

The Freethinker

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IN THE OPENING BOOK of the canonical Hebrew Bible we are told how Adam, the first man, fell from grace on account of his indecent curiosity, and how he and his wife were thrown out of their terrestrial paradise, the Garden of Eden, over which the notice "Trespassers will be prosecuted", or its Hebrew equivalent, was henceforth hung.

Modern Biblical criticism, supplemented in this case by archaeological research, has effectively established that the opening chapters of Genesis were not the original version of the story but were derived from a much older Babylonian or Chaldean legend, the details of which have been considerably modified, as so often in our O.T., by rabbinical editorship. For example, God in Genesis is a single, a monotheistic Being. A piece of clumsy editing has left the original polytheism of the Babylonian original intact: the opening words of our Genesis begin with the original plural number!

"In the beginning the gods created..." The word actually used, *Elohim*, is plural, as the learned (but hardly honest!) Jewish and Christian translators must have known quite well when they turned it into the singular "God".

Adam in Jewish Theology

According to most liberal scholars our Genesis was compiled about 800 B.C., since certain allusions to the author's own period are held to imply this date. However, as Mr. Cutner has often indicated in these columns, one must regard with suspicion all Biblical "history" prior to the Babylonian captivity.

Indeed, probably the only facts known about ancient Israel are the names of a few kings mentioned in contemporary Assyrian inscriptions. It does not appear the story of Adam and the Fall of Man ever attracted much attention in Hebrew theology, even though recorded in their canonical scriptures. The Jews were, and are, an optimistic race in face of their repeated misfortunes from Nebuchadnezzar to Hitler. They had every need to be. The O.T. writers and their rabbinical editors never seem to have been unduly worried by the fall from grace of their remotest ancestor, Adam.

Adam and Christian Theology

With Christian theology, contrarily, the exact opposite has been the case. Here the literal acceptance of the opening chapters of Genesis, and especially of the Biblical account of Adam and his Fall, has been the fundamental foundation of the entire system, the essential lynch-pin of orthodox Christianity. The Fall of Man due to the misuse of his Free Will, leading to the Divine Redemption by Christ, due also to Divine Free Will—such is the foundation stone upon which the whole subsequent gigantic structure of Christian dogma has been erected. In fact, if one rejects the historicity of Adam and his Fall as narrated in Genesis, one must automatically reject Christ, "the second Adam",

and the salvation by his death and resurrection. It is true that, nowadays, Christian Modernists profess to accept evolution and to reject the literal acceptance of Genesis, but they can only do this by *ipso facto* rejecting the whole traditional structure of Christianity, thus to reduce it to

what is in effect merely one of a number of eclectic ethical systems devoid of any special pretensions. If the present writer should ever be misguided enough to return to "The Faith of his fathers", he would certainly not add to his intellectual difficulties by trying to combine the profession of

Christianity with the quite incongruous belief in evolution.

—VIEWS and OPINIONS—

The Second Adam

—By F. A. RIDLEY—

The Second Adam

Christianity did not *begin* as a theological system but as a "hot gospel" revivalist sect who lived in daily expectation of the return of the Messiah in his glory and of the proximate end of the world. It was only later, when it began to dawn on Christians that the world showed no signs of an immediate ending, that the Christian religion was constituted definitely *as such*, and the outlines of Christian dogma began to appear. The foundations of Christian theology were laid by the Gnostic theologians, pre-eminent amongst whom was the "Pauline" author of the *Epistle to the Romans*, that "monumental treatise of Catholic theology", as the German scholar Kalthoff has described it. Romans, traditionally but most improbably ascribed to the missionary of Acts; Saul, or Paul, of Tarsus; is the fundamental treatise in Christian theology. In fact, if one considers its tremendous influence over the centuries it must be regarded as one of the most influential books ever written, and it was so because of its then original doctrine of the Second Adam who descended from Heaven to make good the otherwise irreparable sin of the first.

Romans and Genesis

Most Christian scholars, plus a good many Reverent Rationalists, still speak of Paul as the author of Romans, but the assumption appears rather improbable. Acts, which tells us quite a lot about Paul, knows nothing of any epistles written by him—a surprising omission. In any case, as we know from later Roman writers, such as Clement of Rome and Hermas, both of whose writings were included in the New Testament, it was not till long afterwards that Paul was recognised as the author. Whoever the unknown Gnostic was who impersonated the famous missionary Paul, he influenced Christianity profoundly by introducing into it the story of Adam, not mentioned in our Gospels. Further, he presented the new religion with a theological system complete, which had the additional merit of linking it with Judasm. The Fall needed a Redeemer, a Second Adam, to succeed where the first failed. With this brilliant speculation Christian theology was born: "as in Adam all die, so in Christ all are restored to life". Incidentally, the dogma that Christ was the Second

Adam, first preached in Romans, obviously required that Christ should be an *historical* character, as Adam was. Here we have one of the sources for the Gospel biographies, which are probably later than Romans.

The Two Adams

The Genesis story of Adam and Eve is not mentioned by the Jesus of the Gospels, and we do not know whence, or how, the author of Romans hit upon it. It is known that during this stormy period in Jewish history there were quite a number of heretical sects on the fringe of Judaism, some of which probably contributed to the almost still completely unknown origins of Christianity. For example, the Essenes with their Dead Sea scrolls, and more immediately, the Baptists, the followers of John the Baptist, who is mentioned by Josephus, and from whom the Christians almost certainly derived the rite of Baptism, one or other of these sects may have emphasised the Garden of Eden story more than orthodox Judaism did. The unknown author of Romans may have picked up the Fall stories already in a theological setting before he became an adherent of the new Christian sect. Then he had a brain-wave, a stroke of genius in its way. By linking the two Adams, the Fall which necessitated the Saviour, he created Christianity as history was to know it.

Himmler — The Modern Nero

By F. A. HORNIBROOK

IN 1953 Odhams Press published *Himmler* by Willi Frischau. Unfortunately this book is now out of print but it may be available at some public library. It is an intimate story of one of the greatest criminals the world has ever known; a sadistic brute, who was responsible for the deaths of millions of Jews and many, many thousands of Liberals of all sorts.

Himmler and Hitler had many characteristics in common — one of them, that in their youths they were both zealous Catholics. Regarding Himmler's boyhood, we read "Little Himmler grew up in a calm and cultured atmosphere reflecting the artistic inclination of his father. He was baptised as a Roman Catholic and Prince Heinrich von Bayern was his godfather. In the evening he would say his prayers in front of an ivory statue of Christ cut from one big elephant's tooth, which is still in the possession of his elder brother. . . . No Sunday passed without Himmler senior taking his wife and three children to church. Regularly Himmler would confess his sins and take Holy Communion with the rest of his family."

Himmler recalled the Spanish Inquisition whenever the subject of Jewry was raised. "If the Catholic Church had not had the courage to do these things it would never have survived," he said. So Himmler was not even original in his brutality; he only "improved" on the methods of his Church.

Hitler in his young days was also a devout Roman Catholic, but both he and Himmler, when older, were no longer practising Catholics. However, they both retained their early superstitions: thus, both of them firmly believed in horoscopes, astrology and soothsayers. It is true that the almost unspeakable horrors of the prison camps were directly under Himmler's control, but Hitler was fully acquainted with what took place there.

Dr. Frank Buchman, of the Oxford Group, once described Himmler as a "regular fellow", which means a real good sport. Here is an example of Himmler's idea of

sport — when a prisoner entered the prison camp he was stripped and made to stand on what he thought was a measuring machine, to test his height. Then a spear embedded in heavy material crashed on his head and through the brain. He was lucky, although, of course, he didn't know it, for death in this case was instantaneous.

Above all, Himmler was a practical man and always ready to try new methods. He thought "Why waste so much time killing one man or a score, when you could just as easily eliminate thousands, and in an even shorter time, by putting the victims in gas chambers?"

It is a horrible tale of a degenerate who prided himself on being a pure Aryan, plotting out new and even more appalling tortures against defenceless prisoners. No one man could succeed in doing this unless he had the support of thousands of criminals of his own mentality. Himmler had plenty of followers prepared to rend and tear. Many of these wretches, after serving a few years' prison sentences, are now back in the new German army — the army which, we are now told, is going to fight if necessary to main Christian democracy. Only a few years ago Mr. Churchill, as he was then, spoke of the new German army as "our German cousins". Well, cousins are blood relations and this mob is about the bloodiest lot any family could possess.

The American War Crimes Branch said of Himmler's prison camps, "They could be described as factories dealing in death. Hunger and starvation rations, inadequate clothing, medical neglect, disease, beatings, freezing, forced hand-hangings, forced suicide, shootings, all played a major role . . . prisoners were murdered at random; spite killings of Jews were common. Injections of poison and shootings in the neck were everyday occurrences. Epidemics of typhus and spotted fever were permitted to run rampant as a means of eliminating prisoners. Life meant nothing. Killings became a common thing — common that a quick death was welcomed."

And now we have the extraordinary spectacle of the West trying to force military training upon their former enemies and the majority of the German people strongly resenting it.

NAPOLEON'S RELIGION

NAPOLEON did not believe in any special revelation. He said, "I once had faith. But when I came to know something, as soon as I began to reason, which occurred early in life, at the age of thirteen, I found my faith attacked, and that it staggered." He became, as he said, "no capouchin", but a man of the world ready to utilise it for his own aggrandisement. Of the Christian religion, he said, "As far as I am concerned, I do not see the mystery of the Incarnation, but the mystery of social order, the association of religion with paradise, an idea of equality which keeps the rich from being massacred by the poor". Again, he said, "Society could not exist without an inequality of fortunes, or inequality of fortunes without religion". "A man dying of starvation alongside of one who is surfeited, would not yield to the difference, unless he had some authority which assumed him to be God so orders it, that there must be both poor and rich in the world, but that, in the future, and throughout eternity, the portion of each will be changed". Christianity was not true, but it was useful.

For Your Bookshelf

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Man's Inhumanity

(A Review of *Against the Law* by Peter Wildeblood) By REV. J. L. BROOM, M.A.

IN 1954, Peter Wildeblood, Lord Edward Montagu and Michael Pitt-Rivers were sent to prison for homosexual practices. Wildeblood received eighteen months. Now he has written his autobiography, and it is difficult to see how anyone can read his moving odyssey and still remain convinced that our laws governing homosexuality are not monstrously unjust.

"I do not pity myself, nor do I ask for pity", says Wildeblood at the outset. "I am no more proud of my condition than I would be of having a glass eye or a hare lip. On the other hand, I am no more ashamed of it than I would be of being colour blind, or of writing with my left hand." He then proceeds to defend homosexuality between consenting adults with irrefutable arguments. One by one, he examines the contentions of those who uphold the law and shows their irrationality. Mr. John Gordon, for example, pontificated in the *Sunday Express*: "Perversion is largely a practice of the too idle and the too rich. It does not flourish in lands where men work hard and brows sweat with honest labour".

Wildeblood replies by quoting statistics showing that homosexuals include "twice as many factory workers and twice as many farm labourers as men of independent means". It has been, and is, rife among such manly types as the Samurai of medieval Japan, and the Pathans of the north-west frontier. Julius Caesar, Frederick the Great and Lawrence of Arabia are only a few of the "unwomanly" men known to have been homosexuals. If, as some maintain, homosexuality is mere affectation, why, asks Wildeblood, do men risk life imprisonment in order to practise it? Those who contend that it is a symptom of a nation's decadence, he continues, forget that it is widespread and tolerated in such respectable and progressive communities as Switzerland and Scandinavia. Indeed Britain and America are almost the only two countries in which homosexual relations between consenting adults is still an offence. As in the case of capital punishment, we here lag far behind the rest of the civilised world.

The very words of the law are, Wildeblood points out, charged with emotion. "Murder is merely murder, but homosexual acts are 'the abominable crime' and 'gross indecency'." The essence of a crime is that harm is done to someone. "But who," asks Wildeblood, "does the most harm? The adulterer breaking up a happy home, the man who seduces a girl and abandons her with an illegitimate child, or two men who prefer to live together?" Yet the first two crimes are not legal offences at all.

Those who denounce homosexuality most violently are, as Wildeblood says, by the familiar psychological process known as projection, revealing that they themselves have repressed homosexual tendencies. The author gives impressive examples of the evocation of noble qualities through love between man and man. At his trial, when the affectionate letters between himself and Edward McNally (the individual who turned Queen's Evidence against him) were produced he wanted to cry out, "It is not I who have made love into a dirty word; it's you!"

Wildeblood gives a brief sketch of his childhood and youth, showing that boarding schools, by herding boys together at a time when the sexual impulses are at their strongest, actively encourage homosexuality. The facts of life were, of course, never explained to him by his teachers or any other adult, being picked up in the usual furtive

fashion among his fellow pupils. Sex therefore naturally became something "isolated and unclean".

Some time after leaving Oxford he became a reporter on the *Daily Mail*. Though he made many friends among his fellow journalists he attacks with vehemence the men at the top of the newspaper industry, "a cold-eyed bunch of businessmen who peddled tragedy, sensation and heart-break as casually as though they were cartloads of cabbages".

Perhaps the most disturbing feature of Wildeblood's book is to be found in his revelations of the methods which the police use to secure a conviction. One evening, before his own arrest, he witnessed a horrifying scene in which a policeman in plain clothes entered a public lavatory, made certain suggestions to an old man of about seventy, and then when he responded, attempted to arrest him. During the struggle in the street which followed the old man's head became wedged between iron railings, and he was eventually carried to a police van, bleeding from his injuries. Wildeblood considers that the young policeman who made the arrest would no doubt be applauded by his superiors for his revolting behaviour. While in prison, Wildeblood had many conversations with several inmates who had been policemen, and from them he learned that in each police station there is a scoreboard on which convictions are recorded. Since promotion in the force may depend on the number of convictions obtained, and since it is much more simple to arrest a homosexual than a burglar, a policeman whose score is lagging behind the others can remedy matters by going to the nearest public lavatory and making indecent advances to a "queer".

Again, when Wildeblood, Pitt-Rivers and Montagu were arrested, they were all denied access to their solicitors for fully five hours. At the trial, it transpired that Montagu's passport had been deliberately altered, to try to prove that he had lied about his movements to and from the country. The passport had been in the hands of the police since Montagu's arrest. The deception was uncovered by Chief Justice Lynskey, and Wildeblood points out that it was taken for granted that the police should produce forged documents as evidence and no attempt was made to explain how the passport came to be changed.

Worst of all, perhaps, were the methods used to obtain Edward McNally's confession. While in the R.A.F. he was arrested because of certain letters found in his kit, including some from Wildeblood. In one of these Wildeblood had mentioned "Beaulieu", Lord Montagu's family seat. The police were very anxious to convict Montagu (who had previously been acquitted on another charge), so McNally was first threatened with prosecution and then, when he confessed, was informed that he would *not* be prosecuted himself provided he turned Queen's Evidence against Montagu, Pitt-Rivers and Wildeblood. Moreover, none of the other twenty-four people accused of homosexual practices by McNally and his friend John Reynolds (whose confession was extracted by similar means) was ever brought to trial. Wildeblood comments: "I ask: Could anything be more immoral than the way in which the confessions of Reynolds and McNally were extorted? Could anything be more obscene than the sight of these men, under the promise of a free pardon, being dragged to court to betray those whom they had once called their friends?" And he concludes: "I did not believe that such things could happen in England, until they happened to me." (To be concluded)

This Believing World

Those two great men, Mr. Gilbert Harding and Mr. Hannen Swaffer, have no doubt been delighting readers of *The People* with their views on what they "believe". No doubt also they believe that what they believe is of the utmost importance to mankind. Mr. Harding, as a convert, believes (he tells us) in "the Holy Catholic Church" and "Love"; while Mr. Swaffer tells us that, for him as a Spiritualist and a Socialist, the two words "mean the same thing". This will, we are sure, impress most of the leaders of the Labour Party. Mr. Swaffer also tells us that "after years of atheism", he can now see "a Purpose and a Plan"; and as he believes in the "Fatherhood of God", he concludes there is "a force that makes for good".

★
Mr. Harding believes in the Resurrection but, "for the life of me I couldn't tell you why" — which is, surely, in the Kingdom of the Pope, a dangerous heresy? The Resurrection is detailed in the Bible, guaranteed by the Catholic Church, as the Word of God — and that is enough to answer without further question Mr. Harding's "why". Mr. Swaffer believes that man "rose from the abysmal slime"; but he won't give up the Garden of Eden, which he "can see in the world of tomorrow". We cannot help wondering if the Editor of *The People* would have printed their articles if one writer had not been the Pope of Fleet Street, and the other had been unable to publicise his grouses on the radio. If they had been just "ordinary" folk, would anybody have cared two hoots what either "believed"?

★
"The Observer" appears to be stunned at being banned recently in Eire because of the publication of an article on Birth Control — and instead of seeing in this the hand of the Roman Church, which always practises censorship wherever it has power, discusses the banning as if the lynx-eyed and very religious Customs official who saw the article and banned the journal, was to blame and not the Church of Rome. In a long article "from our Correspondent in Dublin" everything and everybody connected with the banning is discussed — but the "Holy Catholic Church"? Not on your life. That is sacrosanct. And yet — what else is responsible?

★
Two Men of God, the Rev. W. M. Reid and the Rev. G. Sunderland, recently ventilated some heartrending grievances in their parish magazines. Mr. Reid is almost heart-broken that for every man coming into his church there are ten women; and Mr. Sunderland, almost in tears because England is not really Christian, points out that most people, when told that the Resurrection is celebrated at Easter, cry out, "So what?" But what would you have? The ladies go to church often to gossip and compare clothes, and most people, if they have learnt any science in school (or even history) must know that the story of the Resurrection is — just a "story". There is not a scrap of evidence that it ever took place.

★
Hundreds of thousands of people will read the story in the *Sunday Dispatch* written by Group-Captain Cheshire — the V.C. who, in swallowing Roman Catholicism, is doing his utmost to perpetuate that Holy Fraud, the Turin Shroud, as "genuine". He is quite sure that nobody could have painted it because some photographer who was "devout" believes it to be a "negative" of Jesus Christ, photographed when the shroud was wrapped around him after the Crucifixion. Again, he tells us that the French Academy of Science "fully bore out" the opinion of the "devout" photographer.

It must be therefore again pointed out that if the Shroud had the least claim to authenticity, the Roman Church would have filled the world with Hosannahs, and hundreds, nay, thousands, of devout converts like Cheshire would be roped in every day. He says that the Shroud "caused a sensation in many circles" — but after all the only circles which could be taken in by this blatant fraud are the very religious ones ready to swallow Relics, Bits of the True Cross, Holy Splinters from the Crown of Thorns, and so on? Alas, we have them always with us.

Clerical Quotations

That there are no facts for a biography of Jesus is admitted: "The Gospels do not pretend to be 'lives' of Jesus. The early Christians felt no need for a biography of Him whom they called Lord and Christ. The modern emphasis on the Jesus of history, however natural and indeed necessary it may be for a later generation, would have seemed in their day misplaced. A 'life' of Jesus, as we today understand the term, can thus never be written: the Gospels do not provide us with the material for such a work." — *The Historical Value of the Gospels*, by G. S. Duncan, D.D. (*The Christian Faith*, p. 115, London, 1936).

★
Let us debunk the Liberal Jesus and restore the mythical God-Man, says the Bishop of Derby: "There is literature still being produced in which the Jesus of Liberalism masquerades as the Jesus of history, and there are those still to whom the idea of a Christ stripped of dogmatic trappings, a Christ who is 'simply human', and who is supposed to require no kind of interpretation in terms of theology — a plain teacher of righteousness, a human master in the spheres of religious faith and of personal piety — very strongly appeals. But it is not the Christ of documents, and it is not the Christ in whom Christians believe. Jesus Christ — such is the doctrine — is truly and genuinely God; and He is at the same time truly and genuinely man; a divine Being who became man. It is the divine 'Person', incarnate in Jesus, who is to be adored, and who is a proper object of worship; to adore Jesus Himself, as to his simply historical and human 'personality', would be creature-worship and heathenism. The question may be raised, and in fact has been raised, whether a doctrine such as the one which has just been indicated, a doctrine which affirms the paradoxical 'coming' into the world of time and of history of an eternal Person, who in the full sense is God, is not in form mythological and perhaps it may be so. It is a 'mythology' of which God himself is the author." — *The Christian Belief in Christ*, by A. E. J. Rawlinson, D.D., Bishop of Derby (*The Christian Faith*, pp. 147, 152-153).

★
The parsons must prove to atheists the reality of God's existence says the Bishop of Gloucester: "What I would emphasise is that the root of our religious difficulties at the present time lies in the fact that the majority of people do not believe really and vitally in God. They may not indeed deny the reality of God's existence, but the belief is vague and uncertain. To make it real and vital should be the aim of Christian ministers." — *The Rt. Rev. A. C. Headlam, D.D., Bishop of Gloucester (Christian Theology*, p. 470, Oxford, 1934).

★
Never mind the men, mind the God: "The Christian Church is centred upon God, and not on man or men." — *The Rev. C. Smyth (The Recall to Religion*, p. 137).

Compiled by GREGORY S. SMELTHERS

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TO CORRESPONDENTS

Correspondents may like to note that when their letters are not printed or when they are abbreviated, the material in them may still be of use to "This Believing World", or to our spoken propaganda.

Lecture Notices, Etc.

OUTDOOR

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Deansgate Blitzed Site).—Every weekday, 1 p.m.: G. A. WOODCOCK.

Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square).—Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY. Sunday, 11 a.m.: R. MORRELL and R. POWE.

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY and A. ARTHUR.

Orpington Humanist Group.—Bluebell and Primrose Ramble., Sunday, April 29th. Train leaves Victoria 10.4 a.m.; Charing Cross 10.4 a.m. Leader will meet at Orpington Station (town side). Everyone welcome.

West London Branch N.S.S.—Every Sunday at the Marble Arch from 4 p.m.: Various speakers.

INDOOR

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, April 29th, 11 a.m.: DR. W. E. SWINTON, "Lamarck and Goethe: Forerunners of Darwin".

Notes and News

THE General Secretary, N.S.S., asks us to remind readers that all who intend to come to the Annual Conference, May 19th to 21st, and who wish to reserve accommodation at the Stork Hotel, 1 Queen Square, Liverpool, 1, should let him have details of their requirements immediately.

THE veteran N.S.S. propagandist, Mr. T. M. ("Tom") Mosley, is a familiar and respected figure in the Old Market Square, Nottingham, every Friday lunchtime. Under his ægis, two new speakers have emerged and begun holding Sunday morning meetings. "I am quite elated", writes Mr. Mosley, "that R. Morrell and R. Powe have taken the platform". We echo these sentiments and wish the young recruits every success. Continuity of propaganda is the lifeblood of an organisation like the N.S.S. And, here, it is fitting to mention that Mr. A. E. Arthur has been speaking regularly on Sundays at both White Stone Pond (Hampstead) and Marble Arch during the past few months, Mr. L. Ebury having been indisposed. Worthy tribute was paid to Mr. Arthur in a letter recently received by the General Secretary. It stated that Mr. Arthur's "arguments about religion were so thorough and impressive" that the writer wished to join the Society. We wish Mr. Arthur further successes and are pleased to say that Mr. Ebury is now fit again.

MR. DAVID LOW, the political cartoonist, can always be relied upon for wit and sanity. His capacity for expressing with exquisite simplicity the very essence of a situation is probably unique; his satirical touch is often perfect. The cartoon on Malta in *The Manchester Guardian* (27/3/56) was among his best. Entitled "Babe on the Doorstep", it

showed Sir Anthony Eden, Mr. Lennox-Boyd and Britannia at the open door of No. 10 Downing Street, gazing with mingled surprise and dubiousness at the babe (Malta) in the basket. A note fastened by safety-pin to the infant's clothes read: "Please take in my child — Mintoff", and there was a P.S.: "Nurse attached". Therein lay the sting, the nurse being a deliciously-drawn, round-faced, Roman Catholic prelate, unconcernedly knitting. How Catholics will react to Low's latest heresy we do not know, but we hazard the guess that the *doyen* of cartoonists has become an *enfant terrible* in Papist eyes.

★

THE FOLLOWING DAY, Low's wit at Rome's expense seemed to have infected the *Guardian's* Parliamentary Correspondent. Reporting the House of Lords' deliberations on the present visit of Marshal Bulganin and Mr. Krushchev, he told how the Catholic Duke of Norfolk "intruded". "One says intruded", he explained, "because it is impossible to recall when, if ever before, he uttered a word in the Upper House". "His purpose was known", continued the Correspondent. It was "to express the Roman Catholic view" on the visit of the Russian leaders. But "His thoughts seemed a little confused". Having expressed them, however, he left. So he missed Lord Alexander's forthright Protestant denunciation of religious intolerance in Spain, Ecuador, Colombia and other Catholic countries. The *Guardian* Correspondent concludes:

For the information of the Duke (by this time, no doubt, dining in Arundel Castle), Lord Reading proclaimed the interest of all Ministers in religion and wanted the Duke to understand that all religions and not only the Catholic religion, are persecuted in Communist countries. This, of course, will hardly be news for a student of dialectical materialism like the Duke. It was evidently an unusually bright day in the Lords!

The Problem of Mutation

I

By G. H. TAYLOR

WHILE IT IS quite certain that Evolution has occurred, it is still disputable how it has occurred.

Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) would more aptly be called the "Origin of Gaps between Species".

Natural Selection explains how the fittest survive; it does not explain how the fittest first came into existence. The position may briefly be stated thus: Natural Selection *prunes*; it does not *produce*.

Natural Selection makes gaps in the ranks, and thus leaves the fittest standing; it does *not* provide the fittest with the mechanism which enables them to remain standing, thus to propagate their advantageous constitution to the next generation.

In short, Darwin explained the *survival*, not the *arrival*, of the fittest.

In case this should be misread as an adverse criticism, I hasten to add that no theory is expected to solve problems it does not postulate. Darwin's theory is not false. It is incomplete. Nor did he ever suppose it was complete.

The incompleteness of Darwin's theory gives nothing to the religionist (and the same applies to the incompleteness of the Newtonian system and of mechanistic materialism).

When selection has done its work, heredity will transmit the useful variation to the offspring. This will result in the production of "better" (i.e. biologically fitter) individuals. Evolution, however, means producing *new* things, not merely more of what already exists in fitter specimens.

What, then, are the causes of evolution? Heredity, selection, variation and adaptation are well-established

auxiliaries, as we well know. But they could never account for the sudden leaping up of *new* forms, of which a tiny proportion manage to get established (i.e. genetically incorporated into the species).

In the century that has elapsed since Darwin's most famous book, much more is known of the prime causes of biological evolution. And these causal factors may be neither few nor simple.

Now and again there occurs a radical kind of variation, differing from ordinary variation in that it originates as a change in a single gene. In this way quite new inheritable properties come into being, known as mutants. Some of them are known as "sports". There are two kinds of mutation; namely, permutations in which the whole chromosome is involved, and point-mutations of the genes. The recurrence of the same mutation may finally result in its replacing the original type. By giving Natural Selection something *new* to work on, mutations could thus become recognised as a prime cause of *evolution*, as distinct from mere *variation*.

Observation in this field dates back to 1896, when the evening primrose was found to produce a new type in every generation, some of them breeding true. As a result, the Dutch botanist De Vries expounded a "mutation theory" in 1901.

Since the re-discovery of Mendelism in 1909 by Bateson of Cambridge, an enormous amount of controlled experimentation has been done on mutations. Laboratories in Texas and Leningrad were among the earliest to become interested. The standard experiments were by Muller on the vinegar fly *Drosophila melanogaster*. Among other researchers in this field have been Morgan, Goldschmidt, Painter, Bridges, Mohr and Jennings.

In one respect their work has been eminently successful; in another respect it has failed. It has been successful in demonstrating beyond dispute that mutations can be caused by *physical agencies*. This at once removes the "Hand of God" — another disappointment for the religionists. For if mutations are effected by divine purpose, then that purpose is at the mercy of the experimental scientist, who can thus turn God's plan to any direction he chooses!

Of the drosophilists, Goldschmidt produced sports by heating the eggs enough to kill most of them, and Muller by exposing the parents to X-rays. Mild injury of the germ plasm has worked mutations on mice, and Jennings successfully used a similar method on *Diffugia corona*.

The special advantages of *Drosophila* are that its chromosomes are relatively large and that it is a conveniently rapid breeder. Mutations occur in the wild state, but bombardment of the chromosomes by X-rays (the Beta-rays from radium are also effective) has increased the rate of mutation by about 150 times the normal amount. These rays can effect changes without permanently injuring the rest of the cell. A vast number of changes have been worked, at the rate of one in five to ten thousand, all due to determinable physical agencies and physical conditions.

Because physical factors effect mutation in the laboratory there is every reason to suppose, and no reason to doubt, that such factors do so in nature. Morgan has given the opinion that chromosomes may be "clumped" by strong light rays, or very powerful cosmic rays which are more penetrating than radium or X-rays: whereas bones or coins stop the latter, ultra-short cosmic rays may penetrate 18 yards of lead and break up 20 atoms per second per cubic inch. Even in the days before he inclined to materialism, the late Sir James Jeans could write, even if rather crudely: "It may have been cosmic radiation which turned monkeys into men." (*The Mysterious Universe*.)

In any case, once the biologist has noted that the genetic

structure has been interfered with, that is all that concerns him as a biologist. It remains for the physicist to show where the interference could arise. As Prof. J. B. S. Haldane says in *Fact and Faith*: "New genes appear to arise as the result of accidents, causes which are no doubt determined by the laws of physics (but are) not the concern of the biologist."

It should be stressed that mutation in nature is an extreme rarity as a permanent incorporation. Some stocks remain stable all the time, and some creatures have remained unchanged since the earliest rocks.

Nor is mutation necessarily progressive, i.e., moving towards greater competence in relation to the environment. The late Bishop Barnes, an expert mathematician, was completely out of his depth in dealing with mutation, which he saw as evidence of God's activity (cf. *Scientific Theory and Religion*), and he even claimed Jesus as a mutant.

Thus we see the Christian Deity, deprived of his former employment by the march of science, is given the job of Mutation Manager.

Other religionists, including Lunn, also fell into the trap. The following considerations negate the Barnes argument: (1) Mutation also applies to parasites, who would thus share the supposed advantages conferred by God. (2) Since only the tiniest fraction of mutations are ever incorporated into the species, we are confronted, if we are Christians, with a colossal waste of effort by the Almighty. (3) Mutations are mostly diseased weaklings. The Bishop would hardly have wished to add this to the troubles of Jesus. Mohr has shown that sports, compared with normal individuals, have a lack of vigour proportionate to their divergence from type. (4) There is little or no evidence that mutants are biased in a direction advantageous to the species. "Most of the conspicuous gene mutations are disadvantageous whenever present." (H. S. Jennings: *The Biological Basis of Human Nature*.) We speak of mutants being thrown "up", but they are, indeed, much oftener thrown down or just sideways so as to yield some teleologically *neutral* character like the rose comb of the Wyandotte fowl, a dominant gene substitution from a single-combed ancestry. Mainly, mutations seem to produce recessive abnormalities.

In his epistolary debate with Haldane, Arnold Lunn innocently made the point, in support of God's finger on the chromosome, as it were, that "blind chance would mutilate in mutating". If ever a debater put his neck in a noose, it was Lunn! Haldane made the obvious retort, "So it does!" Therefore, where was the Divine Plan?

Naturally the majority of mutations are likely to be harmful, as it is much easier for a random change in a complex mechanism like the body or the brain to throw it out of gear than to improve it. A large proportion of mutations are lethal.

The work of the mutationists, then, has offered no solace to the harassed defender of Divine intervention. Thus far it has been successful. As to whether it has elucidated the major causes of evolution, however, that is a question which we propose to discuss in the next article.

—NEXT WEEK—

THE MALTHUS PROBLEM

F. A. RIDLEY and G. I. BENNETT

The mind which renounces, once and for ever, a futile hope, finds its compensation in ever-growing calm.—GEORGE GISSING.

A Note on Christianity and Slavery

By H. CUTNER

MOST READERS suspect, I am sure, that I am responsible for most of "This Believing World", and if it is unsigned, it is sometimes necessary in a journal to have some unsigned matter. I mention this in case anybody else should be suspected of writing the paragraph so sternly criticised by Mr. L. Ebury, the other week, on Christianity and Slavery.

A hurried reading of his letter made me convinced that I had written that slavery had been abolished by Christianity; but Mr. Ebury had correctly quoted me — I wrote that "modern" Christianity had abolished it. In his criticism, Mr. Ebury forgot the word "modern" and concentrated on "Christianity". He had the right to do so, of course, and, no doubt whatever, he and those who follow him sincerely believe that Christianity and "modern" Christianity are the same.

But all religions have to go through many stages of evolution. Whoever wrote the early parts of the Old Testament — and by early I do not necessarily mean Genesis — represented "God" as a very jealous and mostly a very angry Deity always ready to punish everybody who did not keep his commandments. As an example, we find in Deuteronomy (21, 18), "If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son which will not obey the voice of his father . . . then shall his father and mother lay hold of him and bring him . . . unto the gate of his place . . . and all the men of his city shall stone him with stones that he die . . ." No command in the Bible is stronger than that; but, as a matter of historical interest — did the Jews ever follow it? Is it not a fact that they were *compelled* rarely if ever to follow this explicit and divine injunction? Yet it would be very easy to say that the Jews never abolished killing their unruly sons.

The Judaism which they practise now is totally unlike the Judaism of the wanderings in the desert in many particulars. Judaism has moved with the times, it has obeyed the inevitable laws of evolution. It has been compelled to reject or modify dozens of the inflexible commands of Jehovah. And we can say the same for Christianity. To claim that the word "Christianity" covers *everything* advocated by the 300 sects who follow Christ in varying ways, and who violently differ from each other in many important particulars, is just fantastic.

Slavery was for many centuries an economic "ideal". To capture slaves in war, or by making raids on people who could not defend themselves, was looked upon by many nations as an economic necessity. Not 100 years ago, fully believing Christians in the Southern States of North America fought a terrible war mostly (not altogether) in favour of the retention of slavery. The Southern slave owners waxed fat on the work of their unpaid slaves and they were not going easily to give up their rights. It is absolutely true that their Christianity saw nothing wrong whatever in slavery, and they were backed up to the utmost by their Christian ministers. On the other hand, there were Christian ministers in the Northern States of America who bitterly opposed slavery. Though not a minister herself, Mrs. Beecher Stowe came from a line of ministers and was herself a thorough Christian; and her book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, written from the Christian standpoint was a flaming indictment of slavery which went round the world. It probably did more to bring about the abolition of slavery in

the U.S.A. than any other single book ever written. And it was Christian through and through.

We thus have two opposing points of view both speaking in the name of Christianity, and of God, and human rights.

Neither Judaism nor Christianity in the Bible opposed slavery, simply because it was an institution which had been paramount in the economic field long before these religions were thought of. And it is here that evolution in the shape of many thinkers and reformers came in, and Christianity, as the dominant religion, had to bow to public opinion. It was *compelled* to abolish slavery just as it was compelled to abolish the auto-da-fé, and torture, and imprisonment for debt in such places as the old Fleet prison. To put it more plainly, society, which included Christians, had to civilise Christianity.

The clear and explicit command of Jesus is to hate your parents to be his disciple. Do Christians follow this rule? Do Christian priests and preachers insist that their flocks must hate their parents to be true Christians? It may well be that some Christian sects follow everything in the Bible literally, and would gladly, for example, put witches to death — as John Wesley might have done, for he believed in witches and putting them to death. But do the mass of educated Christians these days? The fact is that, like everything else, Christianity has had to submit to the laws of evolution, and has had to modify, change, or abolish, many things which once were part and parcel of its teachings.

Slavery is one of the things which has been abolished by modern Christianity, as I said in the paragraph which brought forth Mr. Ebury's letter. I might have said "modern Christian states" as better representing what I meant; but I cannot see what we can lose by having a sense of proportion on these things. Our case against Christianity is so strong that we can afford to be fair.

But no doubt Mr. Ebury still disagrees with me, and so I can tell him the easiest way with which he can completely put me in my place. It is to give us the names of a number of Christians who still (in 1956) believe in slavery, and who, in books and articles, support it. Unless he does this, I think that I was not wrong in saying that "modern" Christianity abolished slavery — even if it was compelled by public opinion, mostly Christian, to do so.

Freethought Journals of the World

EUROPE, ASIA AND AUSTRALASIA

BELGIUM

La Pensee. The monthly organ of the Federations of Freethought Societies. Described as the champion of militant Freethought, drawing on the resources of Science and Philosophy. 4 large pages. 51st year. Price 250 fr. Edited by Mlle. Pardon.

ITALY

La Ragione (Reason). Published in Rome by the Giordano Bruno Association; nominally a monthly.

FRANCE

La Raison. Paris. 25 fr. 4 pages of the size of an average newspaper. *La Raison* purveys news and Rationalist propaganda. (The term "Rationalism" abroad is equivalent to English "Freethought".) Editor Jean Cotereau, Director Andre Lorulot.

Among other French periodicals which, though not existing specifically for freethought objectives, nevertheless exhibit more or less strong freethinking tendencies, may be mentioned, in particular, *L'Unique*, a 24-page bi-monthly magazine of culture.

HOLLAND

De Vrijdenker (The Freethinker). Antwerp. Monthly. 30 fr. 6 large pages.

GERMANY

Der Freidenker (The Freethinker). Organ of the German Freethought Association (*Bund*). Monthly. 8 pages.

Geistesfreiheit ("freedom of the spirit or mind"). Published monthly by the Free Religion League, from Ludwigshafen. 20 pages.

Frau und Frieden. Monthly. 30 pfg. 12 pages. From Gelsenkirchen. A paper for women, with freethought leanings.

SWITZERLAND

Freidenker (Freethinker) Organ of the Swiss Freethought Association, Zurich. 24 pages. Uses the emblem of the Pansy.

There are also in Europe Esperantist publications which, as it were, lend a hand to Freethought.

INDIA

Indian Rationalist. Monthly. 3 annas. 12 pages. Now in its fourth year. Editor S. Ramanathan. Several Indian ventures having during the present century "gone down" in the struggle for existence, including the *Indian Thinker* of Trivandrum. It is our earnest wish that this journal will get a secure foothold in the cultural life of the new India.

Radical Humanist of Calcutta. Weekly. 12 pages. 4 annas. A political (Radical) newspaper of a freethought character.

AUSTRALIA

The Rationalist. Bi-monthly. 2/-. 32 pages. Melbourne. Organ of the Rationalist Association of Australia.

NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand Rationalist. Auckland. Monthly. 20 pages. 6d. Mr. O'Halloran has recently been succeeded by Mr. Hanlon as Editor. Organ of the New Zealand Rationalist Association.

There is evidence in many of these journals of a post-war struggle to maintain existence. The work is often largely voluntary, and the size maintained by many reprints (usually, we are gratified to note, from THE FREETHINKER).

Our list is possibly not exhaustive. Before the war, for example, there was a very fine Italian journal, *La Critica*, for culture and progress, edited by the philosopher (the late) Benedetto Croce, himself an atheist, and we have not been able to trace its continued existence. No doubt there exist more or less "underground" ventures, pamphlets or sheets, of a primarily political nature which carry some more specifically freethinking matter of an anti-clerical character. What we have enumerated are the established Freethought journals of the world. G.H.T.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE MEMORIAL MEETING

I deeply regret that any Freethinker should have seen fit to write for publication the letter which appeared under the above heading in your issue of March 23rd. I was unable to attend the meeting owing to sickness, but if every word were true, one should not proclaim domestic disagreements to the world at large. Only those who were at the meeting can know if it is fair comment, but now the complaint is broadcast to our readers in England and the rest of the world. A complaint to the organisers or to the Executive would surely have sufficed, and we should at least remember that a new branch was extending our propaganda activities.

I was greatly shocked by the insult to the distinguished occupants of the platform, who were described as lacking in "warmth and modesty". I understand that the lecturers' services were given freely and I resent the insult to my friends. I know of no M.P. other than Mr. Silverman who would have appeared on a public platform to honour the memory of Chapman Cohen and Joseph McCabe and to acknowledge the work of the N.S.S. He was not on a vote-catching mission.

As one who never forgot his debt of gratitude of Chapman

Cohen, and who served him with loyalty and devotion to the end, I would remind some who do not seem to know it that the movement is more important than any individual and that the only way that we can worthily perpetuate the memory of Chapman Cohen is to work for the cause which he served so superbly throughout his long and honourable life. LEN EBURY, Vice-President, N.S.S.

SCIENCE AND PURPOSE

Your correspondent Rex Clements voices a point of view which needs to be stressed in your columns. Scientists describe and explain the properties inherent in perceptible phenomena; in other words, what they are made of and how they act. If a scientist goes on to draw metaphysical or ethical or æsthetic conclusions from his discoveries, he will then be speaking as a layman, not as a final authority. Science deals with what things are seen to do, not their reason for existing.

Those who imply that because science, as such, reveals no purpose or meaning in the universe, there cannot be any purpose or meaning in the universe, appear to be in the position of a man who says that as, scientifically speaking, the Moonlight Sonata is simply a series of agitations of the atmosphere impinging upon a complicated structure in a human head, therefore the Moonlight Sonata has no further significance. In both cases there is a completely unwarranted assumption that scientific truth is the only kind of truth, and that "unscientific" is necessarily equivalent to "untrue". S. W. BROOKS.

[No materialist is simple enough to suppose that (a) the music and (b) the physical events which make the music possible, are one and the same thing. The materialist does not deny—indeed he asserts—that new patterns emerge from a field of physical happenings. Whether they take the form of the Moonlight Sonata or some ear-splitting discord, the principle is the same. Our correspondent conveniently chooses the Sonata.—ED.]

EMOTION NO GUIDE TO TRUTH

The terms used by Mr. Rex Clements (March 23rd) are so variable in interpretation that it becomes possible to agree with his sentiments from one angle and to disagree with them from another. "Man is not only a thinking, but a feeling animal," and "our emotions are facts." No one denies this. It is only when Mr. Clements uses such things as "the poet's dream, the mystic's ecstasy", etc., as criteria of objective truth that we differ. Pleasant as poetic expression, perhaps, but nonsense in terms of rational thought. (Abridged.) PETER E. J. JORDAN.

As a materialist I do not doubt that poets have "visions" and mystics have ecstatic "experiences". But if these visions and experiences cancel one another out, I shall conclude that they are unreliable as a guide to reality. And if these visions lead them to make statements which fail to pass the test of fact and logic, then I shall conclude that the poets and mystics are deceived. If, for example, they propound the view that the universe has a great cosmic "Why" in its workings, then I can produce a host of facts to disprove it, and shall conclude that poets and seers are charming liars writing beautiful balderdash, as when Browning wrote

"God's in his Heaven,
All's right with the world."

HENRY WHITMARSH

WELSH FREETHOUGHT LITERATURE

You ask if there are "any Freethought works, apart from pamphlets, in the Welsh language".

Yes; there is at least one book, which is well worth reading. *Gwyll a Gwawr (Darkness and Dawn)* by D. R. Williams, Caer-narvon. It has 138 pages, and the price, marked on my copy, is 2s. 6d. It was printed and published by Hugh Evans and Sons Ltd., Publishers, Stanley Road, Liverpool, in 1933.

The book is written, quite frankly, from the Freethought point of view. It can be described as an introduction to Evolutionary Anthropology, etc. THOS. OWEN.

The only way in which one human being can properly attempt to influence another is the encouraging him to think for himself, instead of endeavouring to instil ready-made opinions into his head.—SIR LESLIE STEPHEN.

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