

The Freethinker

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AT A SERVICE in Westminster Abbey in memory of that colourful and controversial politician, the late Mr. Aneurin Bevan, a bishop of the Established Church made a reference to Atheists and Atheism that should be of interest to the readers of this paper. The cleric in question was the Bishop of Southwark, the Right Reverend Dr. Mervyn Stockwood, and his remarks were made from the august pulpit of the Abbey in the presence of what it is the fashion to describe as "a large and distinguished gathering".

Amongst the VIPs present were the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and many other well-known people. As was only to be expected from the purpose of the gathering, the Bishop's remarks

mainly concerned the late Mr. Aneurin Bevan. But in the course of his tribute, his Lordship delivered himself of what is perhaps the most astonishing definition of Atheism and of Atheists, to be found anywhere even in the vast and often highly ingenuous *corpus* of Christian apologetics. It is upon this aspect of the Episcopal discourse that I wish to comment here.

A Left-Wing Bishop

Bishop Stockwood is a man of the political Left, a "Christian Socialist", as might be gathered from his appearance at such a gathering. In which there is nothing very unusual or surprising. Leftist clerics, and even bishops, are a not uncommon phenomenon nowadays. In my youth it was a quite different story. Then, the Church of England really was "the Tory Party at prayer" (as someone then aptly defined it), and at any rate in country districts an Anglican cleric who was a Liberal—let alone a Socialist—would have been regarded as a freak of nature, or even possibly as "possessed" by the Evil One in person! But today, "fings ain't wot they used t'be", even in the Established Church. The Labour Party has many clerical members (Roman Catholics in particular), and even Communists are not unknown in the Close of Canterbury. So the spectacle of a Bishop of the Established Church extolling the virtues of the former bogeyman of the Tory Party, within the hallowed precincts of Westminster Abbey, whilst certainly calculated to make Queen Victoria—and the late Dean Inge—turn over sharply in their graves, did not even raise a ripple of controversy in the placid political universe of 1960. As might have been expected, his Lordship's remarks about Mr. Bevan's personal character and political career were laudatory and what might not have been expected from their episcopal source, Dr. Stockwood's admissions about Mr. Bevan's own self-confessed agnosticism and hostility to Christianity (already cited in *THE FREETHINKER*), were frank and outspoken. To his lasting credit, the Bishop admitted that Mr. Bevan was an unbeliever who, in his own lifetime had no use for either Church or clergy and who did not believe in a personal God. Since Truth, by whomsoever spoken, is always a virtue, we must applaud Dr. Stockwood for what was in most respects, a frank and manly address in honour of a

politician who, however one regards his particular point of view, was probably the last colourful personality to adorn a drab world and an increasingly boring political landscape. But for the almost incredible definition that his Lordship quite gratuitously introduced into his valediction, I for one, and probably most other Freethinkers would have given full marks to this particular successor of the Apostles. In fact the general tone of his address aptly illustrates the observation of my friend Mr. Cutner that "the Church has civilised Christianity". Christ and the early Christians were much less polite about their contemporary critics. "The Mystery of Life"

If only the Bishop had not said it! But he did.

He actually went on record with the astonishing remark that Mr. Bevan was not an Atheist in the ordinary (extraordinary?) sense, since he had a "profound respect for 'the Mystery of Life'." Now we are already painfully familiar with the fact that theology which deals in heavenly mysteries, is not always explicit even on the subject of earthly ones or even comprehensible to the theologically uninitiated. But precisely what does the Bishop mean by the term the "Mystery of Life" and why should Atheists take up an unrespectful attitude towards it? Dr. Stockwood, as an ordinary educated man, even if not as a theologian, must know that a mystery is, at all times and places merely something beyond the comprehension of the science of its particular time, e.g. America was a "mystery" before Columbus: now it is just another continent. At present, let us say, the Abominable snowman is still a mystery, but it will cease to be one and become merely another species of monkey (or mirage) when the people now looking for it in the Himalayas finally succeed in running it to earth. There are, it is true, "mysteries" like, let us say, the Holy Trinity—which all theologians, including presumably Dr. Stockwood, describe as the greatest mystery of all—but this is likely always to remain a mystery since it is, by definition "Incomprehensible" and does not exist in any comprehensible form. But life certainly exists, and if there is a "mystery" of life, this can only mean that its causes are still unknown.

Life and the Universe

We at least now know, as does the Bishop of Southwark (though the founders of his religion did not) that we live in an apparently illimitable universe of which life is, though perhaps only exceptionally and under rarely recurring conditions, one of the attributes. As Sir Harold Spencer-Jones, the former Astronomer Royal, has suggested, life probably recurs periodically throughout the Universe as a perhaps abnormal condition (cf. *Life in Other Worlds*). There are, of course, various theories already in existence to explain both the origins of the Universe and of any life that it contains: viz. The steady-state theory, the picturesquely named "big bang" theory and others. If any one of these could be scientifically proved to be true the

—VIEWS and OPINIONS—

A Bishop on Atheism

By F. A. RIDLEY

Mystery of Life would be a mystery no more any more than would be the Loch Ness monster, if someone were to identify it as, perhaps, an escaped walrus! So far, it is true (or so I understand) that the origins of the Universe and of life, are still not definitely known. But they may be in the future. Then why should one "reverence" this then outmoded "mystery" any longer? And incidentally, Dr. Stockwood or his successors will have to find a new definition for Atheists and Atheism.

It really is both surprising and disheartening that, addressing a University-educated bishop in this Year of Grace 1960, one should have to make the elementary explanations set out in this paragraph. As it is, his Lordship's own definition leaves us with no option but (in Disraeli's expression) to "expatiate on the obvious" and to indicate that the term "reverence" is irrelevant to Atheism. Naturally every intelligent person, believer or unbeliever, takes an interest in the problem of the origin of the Universe, in which he lives and whence life (including his own) derives. But the term "Atheist," in any case, denotes a particular mental attitude to which "reverence"

is totally irrelevant: an Atheist (as the original Greek implies) is a person "without God"; he has no need of that hypothesis. Atheists, or at least most Atheists, do not set out to disprove logically the existence of God: a negative proposition does not lend itself to that kind of proof. God and gods are merely ideas in the human mind; ideas, the social, historical and intellectual origins of which have been exhaustively discussed and are now known with reasonable accuracy. As Chapman Cohen used to demonstrate so forcibly, there is no longer any need to discuss whether gods exist: we know that they do not precisely because we know what they actually are, and how they originally arose as figments in the imaginations of primitive peoples, figments dictated by their knowledge, or lack of knowledge, of external phenomena. We respectfully suggest to the Bishop of Southwark, that he takes a look at, let us say, Grant Allen's masterly *Evolution of the Idea of God*, or at Chapman Cohen's own remarkable pamphlets upon this theme before laying down another definition of Atheism, whether in Westminster Abbey or anywhere else.

Science News

ACCORDING TO two University of Miami geologists, Dr. John Rosholt and Dr. Cesare Emiliani, 93,000 B.C. (or, if you prefer it, 88,996 B.A.—"Before Adam"!) is a probable date for the emergence of *Homo sapiens*, true man. They have developed a new system of dating from sea-bed sediments, based on the fact that a tiny amount of uranium is dissolved in all sea-water and that, as it slowly decays, it produces protoactinium 231 and thorium 230. These attach themselves to particles of sediment and sink to the ocean bed, there, in turn, to decay. Protoactinium 231 decays faster than thorium 230, however, and the ocean sediment can be dated by measuring the relative quantities of the two isotopes it contains.

By this method, Drs. Rosholt and Emiliani have dated the last interglacial Pleistocene period from 100,000 to 67,000 B.C., with its peak of temperature around 93,000 B.C. The oldest *Homo sapiens* skull fragments are believed to be from this warmest part of the period.

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THAT WAS MAN, but what about the earliest living organisms? Another Florida scientist, Biochemist Dr. Sidney W. Fox of Florida State University, has some information on this subject, too, but this time it is a question of how, not when. Not merely speculatively so, either, for in the American magazine, *Science*, Dr. Fox gave details of some remarkable experiments he has been conducting.

It is believed that the atmosphere of the earth, before the emergence of life, was devoid of oxygen, but composed of other gases like methane, hydrogen and ammonia. It is also known that, when a mixture of such gases in a flask with a little water in the bottom is subjected to an electric discharge, the resultant chemical process produces amino acids in the water. Now, amino acids go to make proteins, and proteins are the chemical framework of life as we know it. The first stage in the chemical development of life (and there is now no disputing the chemical basis of all living things) could have come about though the action of lightning or cosmic rays.

For his experiments, Dr. Fox argued that the surface of the primitive earth might well have been fairly hot. Mixing together the 18 amino acids common to the proteins of all living things, he heated them gently, and he obtained "proteinoids", which behave very much like natural proteins, are digested by natural enzymes, and are

eaten by bacteria. And if polyphosphoric acid was added, the reaction took place at only 160°F.

Having obtained his proteinoids, Dr. Fox set about the next stage: their organisation into cells. Dissolving some of his proteinoids in hot water, he then cooled the solution, and billions of microspheres appeared, looking very much like round bacteria or cocci. The microspheres shrank when salt was added, suggesting that they were hollow and had slightly permeable walls, like the cell walls of bacteria.

While not claiming that the microspheres are alive (but what, after all, is "living"?) Dr. Fox does think they resemble the early precursors of living organisms. If amino acids were continually raining down from the sky, large quantities probably accumulated on fairly hot parts of the earth's surface. Heat would cause a reaction like that in Dr. Fox's experiments, and they would become protein-like molecules. Being dissolved in heavy rain and washed into the sea, they could have cooled and formed microspheres. Assuming this took place on a colossal scale, it is not hard to imagine that among the microspheres were some of the requisite chemical formula for the evolution of living organisms. At any rate, it will be seen that biochemistry has effectively banished God from the evolution of life.

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ANOTHER OF NATURE'S PATENTS, chlorophyll, has also been produced in the laboratory. Plants, as is well known, utilise sunlight to make sugar, fats and other energising chemicals from water and carbon dioxide, and this photosynthesis is accomplished by chlorophyll, the green substance with a single atom of magnesium in its centre.

Every effort to synthesise chlorophyll has failed until Harvard Professor R. B. Woodward managed it recently. He has built genuine chlorophyll from simple, everyday chemicals, starting from the rare-sounding but quite ordinary, aceto-acetic ester and breaking it down into four different compounds or pyroles, then—in the Professor's simple metaphor for a complex chemical operation—"tailoring the framework". Not the least difficult part of the process was the separation of chlorophyll from its so-called "mirror-image", also produced by the synthesis, and only a tiny amount of chlorophyll was made. It is therefore limited in power since, in the green leaves of plants, the chlorophyll structure is intricate and a lot of other chemicals assist the photosynthesis. But it is the genuine stuff.

C.McC.

Catholic Crime—Who Pays the Bill?

By Dr. J. V. DUHIG

AS A CLASS Catholics are the most criminal in the world. The cost of this to good people must be fantastic and it is high time that some serious effort was made to bring this fact forcibly to the attention of peoples and governments everywhere. It cannot be argued that Catholics, like people of any other persuasion, are liable, occasionally, to fall to "temptation"; the mass of figures make that plea ludicrous. The situation is far more serious than just that. I shall show that criminality is inherent in the Catholic system of belief and that Catholicism not only does nothing to prevent Crime (and this includes Juvenile Delinquency) but, beyond all doubt, actually promotes it. What is so serious is that Catholic criminality extends right from the top-most levels of rank where Popes used to poison their rivals and now stand responsible for the ruthless destruction of millions of innocent people; where cardinals and bishops approve, plan and even direct murders and assorted cruelties; right down to the schoolchild who steals a few ha'pennies from a mate.

Catholic Crime throughout the world is now patently and manifestly an open and abominable scandal. Honest Catholic clerics who are in touch with the problem freely admit this.

Catholic Crime is of three main types; (1) Political, by action in the international and national fields as symbol of official Vatican policy; (2) In the exercise of an extra-parliamentary approved or permitted power granted by a secular government as in France; and (3) Individual, where private persons, either singly or in criminal combination or conspiracy, such as the organised gangsterism, predominantly Catholic, in New York or Chicago, prey on Society either for monetary gain or simply as an expression of criminal tendencies.

Crime of the first type was freely used in earlier, care-free times by popes, cardinals and bishops, to murder, by poison or dagger, rivals for religious or secular power. This was expressed in a big way by the Massacre of the Albigenses, a landmark in the history of Crime, and by the murder of heretics, such as Joan of Arc, at papal bidding. The St. Bartholomew Massacre was the same kind of Catholic stuff. It seems that then as now religious mania led to murder. The Holy Inquisition was an example of the second type, permissive murder within secular states. The Calas murder was the same thing in France.

It would be a mistake to think that all this foulness, torture and murder ceased centuries ago; it still goes on in Spain, Portugal and Central and South America. It went on all over Europe during the last world war wherever the alliance between the Vatican and Nazism and Fascism flourished.

If we are looking for the evidence we need only run over the list of rulers and supporting politicians in Europe and America between 1920 and 1945, all Catholics, all criminals and many of them traitors. In Germany, Hitler, Goebbels and von Papen; in Italy, Mussolini; in Austria, Dolfuss, darling of the Jesuits, and Innitzer and the infamous Stahremberg; in Yugoslavia, Stepinac; in Slovakia, Tiso; in Spain, Franco, the worst criminal living; in Portugal, Salazar; in France, Pétain and Laval; in Poland, Beck; in Norway, Quisling; in Belgium, Degrelle; in Hungary, Horthy and Mindzenty; in U.S.A., Joe McCarthy, a foul liar and drunkard; in Argentina, Peron; in Nicaragua, Trujillo; in Cuba, Batista; and at the

apex of the pyramid, Pius XII, who deliberately made the pact with von Papen, probably the most despicable single person of the 20th century, which made possible the rise to power of Hitler and the deliberate destruction of 6 million Jews and millions of French, Poles and Russians. I do not think any previous act in history was so destructive in human life as this Pacelli-von Papen pact. I can only surmise that Pacelli was fascinated by the Hitler technique: if you propose to tell a lie, make it a really big lie, otherwise nobody will believe you; the bigger the lie the better your chance of success. Pacelli opted for the big crime: he has succeeded (for a time).

It would need a very long book to fill out all the freely available evidence and I must refer my readers to such books as Manhattan's, Adrian Pigott's Blanshard's and, above all, *Le Vatican contre l'Europe* by Edmond Paris, (Fischbacher, Paris, 1959) in which my reference to the late Pius XII is fully documented. The only other comment needed, concerns the late Cardinal Stepinac who approved and helped to plan, in collaboration with the hired assassin Pavelich (who murdered the late King Alexander of Yugoslavia), the mass murder of Orthodox Serbs to the number of tens of thousands, who refused Stepinac's plan for forced conversion to Catholicism; and the further comment on Mgr. Tiso, who was hanged by the Yugoslav Government after the war for sending Jews from Slovakia to Auschwitz for destruction in the gas ovens, in accordance with the Christian decree, based on Jesus Christian love, "De haeretico comburendo". (Heretics must be burned, the Catholic Church says, and it still adheres to its claim to do so.)

The Church is peculiar for its numerous organised swindles, such as the miracle shrines—La Sallette, the crudest ever, Fatima, and the greatest swindle of modern times, Lourdes. I will give this circus my official approval on the day when a complete, normal replacement takes the place of a limb, wholly or partially missing; fake cancers are easy to cure but a new limb is a real miracle. But at present, Lourdes is a vicious cruel fraud.

But the real effect of Catholic doctrine is individual crime, organised by gangsters in New York and Chicago and by the Mafia in Sicily, practically all Catholics, who, when mown down by the Police and the FBI, receive (at a price) a most sumptuous send-off from the clergy.

At the start I said that Catholics are the most criminal people on earth. Here is the proof. Some time ago, the Toronto Sentinel published the fact that of 2,100 convicts in Canada, 1,205 were Catholics, 53 per cent, and that while 40 per cent of the Canadians were Catholics, the prison population was 46 per cent of that persuasion. In Sing Sing, one year 60 per cent were Catholic though only 27 per cent of New York people were members of the Holy Roman and Apostolic Church. In California, the figures were 16 per cent in the population, 56 per cent in gaol Catholic; for Wisconsin, 24 per cent and 44 per cent respectively; for Wyoming, 7 per cent and 32 per cent respectively. In New Zealand recently the Prisons Department issued the figures showing that the population was 13 per cent Catholic but the prison population 30 per cent of that faith. The last time such figures were released in New South Wales, they were 19 per cent and 35 per cent respectively. What figures a proper survey in Italy, Spain

(Continued on next page)

This Believing World

We must congratulate the Dean of Brisbane who, the other week, went to a racecourse, backed six horses by putting 5s. on each, and winning on them all. His success has naturally led to a howl of anger by many true followers of gentle Jesus—who, so far, has not been hailed as the greatest backer of horses who ever lived. That may come when Christians *as Christians* will be allowed to back horses; but we are only in the year 1960, and John Wesley's influence is still with us.

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The same influence made it almost impossible for his followers to go to a theatre which was once considered so wicked that playgoers deserved to burn in Hell for ever. And as for playing cards—it was so bad that burning in Hell for ever was changed as a punishment into "for all eternity". Many Churches unite of course in condemning every kind of gambling, particularly Premium Bonds. All the same, we doubt if any of them these days would refuse a handsome donation taken from a winning number.

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In spite of the fact that whatever may be the cause of the rise in crime these days, national journals like the *Daily Mail* will always print a letter from any reverend gentleman who has the cure so long as it advocates a return to God and Christ. The Rev. W. E. Bartlett of Shrewsbury Abbey, for instance, puts all the blame on the fact that "the majority of people in the world today have no belief in a personal God". This may be true, but what a dismal complaint from a member of a Church which has been teaching belief in a "personal God" for at least 1,700 years, backed up by the whole might of our secular states and the laws they have made to teach this particular belief. What a sorry admission of total failure!

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But is it true? Is the lack of belief in a "personal God" the cause of crime? The truth is that the most terrible crimes in history have been committed not only by "intoxicated" believers in God, but by nations like the Germans, most of whom always believed in a personal God and still do. In actual fact, one has only to trace the lives of some of the most bestial thugs in history—Hitler is a precious example—and it will be found that they nearly always cherished a belief that God was ever with them.

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It was most revealing to find that Mr. Stanley Kramer, who produced the film "Inherit the Wind" which deals with the celebrated Monkey Trial in Tennessee, declaring that he at least admired Fundamentalists, and was more or less indifferent to the religious implications of the Trial. He seemed to know as little about Evolution as he did about Christianity. The interview with him took place the other Sunday in I.T.V.'s "About Religion" programme, and opposite Mr. Kramer was the Rev. M. Wood who laughed off any idea that the Trial harmed true Christianity in the slightest degree.

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For Mr. Wood there was no longer any issue between Science and Religion—Religion winning all along the line. The Bible was sold all over the world at the rate of two every second, and more and more people went to it everywhere for comfort and hope. Of course, Christianity in England was not quite like that of such obscure sects as the one in Tennessee; and by talking like this, and introducing Christ with almost every other word, Mr. Kramer was left nearly helpless. But we must congratulate Mr. Wood on one thing—he brilliantly kept out of his comments any reference to Evolution. It was cleverly

done. We wonder what the reverend gentleman really thinks about it?

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That grand old stalwart "Hymns Ancient and Modern" recently got a fearful slating from the Rev. H. Spence—this time because some of its best loved hymns for children were sheer nonsense and completely unsuitable for them. He had nothing but disgust for "All Things Bright and Beautiful", and "The Rich Man in his Castle, the Poor Man at his Gate", and many favourites sung for decades with the full backing of the Churches, sung because—so the kiddies were told—they brought God Almighty and Jesus in full communion with them. It is curious how right have been Freethinkers in the past for saying the same thing as Mr. Spence—but all we got were kicks and curses!

Irreverences

"IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD," and at the end may be the H-bomb.

The materially most profitable idea ever invented is that of sin.

If Christians genuinely believed in heaven and hell, they would try to love their neighbours and enemies without the help of napalm and hydrogen bombs.

The high priests of the Christian religions have undoubtedly the divine right to bring, from time to time, the eternal truths and values into line with the results of heretic and atheist research.

The first ship to take slaves to America was named Jesus. More is hardly needed to judge correctly the value of Christian ethics.

It is strange how much many people are prepared to sacrifice for their gods, and how little for their fellow human beings.

The "free world" seems to be turned more and more into a military organisation for the propagation of the various Christianities.

Siamese twins: Hurralleluiah.

What is the teaching of religion in schools but brainwashing of defenceless children?

1984? We had all that much better in 1484, under Big Brother de Torquemada.

If all Christians would read their Bible more diligently, there would be far fewer Christians.

IULIANUS

CATHOLIC CRIME

(Continued from page 275)

and Portugal would reveal, I shudder to think, but naturally the priests would not allow such a blasphemy.

Now it is evident that there is something seriously wrong with the Catholic religion which has such an appalling social effect. Other religions put into gaol about the same or more often less than their population quotas. So that, in comparison, one which sends to gaol twice or three times its quota is a social menace of the highest order.

(To be concluded)

—NEXT WEEK—

DID HENRY GEORGE TALK NONSENSE?

By W. HARTLEY BOLTON

THE FREETHINKER

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

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London (Tower Hill).—Every Thursday, 12—2 p.m.; Messrs. J. W. BARKER and L. EBURY.

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Sussex Branch N.S.S. (Peace Statue, opposite Embassy Court, Brighton), Sundays, 3 p.m.: Messrs. BARKER, EBURY, MILLS, and TRIBE.

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch N.S.S. (Midland Institute, Paradise Street), Sunday, August 28th, 6.45 p.m.: The Recording of the Debate between Mr. F. A. RIDLEY and Dr. NORRIS (Christadelphian).

Notes and News

WE ARE PLEASED to note that some of our readers wrote to their M.P.s regarding Sir Leslie Plummer's Racial and Religious Insults Bill, following Colin McCall's Views and Opinions article on July 22nd. It is quite true, of course, as some of the M.P.s replied, that the Bill has been dropped, but Sir Leslie has announced his intention of pressing it again and again, and the National Council for Civil Liberties intends to do likewise. That is why our readers' letters are timely: the case against the Bill will be known when it comes up next time.

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ANOTHER OF OUR READERS who happened to see a copy of *Reveille* (21/7/60) protested against that paper's answer to a question from E. Anning of London. Mr. Anning had asked "Does the Church of England consider women morally inferior to men, and is that why women are not admitted to the priesthood, as they now are in Sweden?" *Reveille* was, as our reader (Mr. J. Hendren of Belfast) said, "content to quote the Church Information Board" that "There is absolutely no question of women being considered less righteous than men", whereas, "The truthful answer to both questions is. . . Yes, and the authority is the Bible". Replying to Mr. Hendren, *Reveille's* Isabel

Sutherland acknowledged that it was a "controversial question", but considered the CIB's answer to be "accurate". Parts of the Old Testament, said Miss Sutherland, "have an allegorical rather than a literal meaning". We seem to have heard that line before.

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THE VATICAN—we read in the (*Glasgow Daily Record* (4/8/60)—"does not want women to wear trousers, slacks or any kind of shorts that are not underwear". It has authorised publication of a statement on the subject by the Archbishop of Genoa, declaring that "Male dress alters a woman's psychology" and "This alteration fundamentally and in the long run irreparably damages the family, conjugal faithfulness and the possibility of men and women living in harmony together". And the statement emphasises, with typical Roman Catholic all-knowingness, that "For women to wear masculine dress is an affront to the proper order of things". To which we retort that the Archbishop ought to take a look in the mirror sometime when he is "dressed for the job", and ask himself (a) if he looks masculine? (b) does woman's dress alter his psychology? and (c) is his outfit an affront to the proper order of things?

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ON THE SAME DAY, another Scottish paper, the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* reported a Free Church of Scotland attack on the B.B.C. for refusal to name a clergyman who took part in a recent Catholic service. "If the B.B.C. decides at any time to put on a service that is to be Roman Catholic in character they should say so quite frankly and not leave their listeners to assume that the service is to be, as it usually is, of Protestant form", says the monthly magazine of the Free Church. "The B.B.C. has been suspected of lending itself to the propaganda purposes of the Church of Rome", it adds, "and its denials are unavailing so long as it allows. Roman usages to find a place in broadcasts which are expected to be of a Protestant character".

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THE EDUCATION MISSIONARY SOCIETY (Inc.), of 120 Cameron Road, Aba, Nigeria, might, from its name, be thought to be a religious body. In fact it is not. Among its aims are "To promote Sciences, Arts and Philosophies, and encourage researches for advancement of knowledge", and its Constitution states that the Society "shall be non-denominational and non-sectarian"; it "shall have no connection with any particular religious body and shall take no part in religious controversies"; and "shall be neutral in all religious arguments"; though "It shall encourage its members to take an interest in their particular religions and shall desire that each person should seek God in his or her own way in his or her light". The General Superintendent, Mr. T. K. Utchay, emphasises that "Education is our sole business". He is in touch with the Secular Education League of London, as well as the National Secular Society. Our Nigerian readers might like to get in touch with Mr. Utchay, with a view to joining the Society.

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IN A LETTER to the *East Anglian Daily Times* (6/8/60), Mr. R. Woodhouse Beales of Ipswich pointed out what may well be true (we haven't checked it ourselves) that "about one quarter of the Bible is concerned with the second advent of Christ, much more in fact than the first advent". "If the second is to be spiritualised away", Mr. Beales went on, "then so also must be the first, and there is no salvation for us at all". We can "throw our Bibles away" and—you'll never guess!—"eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die".

God's Word

By C. STANLEY

IT IS WELL KNOWN that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3.16), and that "the Bible is none other than the Voice of Him that sitteth upon the Throne! Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every word of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is the direct utterance of the Most High. The Bible is none other than the Word of God—not some part of it more, some part of it less, but all alike the utterance of Him that sitteth upon the Throne, absolute, faultless, unerring, supreme" (Burgon's *Inspiration and Interpretation*, page 89).

Such being the case, it behoves everyone to follow the advice of Jesus and "search the Scriptures". Having done this it may appear to the searcher that the Bible is not all that might be expected of an almighty, all-knowing god, but upon reflection it will be found that there is a very good reason for this.

When a human author sets out to write a book he is usually alone, and is thus able to marshal his thoughts accordingly, but in the case of the Bible writing this was entirely a different matter.

Presumably, as not only the Holy Ghost (or Wind) together with Jesus and Melchisedic—who had "neither beginning of days nor end of life" (Heb. 7.3)—but also the Virgin Mary ("By thy governance, most Holy Virgin, endureth the world which thou with God didst found from the beginning"—St. Liguori) gave Jehovah help and advice in the creation of the world, it can be readily understood that they were all at hand offering advice and suggestions when he sat down to write his memoirs.

It is very difficult to decide the relationship of the Virgin Mary to Jehovah owing to the "three-in-one" business—whether she is Mother, Wife, or Daughter-in-Law—but it is clear from Catholic writings that, whatever the relationship, she was always setting herself up to be as big, if not bigger than her Son, Husband or Father-in-Law! St. Liguori informs us that "Whereas it is said of other saints that they are with God, of Mary alone can it be affirmed that not only is she not subject to the will of God, but that God is subject to her Will" and "all things, even God himself are subservient to the empire of the Virgin". This being the case it is very easy to understand who, in the case of argument as to what was or who was not to go into the Bible, had the final say in the matter.

Try to imagine poor old Jehovah, having found what he thought to be an excellent phrase to go into his Book, being overwhelmed by criticism from Jesus, the Holy Ghost and Melchisedic, with the Virgin Mary giving the casting vote. In the circumstances it is wonderful that the Book got written at all.

Having at last overcome these trials and got the final word written, Jehovah was entitled to think that everything would now go smoothly, but this was far from so. Being, presumably, not too proud of his Book, he gave it into the keeping of the Jews (Rom. 3.2). But they were not to read it, they were to place it in the Ark (Deut. 31.26). The author took a very great interest in this ark, coming down now and again to dance upon the lid—or rather to shine like a penny candle. Even Aaron was not allowed to look at the Book when he wished (Lev. 16.2), and when the men of Beth-shemish peeped into the Ark—presumably to see the Book—they were "smote" to the extent of 50,070 (I Sam. 6.19). Seeing that no one was to look at his Book, it was exceedingly obliging of Jehovah to come

down and sit on the lid of the box which contained it and chat over things with his old friend Moses (Ex. 25.22). Either Jehovah wanted to get out of the way of the Virgin Mary or business must have been slack in heaven, to enable him to come down and sit between his sacred fowls (like a performing monkey on an organ). It seems an odd thing to do, but it is truly said that "God's ways are not ours", and presumably Jehovah thought this the best way to protect his copyright.

In spite of all this bother about his Book however, someone overreached Jehovah because, when the Ark was opened in the time of Solomon (I Kings 8.9), the Book was missing! After this appalling discovery, the Ark was never heard of again, and it can only be assumed that Jehovah, on discovering how someone had outsmarted him, jumped on it with his omnipotent feet and smashed it into firewood. However, 350 years after it had been lost, the Book turned up again (II Kings 22.8). Hilkiyah, the High Priest found it in the "House of the Lord". What had happened to it in the meanwhile is not disclosed. Hilkiyah and his friends did not bother to take the Book to experts to decide if it was the genuine article—they submitted to Huldah the witch (called by courtesy Prophetess). This lady cursed the place and all its inhabitants—and perhaps not strangely (as the Book has been a curse ever since) not the generations who lost the Book but the generations who found it! The only one exempt from the curse was King Josiah, he was to die in peace. It is perhaps unnecessary to state that this king was afterwards killed in battle (II Kings 2.29-30) as this is the usual result of prophecy. This however is not the most wonderful thing which happened to Jehovah's Book, because 150 years after Hilkiyah, it was found again by Ezra (II Esdras 14.21-44)—but while Hilkiyah found the Book in the temple, Ezra discovered it in his own head! Yes, after the 70 years of exile this gentleman thought it only right to call Jehovah's attention to the fact that "Thy law is burnt, therefore no man knoweth the things that are done of thee, or the works that shall begin". After this assurance Ezra obligingly offered to write "all that hath been done in the world since the beginning".

Having received Jehovah's approval, Ezra with the aid of five scribes proceeded to re-write the Book. All this is verified by Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Irenaeus and Jerome. The last named wrote: "Certainly the present day is to be deemed of that time in which history itself was put together: whether you chose to call Moses the author of the Pentateuch or Ezra the restorer of the same work I make no objection".

It is clear that the only necessity in writing the Book was inspiration. It was a matter of small importance whether Moses was inspired or not—his writings had been destroyed and as he only wrote five books, and Ezra twenty-two, it is clear that the latter's attack of inspiration was over four times as severe as that of Moses. Dr. Samuel Clark, *The Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures*, says that after the manner of the Pythian prophetess, the spirit that possessed those inspired was believed to "swell and blow-up their bodies, especially their breasts and bellies like a bladder or bottle", and it is reported that the inspiration of the Holy Ghost came upon the Bible writers as "a mighty rushing wind" (Acts 11.2). The correct translation of Holy Ghost being nothing more or less than "Holy wind", it can only be assumed that Ezra was blown out by this

"Holy wind" sufficient for the five scribes also. It is left to the imagination to picture the size of Ezra's breasts and belly during the operation! Bearing in mind the way Jehovah was badgered when writing his Book and the adventures which befell it subsequently, it is a remarkable thing that it turned out as well as it did. It is understandable—remembering what he had to put up with from the Virgin Mary—that Jehovah had but a poor opinion of women, as is evidenced in many places in the Book—a notable instance being in the time of Moses when it appears that certain Jewish women had litters of ten or twelve children at a time and had to leave Egypt at the rate of about seventy miles an hour (see Exodus).

It is difficult to decide which parts of the Book are Jehovah's unaided work, and which are the joint efforts of the Trinity, Melchisedic and the Virgin Mary.

Attempts at Papal Expansion in Russia

MANY MONTHS AGO, THE FREETHINKER received the 1958 *Year-Book of the Museum of the History of Religion and Atheism*, published by the Academy of Science of the U.S.S.R. Through the courtesy of Mr. F. O'Dempsey, of the Marble Arch Branch of the National Secular Society, we are now able to raise the iron curtain of language difficulty and comprehend its contents. It is impossible to give an adequate account of the work; the chapter headings alone would require an article to themselves, ranging as they do from studies in primitive religion (that of the Papuans) and myths of Ancient Greece to modern Ukrainian writers on the Vatican and Modernism in Catholicism. There are in addition, details of the Museum's remarkable collection. Mr. O'Dempsey has supplied a complete translation of the essay entitled "The Three Stages of Papal Expansion against Russia in the 10th to 15th Centuries" by B. Y. Ramm, but it is unfortunately too long to print here. We therefore summarise.

Transpose the dates and the names to the present time, and the facts revealed might well be a record of Vatican policy towards Russia from 1914 to 1960. The aims and aspirations of the Papacy are the same today as yesterday, and its methods have shown very little basic change.

Rome has always regarded Russia with the deepest hostility, because she was the bastion of the Greek Orthodox faith, Rome's hated rival through the centuries. Just as in 1914, the Vatican would not give benediction to the Western allies while Orthodox Russia remained in the *Entente*, regarding a victory of Tsarist Russia as a "disaster greater than the Reformation" (Cardinal Gasparin). So, during the 10th to 15th Centuries, Rome supported the enemies of Russia. Mr. O'Dempsey translates: "The Papacy covered the aggressive anti-Russian designs of the West European feudalists with the standard of the Church and religious slogans. But, as well as that, the Papacy made its own plans for the establishment of the Catholic Church in Russia, as this promised to strengthen its economic and political situation." In 1917, the Vatican hailed the collapse of Tsarism; from the *Osservatore Romano* came the joyful cry, "The moment has arrived, propitious for *rapprochement*, inasmuch as the iron circle of Caesaropapism, which hermetically closed Russian religious life to all Roman influences, has been broken". In 1088, Clement III, the anti-Pope at Rome, sought "reunion with Russia", with promises of liberal donations and other benefits in return for acceptance of Catholicism, with his eye on Russian help in his struggle against Pope Urban II. The offer was diplomatically declined and the Papacy, too weak to strike back with force, merely threatened forcible conversion and "the annihilation of the Slavonic lan-

It is suggested, after a careful study of the whole of the Book that the following, at least, bear the unmistakable print of being Jehovah's work alone.

(a) Both accounts of creation which contradict each other but are nevertheless both true.

(b) Psalm 59 (c) Ezekiel 1.16-21; 4.1-15 and 13-18. (d) Leviticus 11.20 & 21 (e) Numbers, especially Chapter 31. (f) Exodus 29. 20 & 21. (g) Jeremiah 13.4-8 and (h) Hosea 1.2-11.

The best advice which can be given to the reader seeking in the Scriptures for eternal life, is to memorise Jehovah's favourite Chapter which must be II Kings 19 as this is repeated almost word for word in Isaiah 27. If verses 28 and 35 of these chapters are referred to this preference will perhaps be understood.

guage". The Bolshevik government through Chicherin, also declined the Papal offer, asserting that for Catholic and Orthodox alike religion was untrammelled, since the Soviet Republic had separated Church and State.

From the ruins of the 1914 war, Fascism arose; the Vatican had found its political counterpart, and all attempts at Concordats were ended. The Concordats in future were to be with the succeeding Fascist powers as they arose. The Vatican began by openly condemning Soviet Russia and indicting her before the world, and when it was proposed that Russia be admitted to the League of Nations. Catholic governments and the Vatican protested. When Hitler voiced his ambition to acquire the Ukraine, the Vatican proclaimed that Christian nations should not help Russia in the event of attack by Germany or Japan. The bargain made between Hitler and the Vatican reveals that anti-Communism was not the sole basis of her enmity. There it was provided that the Catholic Church should replace the Orthodox throughout Soviet territories occupied by Germans, with the proviso, "only through the German Catholic Hierarchy". Ramm describes like tactics in his second and third stages of expansion. "When under the aegis of the Papacy, under the flag of the Crusades, there developed a widespread offensive from the West against the Russian lands. When the Cross of the Cistercian monks prepared the way for the sword of the Conquerors, there was revealed the direct participation of the Papacy. The Cistercians were followed by the Dominicans. The Crusaders were continually falling out over the booty they had taken, but the Apostolic Legate effected a union between the Sword Bearers and the Teutonic Knights. Later legates were dispatched to the Mongolian Khans whom they sought to incite against Russia". He tells us also of the Papal treachery when Byzantium was threatened; the unfulfilled promise of assistance of 50,000 Knights, the Pope's own expressed desire to lead the "campaign against the infidels", his exhortations of a Crusade to be led by the Princes whose absence he most desired, while he played his cards for Papal expansion, and Christendom tottered before the onslaughts of the Magyar and the Turk. Again, in the 14th century the same tactics were employed. Although the Popes could not actively interfere in the affairs of the East because of the declining authority of the Church, they stirred up enmity against Russia, forbade trading; demanded the severance of all relations with the people; and called on the Teutonic Knights to embark on a campaign against them on the pretext of their "conversion", for which there would be the same liberal absolution from sin as had been given for the Crusade in Palestine.

Gregory XI, in his bulls, demanded that in the South Russian lands seized by the Polish Crown, the Orthodox faith was to be "completely exterminated". Urban VI sought to introduce the Inquisition into Russia, and the Papal Curia tried openly to incite the Tartars against her.

The resurgent strength of the Greek Orthodox Church in U.S.S.R. has spelt the end of any attempt at *rapprochement* by the Vatican since 1945, but she can no longer openly ally herself to the Fascist countries. Her eye is ever upon reactions in the U.S.A. The Vatican dare no longer call for the extermination of the Orthodox religion as she did in Yugoslavia. The Ustashi can no longer receive her open blessing for the murder and torture of thousands. She waits again, as she has waited before, but relentlessly burrowing and undermining, until her time shall come in a holocaust of humanity and a crusade for God and the One True Apostolic Church.

The Vatican's attitude to Russia during the 10th to 15th centuries is summed up in Ramm's words: "The history of these relations is to be found in their close connections with the general historic development of West European feudalism and the Catholic Church. But whatever character they assumed, at their basis the expansionist policy carried on by Rome has remained unchanged. Throughout this whole period Russia, in the eyes of the Papacy has remained an object of its political and economic cupidity." "Periods of open aggression alternated with periods of peaceful relations, when the Papacy sought to strengthen its religious and political position in Russia by means of diplomatic conversations or by the missionary activities of Catholic monks." A "mission" usually displayed, not so much religious propaganda as political agitation to the advantage of the enemies of Russia. Individual princes were repeatedly obliged to take defensive measures against these "missionaries" in Russia.

CORRESPONDENCE

FEAR OF DEATH

Mr. R. Smith gets worse and worse. To suggest that I failed to understand that "Scientific Materialism has nothing to offer in place of the fear of old age and death" is rubbish. What I failed to understand was his unintelligible gibberish. (Note the change in his original wording: a sly device to make it intelligible. I put the change in italics.) I shall think his obsessive phobias represent a very craven attitude to life and his unedifying display of self-pity is unpleasant. He should stop snivelling and, if his teeth are falling out he should go to the NHS and get a free set of dentures. (Unfortunately the NHS does not provide new backbones.) Mr. Smith is really in a pitiable condition; he confuses the normal physiological process of aging, with things which are only incidental to and not inherent in this process, such as economic insecurity, loneliness, etc. The only basis for an approach to the problems of life, including those of old age is Scientific Materialism; there simply is no alternative but superstition and guesswork. That is to say that Mr. Smith's nagging phobias can be dealt with only by the scientific method. His morbid fears are not shared by millions of happy people living out a serene old age and facing death with simple courage and equanimity. Unfortunately Mr. Smith is one of the tiny minority of weaklings who, because of their moral cowardice, become a burden on Society. The kindest explanation of Mr. Smith is, of course, that he is mentally sick. I advise him urgently to seek medical help and stop messing about with things he seems unable to understand and of which he obviously has no knowledge.

Mr. G. I. Bennett is, as usual, trivial and muddled: his contribution is mainly a totally irrelevant personal abuse of myself, so crudely offensive as to be quite unworthy of reply, even if there were anything that merited a reply. (Dr.) J. V. DUHIG.

DR. HOPE AGAIN

So my temerous suggestion was true! Eva Ebury *does* take her illusions too seriously and finds "Atheism an escape mechanism"—her words not mine—from them; otherwise, instead of allowing the "smoking faggots and clanking dungeons" of the

past to "crowd her imagination" today, she would occupy it with the absurdities of modern man.

May I assure Mr. Belmour that my studies of the Universe—and I have been at them now for quite a while—have no more impressed me with the self-sufficiency of the universe, than my studies of my car have impressed me with the self-sufficiency of my car; and while congratulating Mr. Murray on his happy escape from the clutches of Rome, may I assure him that—believe it or not—I live in a community of happy Christians. There are no faggots or dungeons in our "coward's castle"; and although we have our full quota of sin I have not noticed any excess of guilt or anxiety about it.

Still, if this sort of polemical catharsis is helpful to Freethinkers, by all means let them have it. It is one of the latest therapeutic techniques in our mental hospitals. But somehow it sticks in my gullet to call it "freethinking". (Dr.) RICHARD HOPE.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY, August 17th, 1960. Present: Messrs. F. A. Ridley (Chair), Barker, Cleaver, Ebury, Johnson, McIlroy, Mrs. Ebury, Mrs. Trask, Mrs. Venton, the Treasurer (Mr. Griffiths) and the Secretary. Apologies from Messrs. Arthur, Hornibrook and Mills. Building Fund donations were reported, including one of £100. The Committee expressed its grateful thanks. Correspondence from members who had written to their M.P.s over the Racial and Religious Discrimination Bill and from the Minister of Education on Roman Catholic criminality was read, as was further data from the NCCL. The Annual Dinner 1961 was booked for Saturday, March 4th, in the Pavilions Arms. Preliminary discussions with Mr. C. Brunel on spreading information about Thomas Paine were reported. The matter had been referred to the Humanist Council. Sussex Branch meetings at Brighton were reported to be very successful. The next meeting was fixed for Wednesday, September 14th.

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