more or less after the events they described, that is to say no farther off than we are from the First World War, at a time when many survivors would have bitterly resented any tampering with what they remembered so well.

All Agreed

More critical opinion concurs with the ancient Church tradition that these three Gospels were written independently by authors who drew upon two earlier documents, the Sayings of Jesus, and a Passion Narrative. Apart from these features, the three differ widely in style and content, a consideration that, as any police magistrate will tell you, guarantees their authenticity. Three witnesses recording what they have seen or heard of the same events from different points of view are as good evidence as you are likely to get. Matthew is a learned *rabbi* mainly interested in reconciling his story with the national tradition. To him we owe the most systematic statement of the ethical teaching of Jesus. Mark is the perfect witness, a plain man with good sense and little formal education who tells only what he has seen and heard. Luke is a highly sophisticated man of the world, a literary artist if ever there was one. Though a colourful writer, he is unusually accurate among ancient writers in his use of dates, and his descriptions of life in the Roman Empire have been repeatedly verified from archaeological evidence. He well knows how to make the best of a good story and if none of the Christian scriptures, except his Gospel, had survived, the man who gave the world the Magnificat, the Good Samaritan, and the Prodigal Son would still be hailed as a master of words.

In my reading of History Ancient, I do not recall any other famous person of whom we have three such valid accounts. There are indeed three contemporary pen-portraits of Socrates but only one, that by Xenophon, is a true biography. Aristophanes supplies a comical caricature, and the Platonic Dialogues, though they contain biographical material, do not constitute a life-story; they are dissertations on the philosophy of Socrates' expressed as speeches put into his mouth, and, perhaps we should classify the Fourth Gospel, Saint John, as a Platonic Dialogue rather than as a biography.

After the apostolic age there is a gap of about 20 years in our knowledge of Church History, which was bridged by the learned Eusebius, 200 years later. He took pains to establish a chain of evidence from the last survivors of "those who had known Jesus" until his own day. He records, and we have no reason to doubt his word, that within his memory a persecuting Emperor drew out of the archives the report on Pontius Pilate on the execution of Jesus, in order to use it for anti-Christian propaganda. There are gaps, too, in Roman History. For the Third Century we are largely dependent upon a late and suspect compilation called the *Historia Augusta*. Lord Acton said that he preferred Eusebius, and Sir Ronald Syme has recently handled the *Historia* most roughly.

A final note. Some rationalists may reject the Gospels as evidence, on account of the signs and wonders they contain. There are fashions in credulity, and historians must study the climate of opinion. If sceptical

about miracles in Matthew, Mark and Luke, they should study Tacitus and Suetonius where similar portents, omens and ghostly visitations are to be found, even miraculous cures. We have two accounts of the matter-of-fact Emperor Vespasian, who was much embarrassed by becoming a god-king, even after the oracle of Elijah on Mount Carmel had told him that a world-saviour was coming out of the East. It astonished him to discover that his royal touch could restore the sight of a blind man. Jesus, too, was a healer but it was his words that changed the mode of thought of half the human race. In that sense Jesus lives, while the other "Dying Gods", Mithras, Osiris, Adonis, etc, had nothing to say for themselves and are as dead as the dodo.

PROF. C. E. CARRINGTON

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South Place News

New members

We are pleased to welcome the following new members: Mr K. Taylor, Harrow; Miss P. Lawson, London E4; Mrs P. Mares, London SW13 and Miss H. Riley, Guildford, Surrey.

Open air theatre

Miss Connie Davis is arranging two visits to the Holland Park Court Theatre, London's open-air entertainment venue. The June visit has been arranged for the 22nd, for the 2.30 p.m. matinee performance of José de la Vega and his Spanish Dance Company. Admission is 35p, free admission for OAPs.

Meet Connie Davis at 2 p.m. in the main entrance of the Commonwealth Institute, adjoining the theatre grounds in Kensington High Street. Any bus to Kensington High Street, or nos. 28 or 31 and walk from Earls Court Road.

The July visit is planned for the 6th, venue and time as for June. Afternoon performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's "Yeoman of the Guard".

Seats not bookable; prompt assembly essential. Tea afterwards and walk round Dutch gardens and peacock area.

Bridge Drive

This will be on Thursday, June 20, in the Library at 6.30 p.m. Members and friends welcome, light refreshments served. Regular bridge practice is held on Sundays at 6 p.m. in the library.

Kindred Organisations

Humanist Holidays is arranging a week's holiday in Hunstanton, Norfolk, August 17 to 24. Details from Mrs M. Mepham, 29 Fairview Road, Sutton, Surrey.

Humanist-motif ties, brooches, badges, etc, are now being distributed by Mr Harold Penfold, 7 Ravenscar Road, Tolworth, Surbiton, Surrey.

The **Waltham Forest Humanist Group** continues its monthly public meeting programme, with Derek Marcus on "The Local Humanist Group and the Community", on June 25. The meeting will be at the Wood Street Public Library, Forest Road, Walthamstow, at 7.45 p.m.

The **Humanist Housing Association's** coffee morning and sale in aid of a Botswana school and general funds is on June 8 at 10.30 a.m., Rose Bush Court, NW3.

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(Continued from page 2)

Sunday, June 16

11.00 a.m.—**Sunday Meeting: H. J. BLACKHAM** on **Modern Fables**.
Piano and Flute: Edward Mandel and Andrew Solomon.

6.00 p.m.—**Bridge Practice**

Thursday, June 20

6.30 p.m.—**Bridge Drive** in the Library

Sunday, June 23

11.00 a.m.—**Sunday Meeting: HECTOR HAWTON** on **Crisis in Catholicism**. Soprano solos: Janet Cass.

3.00 p.m.—**Forum: The Public's Right to Know** with **Ron Bailey**

6.00 p.m.—**Bridge Practice**

Sunday, June 30

11.00 a.m.—**Sunday Meeting: DR COLIN HAMER** on **Ethical Feeling**. Tenor solos: Harvey Kesselman

The season of Tuesday discussions has ended for the current year. The new season starts in October. Sunday evening concerts resume in October.

South Place Ethical Society

FOUNDED in 1793, the Society is a progressive movement which today advocates an ethical humanism, the study and dissemination of ethical principles based on humanism, and the cultivation of a rational religious sentiment free from all theological dogma.

We invite to membership all those who reject supernatural creeds and find themselves in sympathy with our views.

At Conway Hall there are **opportunities for participation** in many kinds of cultural activities, including discussions, lectures, concerts, dances, rambles and socials. A comprehensive reference and lending library is available, and all Members and Associates receive the Society's journal, *The Ethical Record*, free. The Sunday Evening Chamber Music Concerts founded in 1887 have achieved international renown.

Services available to members include Naming Ceremony of Welcome to Children, the Solemnisation of Marriage, and Memorial and Funeral Services.

The Story of South Place, by S. K. Ratcliffe, is a history of the Society and its interesting development within liberal thought.

Minimum subscriptions are: Members, 75p p.a.; Life Members, £15.75p (Life membership is available only to members of at least one year's standing). It is of help to the Society's officers if members pay their subscriptions by Bankers' Order, and it is of further financial benefit to the Society if Deeds of Covenant are entered into. Members are urged to pay more than the minimum subscription whenever possible, as the present amount is not sufficient to cover the cost of this journal.

A suitable form of bequest for those wishing to benefit the Society by their wills is to be found in the Annual Report.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

TO THE HON. REGISTRAR, SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY,
CONWAY HALL HUMANIST CENTRE, RED LION SQUARE, LONDON, WC1R 4RL

Being in sympathy with the aims of South Place Ethical Society, I desire to become a Member and I enclose as my annual subscription the sum of £..... (minimum 75p) entitling me (according to the Rules of the Society) to membership for one year from the date of enrolment.

NAME
(BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE)

ADDRESS

OCCUPATION (disclosure optional)

HOW DID YOU HEAR OF THE SOCIETY?

DATE SIGNATURE

The Ethical Record is posted free to members. The annual charge to subscribers is 75p. Matter for publication should reach the Editor, Eric Willoughby, 46 Springfield Road, London E17 8DD, by the 5th of the preceding month.