

FREE THINKER

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ROME

Distinguished Secularist Avro Manhattan has produced another masterpiece of political analysis of the Vatican in the modern world. At the same time there have been published a book on the *Vatican Politics of the Council*, a revealing autobiography by ostracised heterodox Jesuit Archbishop Roberts, and a further volume of critical essays by Catholics, edited by former editor of the *Catholic Herald* Michael de la Bedoyere. They all tell the same story.

The One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Rome is a remarkable creation. One, holy and apostolic she has never been, but today she may truly claim to be Catholic. She spans all countries. Within her arms there is something for everyone. The contemplative can find peace; the anchorite, isolation; the politician, politics; the intellectual, metaphysics; the artist, art; the musician, music; the antiquarian, antiquities; the aggressive, holy wars; the dedicated, social work; the mystic, mysteries; the simple, simplicity; the unloved, sublimated sex; the speculative, mythology; the inadequate, security; the lonely, fellowship. If Freethinkers talk more about her than any other religion it is because in a sense she is more worth talking about. But her organisation is built on foundations of forgery and fraud, deceit and misconception; her walls are kept intact by mental subjection and physical tyranny; her history shows clearly how those who believe absurdities can indeed commit atrocities.

Vatican Imperialism in the Twentieth Century is essential reading for those of any ideology who want to know the historical undercurrents of this most fascinating of centuries. In it, as in its predecessors, empires have risen and fallen. But one empire goes on, reshaping, "re-interpreting and re-applying", changing her political costume with the speed of a cabaret artiste while the eye never blinks, the benediction fingers never quiver. Thwarted in all her major ambitions, repeatedly unmasked and denounced, the wonder remains that she has been able to survive it all, the anxiety springs from consideration of how very close she has come to bringing off her master strokes.

As a political entity she is "landless and boundless" if one excludes 108 acres in Rome which comprise Vatican City, and the odd desolate isle whither the Black International may never have strayed. Yet no country is without her influence for no country is without Catholics. Approaching 600 million of them throughout the world. Say a third are indifferent and a third even hostile! That leaves 200 million whose prime allegiance is to Rome, scattered throughout 2,000-odd residential and 1,000-odd titular sees, served by two million priests, brothers and nuns. Many of them are simple, devout people, growing

peas, like Mendel, in monastery gardens; many are unworldly scholars, poring over ancient MSS or translating the Bible into African dialects; many are kindly workers, looking after the sick and poor in the name of Jesus or Mary or Vincent. But all of them are obedient sons and daughters of Holy Mother, and "only the best and wisest of mankind can be trusted with religion" (Yvonne Lubbock in *The Future of Catholic Christianity*).

The grand design

Throughout its two millennia the Catholic Church has had no friends, only enemies. This is how it has chosen to operate. People and ideologies are from time to time courted, but they are never real friends. When their usefulness is over they are discarded like a paper handkerchief. They are simply taken up to deal with the political congestion of the moment. In one century the foe is ancient Rome; in another, the Feudal System of the Holy Roman Empire; in another, usury and the rise of capitalism; in another, liberalism and parliamentary democracy; in another, socialism and anarchism; in another, communism. On the religious side she is prepared to do battle with paganism, Mithraism, totemism, Islam, Judaism, Orthodoxy, Protestantism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Shinto, Hinduism, Freemasonry or Spiritualism. Her intrigues spread from Vienna to Vietnam, Moscow to Melbourne, Berlin to Bogota, York to New York. She has fomented wars, revolutions, assassinations. All ancient history? Mr Manhattan shows how this century has in fact been one of the bloodiest hotbeds of the lot, but most remarkable in that an international publicity machine has whitewashed and wooed with unprecedented success.

With the rise of liberalism and cosmopolitanism the Vatican—under the leadership of the relatively liberal Leo XIII—set up Catholic political parties to present the faith to the electorate pure and undefiled. But even within the fold new ideas were on the move. Here they could, at least for a few decades, be stamped out with the help of Pius X's *Pascendi gregis* against Modernism in 1907. But ideas were beating hard on the walls from without, and a world of power politics needed tangible expression of its ideologies. Through the Austro-Hungarian Empire of the Hapsburgs, Rome played an important rôle in engineering the First World War. In 1917 came the great twentieth century challenge to her power with the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. With incredible duplicity she then began the dual operation of fomenting Western intervention and encouraging the Kremlin to clip the wings of her ancient rival, Orthodoxy.

Catholic parties proved too weak of themselves to effect the first operation, so she threw in her lot with the rising

Fascist-Nazi movement of Italy-Germany. The concordats may have been marriages of convenience on both sides, but the political children were joint offspring and without them would earlier have been denounced as bastards. This fascist replacement of the Hapsburg Empire both strengthened Catholicism in Central Europe and prepared to launch itself against atheistic communism. As the Second World War broke out, Catholic pressure in America—operated through the Grey Eminence Cardinal Spellman, who runs through the pages like an ink stain—tried to bolster Isolationism so as to leave Hitler and Mussolini free to pick the Soviet Union off the map of Europe. This strategem failed when Japanese treachery at Pearl Harbour (probably modelled on Vatican diplomacy) brought the United States into the war and victory over the Axis.

The second grand design

Whereupon Rome gave thanks to God for the victory over fascism, set up neo-Catholic parties ingratiatingly called Christian Democratic, and began to put pressure on America to wage a "war of liberation" against Russia. When the plan burnt itself out, Pius XII mercifully died, and a "new look" came with John XXIII, backed by the longer-sighted liberal elements at the Vatican. The Church came to look more pastoral and less political, a *detente* was reached with communism, and "dialogue" began almost simultaneously with Orthodoxy, Protestantism, the non-Christian religions and unbelievers.

Many devout Catholics will find this bald résumé incredibly bizarre. They will do well to look into Mr Manhattan's carefully documented reconstruction, which brilliantly shows how the political wing of the conspiracy was reinforced with the audacious religious counterpart in the Fatima cult, culminating in the Pope's personal miracle "authenticated" by fake photos of the dancing sun. They will also find dozens of identical vignettes: assassinations from the time of Lincoln; civil wars abetted in Ireland, 1916, Mexico, 1926, Spain, 1936, Yugoslavia, 1946, Hungary, 1956; excommunications and anathemas on a scale almost as grand as for mediaeval interdicts. If a plot succeeds, the Church "recognises" the *fait accompli*; if it is exposed and dealt with, the Church makes international capital out of a cry of "religious persecution". Officially the Church is not and has never been a political organisation. Her sole concern is "faith and morals". But in practice her theology is such that the philosophical becomes ideological, the social and ethical, political. In contrast, however, with the political scheming of communism, Rome's intrigues are often difficult to identify, to the satisfaction of a democratic electorate, as political,

needing quasi-political opposition (consider the story of the British ETU). This is especially true in this country and America, where the Church operates not through identifiable Christian Democracy but through amorphous Catholic Action.

The current danger

Perhaps Mr Manhattan has not given sufficient prominence to the genuine upsurge of liberal ideas today among Catholic and non-Catholic alike, the spectacular rise of atheism (his book is published in America) and the internal criticism of the Church by her own laity. But nobody can know how long this will last. As Magdalin Goffin says (*The Future of Catholic Christianity*), "Whether after the Council some sort of control over free expression will be attempted it is impossible to tell". And if attempted, is it unreasonable to expect significant success? For in addition to the political factors which are Avro Manhattan's concern, there are rapidly accelerating demographic and economic factors. He deals with overall dangers of the population explosion, but not the relative increase of Catholic populations. This consideration may have been in Pope Paul's mind when he appointed Cardinals Ottaviani and Heenan to the Birth Control Commission. Added to this is the huge financial resources (Andrew Boyle is calling for a Catholic offertory in Britain greater than the total income of the Church of England) which by immunity from death duties, rates and sundry forms of taxation, are increasing disproportionately to those of other institutions throughout the world.

Added to this is the enormous success of her new image-building of "sweetness and light". Some British Humanists recently expressed their surprise, indeed hurt, that they weren't consulted when Catholic schools got yet another subsidy, at a time when they have actually been talking to Vatican representatives. They will save themselves further disappointment if they come to realise that the Catholic Church cares no more for them than for pawns in a game of chess, to be used to emasculate opposition until such time as she can emerge restrengthened in a super-Common Market, world Christian (Theist) Unity complex. When the crunch comes, as Magdalin Goffin concedes, "The great divide, the real battleground, is between those who believe in God and those who do not".

Mr Manhattan has generously agreed to donate to the FREETHINKER 40 per cent of the retail price of 40s (postage 1/7) of all copies of Vatican Imperialism in the Twentieth Century ordered from the Freethinker Bookshop (103 Borough High Street, London, SE1).

REFLECTIONS

WHEN primitive man first set eyes upon his own facial reflection in a pool of still, clear water, he unconsciously came face to face with his very first God; ready made in his own image.

Imagine if you will the extent of the traumatic effect upon this poor creature and his reaction to this strange apparition as he struck at his image in a futile effort to dispose of it; to kill or at least disable this new and unfamiliar aggressor. On failing to accomplish either he would look at his wet hand or weapon in utter perplexity and retire hurriedly to his cave to consult with his wife or

ponder this new and frightening experience within the limited confines of his dark mind. *The Supernatural had been born in the conscious mind of man.* The mystery of this strange and indestructible creature was perhaps the first mystery of mankind, and could well be the last.

Image worship

Through the centuries that followed, into the dark ages, the importance of the image grew and leaders of the human species were enabled to augment their physical superiority by the use of the newly developed "looking

Peter Bullough

glass" in front of which they developed each his individual facial and oral personality with murmurs of approval from image worshippers less gifted or powerful than themselves.

When scientific theory suggested that the phenomenon of the facial image could be explained in terms of optics, religio-military leaders were not in any way deterred from following their pre-ordained course of image-worship. "Playing the game" in their ridiculous and infantile uniforms in much the same way as a child will "pretend" in the nursery, they were instrumental in shedding the blood of millions of human beings in order to prove the worth of their own particular brand of image as against the image of hated brothers in similar uniforms but of a slightly different "cut".

"Just a simple case of mistaken identity", said the mirror as it placed a large question mark in front of the glass. "Just the will of God!" said the creature in uniform, firmly grasping his mitre and drawing his cope more closely around his shoulders. "It is none of our doing", said he as he rubbed out the question mark and substituted two exclamation marks. Honour and Ego had been satisfied.

Man and ethics

Even in this present day and age the term "humanitarian ethics" means "mental and physical aggression" spelt backward to a great number of these people, and honest to goodness introspection on the basis of "love of the life-force in all its incomprehensible complexity" means literally nothing. Perhaps the term in its singular context would be more appropriate. It is said that an image cannot exist inside a vacuum; but I am writing about human beings, not atomic physics.

I also often wonder what would happen to a human being who was caught surreptitiously trying to feed bacon and egg sandwiches into a hand-mirror. Would he be rushed off to a psychiatrist's couch post haste? Would

he perhaps be given a contract to appear as a comic at one the leading theatres? Or would he be merely a professional contortionist trying to find his mouth and shave at the same time? In any case he would be a much saner person and surely far less dangerous to his fellows than the creatures who are hailed as saviours of humanity for performing the same act of "feeding the image", but in a slightly more mystical way. One could expand the premise of confidence trickery into all sorts of legalised pursuits of humanity.

Custom and authority

One can of course change this image at will, almost as easily as one changes one's socks or party politics. In the case of organised religion the change from Protestant to Roman Catholic is relatively easy compared with the reverse, which of course involves a great many more mirrors of different shapes and sizes. But surely this is purely a measure of how firmly the mirrors are held by the glue of dictatorial authority. There are as many "reflections" of party religions as there are different types of emotion in one human being and it follows that if religions are based on the phenomena of "emotion" then "belief" and "authority" are part and parcel of the same phenomena. Hence the Blood! Either way, religion or emotion has little or nothing to do with the possible idea of a God-head, Supreme Being, or even pure deism. But this is another story.

Belief is surely a form of simple hypnosis. But who knows! ? Perhaps the believer feels secure; snugly imprisoned in the womb of mental evolution, fastened by the umbilicus of his own image and the images of past generations.

Countless mirrors, darkly bright,
One of you is mine all right.
But which among the few I see
Reflects my own non-entity?
But what is this?—they've gone! Why so! ?
Perhaps Old Father Time will know?

HUMANIST BROADCASTS

Colin McCall

I WAS UNABLE, for one reason or another, to hear any of the six Saturday-morning radio interviews by Kenneth Harris which have now been issued as *An Inquiry into Humanism* (BBC Publications, 4s). I know that some Humanists were disappointed, especially with the earlier broadcasts, and it is not hard to see why. The President of the British Humanist Association was at some pains to emphasize his kinship with the Christians. But the later speakers were better and, on the whole, the booklet affords a useful introduction to its subject.

Can A. J. Ayer have inherited the Huxleyan attitude along with the Presidency of the BHA? From his broadcast it would seem so. The only logical reason for the existence of such an association lies in its anti-Christian, or at least non-Christian outlook. But the Professor thinks "we are moving away" from the militant anti-Christian, anti-theistic rationalism to "a new position". On the ethical side, in fact, "there need be no difference between Christians and Humanists"; they have "an enormous number of values in common . . .". And when it comes to actual practical work, the Professor feels that "co-operation is possible".

In many fields it is, of course, but there are others

where it isn't. And there are some—e.g. education, contraception, abortion, adoption—where Christian views have to be fought, abhorrent though the idea may be to some Humanists. Professor Ayer himself mentioned Christian opposition to social reform in the past and the harmfulness of Roman Catholic opposition to birth control today. There was a danger, he added, "with any group of persons who are dogmatic, who do not really look at the facts but go from first principles, that there will come a time when their principles are in conflict with human happiness, and they will stick to their principles". Well, what does the Humanist do then?

No mention of Greeks

The fault with Professor Ayer's broadcast was one of emphasis. Asked what is Humanism, he began with Erasmus and More—"Christians who were interested in secular things, particularly in the revival of classical learning, and in the development of science, independently of theology"—instead of the Greeks themselves. It appeared then that Humanism was Christian in origin. It was, he said, "difficult to disentangle now in one's ethical outlook

(Continued overleaf)

what comes from the Greco-Roman strain, what comes from the Judaic-Christian strain". And he saw no need for "any hostility or disagreement on questions of moral attitude". Indeed, people who genuinely believed in the Sermon on the Mount "would be socially useful". (When, I wonder, did the Professor last read it?). He made no reference to otherworldliness, let alone damnation. And there was, he told us, "not all that much difference" between himself and the Bishop of Woolwich.

James Hemming started by "making it plain" that he was not an atheist but an agnostic. Fair enough; I don't intend to quibble over that. Nor do I mind his reference to Humanist "faith", particularly when he defines it as "belief in man, and belief in life". I am sorry, though, that he contrasted it with what he called "the mere utilitarian day-to-day issues of personal advantage and so forth". "Utilitarian" was, after all, adopted by Bentham and the Mills to indicate the same ethical goal as Dr Hemming aims for, namely, "the best consequences for the maximum number of people".

Welcome militancy

I detect a (for me) welcome militancy in the third interview, with Mrs M. B. Simms. This is due in part, no doubt, to the more practical nature of the subject-matter, "Problems at Home and at School", but also to Mrs Simms's forthrightness. When her little boy or girl asks her, she tells him that she doesn't believe there is a God, "that if people want to make the most of life they have to rely on themselves and on co-operation with their fellows, and not upon the supernatural". When asked about sex, she would give as straightforward a description as the children could cope with. And here, as she said, Humanists have an enormous advantage over Christians, "since they stick very closely to the facts in all things".

Mr Harris seemed to favour consoling lies—about life after death, for instance—but Mrs Simms would have none of them. It was "very wrong for parents, whatever their beliefs happen to be, to tell their children things that they do not themselves believe to be true". And she condemned religious indoctrination in schools.

It was interesting that in the following interview, two young Oxford University Humanists envisaged no special difficulty in bringing up children in a Humanist manner.

The good life

The last two interviews were with life peers; and in some ways they were the best of the series. Lord Willis described his attendance at a Primitive Methodist chapel when he was a child, and the one-time possibility of his becoming a minister; his later sampling of other faiths—including Buddhism and Confucianism—and his progress to Humanism. Many of the "moral principles which are

part of the fabric of civilization" are, he pointed out, much older than Christianity. And he believed with Bertrand Russell that "the good life is the life that is lived with love but is informed with knowledge". That was how he tried to live. But, Mr Harris asked, "Is Humanism specific enough to govern everyday conduct?" Yes, Lord Willis answered, "because it does not lay down any particular set of rules or dogma which could be wrong in a particular situation". One's reactions become conditioned, based on one's background and training. As for God and the divinity of Christ, Lord Willis disbelieved in them "actively"; and he thought the fear of death "childish and primitive and savage".

Lord Francis-Williams was also asked—as the final question of the series—if in old age he "might perhaps long for the consolation" of Christianity. He didn't think so. In a way this problem—"if it is a problem"—came to him a few years ago when he suffered a coronary thrombosis, and he felt "no sense at all of anxiety about the end, but a great deal of interest in considering what would be happening to mankind when I was gone from it". This last interview, in fact, provided an admirable summary of the Humanist position. The philosophy of Humanism, Lord Francis-Williams said, "rejects or finds no need for any supernatural explanation of the universe"; it has as its basis "a sort of limited certainty . . . a certain amount of certainty about a certain number of things". But that certainty might be altered by new knowledge. The essential thing, therefore, was "always to be open-minded, not to believe in a system of absolutes, of blacks and whites . . ."

Inspiration

Did Humanism have the same inspirational effect on his life as Christianity does—or should—have on a Christian? Lord Francis-Williams was not quite clear what was meant by inspiration. He got his "sense of inspiration"—"his sense of uplift"—from "great poetry, from art, from the movement of nature, from a beautiful view, and so on", and also from his "sense of the infinite variety and wonder of ordinary human beings". He didn't need anything more than that. Nor do we.

It has been reported that the Secretary of State for Education and Science proposes to bring in legislation to raise the Government building grant for church schools from 75 to 80 per cent.

PUBLIC MEETING

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13th at 7.45 p.m.

ALLIANCE HALL,
Caxton Street, London, S.W.1
(nearest Underground: St. James's Park)

Speakers include—

MARGARET KNIGHT HECTOR HAWTON
WILLIAM HAMLING, MP.

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LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.
Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street), 8 p.m.: MESSRS. COLLINS, WOODCOCK, and others.
Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.; Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.
Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

King Alfred School (Manor Wood, North End Road, London, N.W.11), Day Conference, "Ethical and Moral Values in Education". Speakers: JOHN WILSON, JAMES HEMMING, JOHN WREN-LEWIS and MARGARET KNIGHT. Saturday, April 30th, 9.30 a.m.—6 p.m. Conference fee (including morning coffee, lunch and tea) £1 1s. 0d. Details from Edwin Savitt, 25 Grove Court, Circus Road, London, NW8.
Havering Humanist Society (41 Helmsdale Road, Rise Park, Romford), Wednesday, March 23rd, 8 p.m.: GEORGE LESLIE, "The Case for Vivisection".
Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, March 20th, 6.30 p.m.: Father M. TIDMARSH, "The Development of Conscience in Children".
Manchester Branch NSS (Wheatsheaf Hotel, High Street), Sunday, March 20th, 7.30 p.m.: M. H. MORRIS, "Witchcraft".
Progressive League. Spring Conference, "Mental Health and the Community", Endcliffe Hotel, Cliftonville, March 18th-20th. Details: Mrs. Joyce Coles, 120 Corringway, London, W5.
Progressive League (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1), Monday, March 21st, 7.30 p.m.: Professor COLIN CHERRY, "Little Problems—Big Problems".
South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, WC1), Sunday, March 20th, 11 a.m.: H. J. BLACKBURN, "Friends and Enemies of the Humanists"; Tuesday, March 22nd, 7.30 p.m.: TOM VERNON, "The Public Image of Humanism".
West Ham and District Branch NSS (Wanstead and Woodford Community Centre, Wanstead Green, E11). Meetings at 8 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of every month.

Humanist Letter Net work (International): send s.a.c. to Kit Mouat, Mercers, Cuckfield, Sussex.

THIS WORLD

Third Home

HUMANISTS will be delighted that the Ethical Union Housing Association has acquired land in Parkhill Road, London, NW3, for a project to supplement existing schemes for elderly Humanists in Burnet House, Hampstead, and Blackman House, Wimbledon.

Curious Education

IN AN INTERVIEW in *Neues Deutschland*, recalled in the *Guardian* (March 4), Lieutenant-General Riedel of East Germany is reported as saying of her "socialist" education:

One of the most urgent tasks is to encourage the young to be enthusiastic about a military career. They must know about the army from childhood. Military service should be regarded by all as a citizen's normal duty.

HUMANISTS regard military service as a highly abnormal and distasteful, though at times necessary, undertaking. They believe that if aggressive training begins in childhood there will be no hope for the future peaceful development of the world. At least let infants have some illusions and be preserved from thoughts of cold wars and walls.

The 14 Nuns of Julian Amery

UNDER THIS INTRIGUING title the *Sunday Times* (March 6) relates how at the last election Mr Amery spoke to 14 Carmelite (enclosed) nuns through their Mother Superior, and won the seat by 14 votes. Absentee votes are not allowed except in special circumstances. Being a Carmelite nun seems to be one of them.

Humanity

UNLESS it is concerned with religion, people wear their bravery lightly. The Royal Humane Society has just announced its award of the 1965 Stanhope Gold Medal to Lieutenant Barry John Campbell for rescuing a potential suicide on a rocky cliff. Humanists own the right to suicide, but know that attempts are often a cry for help and salute the brave who answer their call.

Can the Dead Speak to the Living ?

UNDER this title appears in the *Sunday Citizen* (March 6) news of a clairvoyant junket with Mr William Redmond, jointly organised with *Psychic News*. The *Citizen* aims at the commonsensical co-operative-trades unionist market. No wonder it is losing readers.

NO COMMENT

"A Roman Catholic priest launched a campaign in California yesterday for a 'trade union' for America's 58,000 Catholic priests. Its aims: Guaranteed holidays, professional freedom and proper pay"—*Daily Mirror*, February 24.

"Mr Jackson explained he was lying beside Mrs Kemp with his hand on her forehead while quietly praying. . . . On another occasion Mr Kemp walked into the front room during a faith-healing session and noticed Mr Jackson's clothing in disarray—and the pastor trying to hide the fact with his Bible. 'At least it came in handy on that occasion,' said the judge"—*Daily Express*, February 26.

"Dialogue between Christians and Humanists is to be stepped up on the international level, it was announced in London last week. Six representatives of each will meet at Amersfoot, Holland, on April 16 and 17. The announcement came from Harold Blackham, director of the British Humanist Association, when he joined Cardinal Heenan, Bishop Grant and other national figures in a teach-in on Vatican II at London University. He said Humanists believe dialogue with Christians is both possible and desirable, and in fact, Humanists were agreeably surprised with the cordial dialogue they engaged in with Church representatives at Salzburg and Utrecht last year"—*Catholic Herald*, February 25.

MOCK TRIAL

H. RICH

Place: The Supreme Court, Heaven knows where.

Time: Judgment Day.

Dramatis Personae:

The Supreme Judge.

Homo-Sapiens (a human being).

Archangel Gabriel (Clerk of the Court).

Voice of Wisdom and Reason.

Angels doing duty as ushers, trumpeters, Court Officers, etc.

ACTS

There are no Acts other than those of the Apostles performed off-stage under an off-licence.

The scene is set for the trial of Homo-Sapiens. Trumpeters announce that the Court is about to go into session.

Gab. to Hom-Sap.:

You are charged with the offence that you are a human being. Do you plead "Guilty" or "Not Guilty"?

Hom-Sap.:

To whom is it alleged that I have given offence as a human being?

Gab.:

You are not charged with giving offence as a human being but with the offence of being a human being.

Hom-Sap.:

I crave the indulgence of the Court for the charge to be clarified.

Gab.:

You are wasting the time of the Court. You must know that, being man, you are clearly imbued with evil. It is therefore only necessary for you to admit that you are of that species or to prove otherwise.

Hom-Sap.:

How can I prove that I am not what I am?

Judge:

What utter nonsense! Do you suggest that you do not know the difference between good and evil?

Hom-Sap.:

I have not suggested that I do not know the difference, although the standards I use may not be acceptable to you. However this may be, it is surely not the point at issue. I am charged with being what I am. You are best qualified to know that I cannot be otherwise.

Judge:

It is for me to decide whether you can help being what you are.

Hom-Sap.:

Where are the witnesses to testify against me?

Gab.:

Don't be impertinent. Jehovah requires no witnesses.

Hom-Sap.:

In that case I object to the constitution of this Court.

Gab.:

On what grounds?

Hom-Sap.:

On the grounds that my own creator cannot also be my prosecutor, judge and executioner.

Judge:

You cannot so object and there is no other Court.

Hom-Sap.:

There is the Court of Wisdom and Reason.

Judge:

This is unprecedented. I cannot allow my authority to be usurped.

Gab.:

My Lord, perhaps if we could hear what Defence the accused has to make to the charge, we might then dispense with having to consider his objection.

Judge:

Very well. You are at liberty to imagine that this is the Court of Wisdom and Reason. Proceed with your Defence.

Hom-Sap.:

But this is still the same Court to which I object. All I ask for is a fair trial.

Judge:

The attitude you are adopting will not help you in the slightest. You know very well that all the qualities of wisdom and reason emanate from me.

Hom-Sap.:

This is most unjust. Where I come from the whole proceedings would be regarded as irregular. In order for me to present my Defence properly it will be necessary to cite you as my accomplice in the offence of which I am accused. How am I to do that if you are still the Judge?

Judge (after a whispered conversation with Gab.):

As I shall in any case have the last word, you may proceed as if you were being heard in the Court of Wisdom and Reason, and this is that Court.

Hom-Sap.:

If you will join me in the dock I shall proceed upon that assumption.

(Judge muttering "This is ridiculous, but what have I got to lose?" descends from the Seat of Judgment. Accompanied by Gabriel and surrounded by Angels, he places himself in the dock with Homo-Sapiens.)

Hom-Sap. (now addressing the Court of Wisdom and Reason):

With respect, sirs, I submit that the offence with which I am charged is irrelevant, inconsistent and only conceivable in the sense that I was born in the normal way. I could not have had any say in the matter or manner of its cause, as I was not then there. It is alleged against me that, having been born human, I became automatically blemished with evil, and that I must pay the penalty for it. Incredible as it may sound, the demand for this penalty comes from my own creator, who claims to be the giver of all life, and now assumes the combined roles of prosecutor, judge and executioner. I am prepared to leave myself in the hands of this Court, and if it can be shown that I influenced my birth or was in any way responsible for the original evil which is imputed to me, I am prepared to take the consequences.

Voice of Wisdom and Reason (to Judge):

What have you to say?

Judge:

It is true that I am the creator of the universe including, I would remind you, wisdom and reason. As such I do not have to account for my actions or decisions. For the record I say that any evil which happens to have occurred is not of my doing.

Hom-Sap.:

What kind of double talk is this? He says that evil is abhorrent to him and at the same time claims to be omnipotent so that, if he so desired, he could have excluded evil from his creation. He further claims to be omniscient, knowing all from beginning to end, so that he must have known at the time he made man what would happen. In spite of this he carried on with what he had decided to do. When evil was unknown, because there was nothing to know and nobody to know it, he started off a process in the course of which he complains evil appeared. As he was the sole agent responsible for setting this process in motion, where, I ask, did evil come from? Being mortal, I was never endowed with more than mortal powers, whereas the creator possesses unlimited powers. If I am the product of the mind of the prime mover and causer, whatever is found in me must exist in the mind of my maker. I ask you then how evil originated and whether it is not adding injury to insult to seek retribution from his own creatures for something which only he could have made possible. Does he also vent his spite on the inanimate objects he has created and found fault with—or is it only man he has created imperfectly? If I am found guilty, how many more times is my accomplice guilty?

Voice of W. & R. (to Judge):

Will you please answer the following questions with a simple "Yes" or "No":

Did you create the universe *in toto*?

Judge:

Yes.

Voice of W. & R.:

Do you claim the power to make, alter, or destroy as you deem fit?

Judge:

Yes.

Voice of W. & R.:

If at any time you were not satisfied with the way in which Homo Sapiens was behaving, did you take any steps to remedy the matter?

Judge:

Er, yes and no.

Voice of W. & R.:

What does that mean?

Judge:

I left it to man by giving him free will.

Voice of W. & R.:

If you left him free to choose, you must also have provided alternative choices, as man, according to your own contention, could neither add to nor detract from what you yourself made available. If you were in a position to see to it that man did whatever it is you wanted him to do, why did you not attend to it?

Judge:

I work my wonders in mysterious ways.

Voice of W. & R.:

If that is so, how can you blame man if he does not understand these wonders and mysteries?

Judge:

It is for me to decide what man should or should not understand.

Voice of W. & R.:

That may well be so, but it is a mere prevarication and not pertinent to the purpose of this trial, which is to ascertain whether you are acting in good faith. It is essential that judgments are based on standards which will bear the closest scrutiny. They must be logically sound and just. The standards adopted by you, if they can so be called, are purely arbitrary in their application and cannot be shown to be valid. Whether man was created perfect in the first place and later became defective is not our concern, since you, his accomplice in these proceedings, could either have kept him perfect or brought him back to perfection had you so desired. It is quite possible that if you had instilled our code of ethics and principles into your creatures, this question of the source of evil might never have arisen, but there is no evidence of any effective action or supervision in this respect. On your own admission it has been established that it is within your power to remedy whatever you consider necessary, so that it comes to this—whatever takes place in the universe takes place with your sanction; whatever you find intolerable can be made tolerable by the exercise of your power. It is, therefore, completely outrageous for you to wreak your vengeance on that of your work with which you are dissatisfied. It would simply mean that you are punishing those who are already sufficiently punished by the incompetence of your efforts. The Accused, Homo-Sapiens, is free to go, if he can find anywhere to go. His accomplice will stay while we consider our judgment.

Judge (quickly resuming his judicial office and seat, and accompanied by Gab., to Hom-Sap.):

Your fantasy is over. You are consigned to the infernal regions for the duration of eternity. As for your contempt of this Court, you are condemned to suffer the torments of Hell for a further period of eternity, without the option of purging it.

Gab.:

My Lord, are the sentences to run concurrently or consecutively?

Judge:

Eh? Run? Certainly not—make it as slow as possible.

(Hom-Sap., wailing "Oh wisdom and reason, why have you forsaken me?", is led away by angels acting as Court Officers.)

First Remaining Angel:

What is he talking about? Surely he doesn't really believe in this wisdom and reason business?

Second Remaining Angel:

Perhaps he is mad. I read somewhere that whom the Gods would destroy they first send mad.

Third Remaining Angel:

Thank God that's over! You all coming to the barbecue?

Chorus of Angels:

Roast, roast, roast,
Let us drink a toast
Ruby red to the dead
When they scream the most.

The end without ending.

LETTERS

Animal Protection

MAY I be permitted space to correct certain statements which appeared in your issue of February 18, under the heading "Animal Protection".

Firstly, having worked amongst anti-vivisectionists for nearly 20 years, I have never heard of the "Anti-Vivisection League". Secondly, anti-vivisectionists are, in the main, realistic and intelligent persons, putting forward a sound case against a cruel and frequently misleading method of research. It maligns these humane people to rubber-stamp them as "hysterical".

Those suggestions put forward by your writer, including computers, plant substitutes for insulin, tissue culture, etc., are all methods of research which have first and foremost been recommended by the National Anti-Vivisection Society. Furthermore, that Society played a leading part in founding the Lawson Tait Memorial Trust, which is a charitable organisation offering grants and awarding monetary prizes for work of outstanding value to medicine, but which does not involve any experiments on living animals. This Trust was established to encourage as many research workers and scientists as possible to utilize methods of research other than the very cruel (but fashionable) vivisection method, and without harming a single living creature.

Better results would obtain in the fight against vivisection if animal welfare "splinter" groups would support—instead of spending their time deriding—the very useful and constructive work which the National Anti-Vivisection Society is already doing, along so many lines, to bring about the total abolition of vivisection in this country.

NEVILLE BASSOUS, Harley Street

Twisted and Disgraceful

IN YOUR ISSUE of February 25 at the end of the article "Subsidising Segregation", you published several smears on the BHA. I think it regrettable that a paper professing itself to be a "Freethought and Humanism Weekly" should use tactics which I have hitherto associated with MRA.

Please say exactly what you mean and give the evidence for it.

As a relative newcomer to the BHA, I can say that I consider your attack upon people whose life's work has been the furtherance of humanism in this country to be twisted and disgraceful. Further, I think that the BHA has a record of practical work and enterprise which compares more than adequately with any humanist/secular body in this country.

Freethinkers and Humanists have many aims in common, though their methods of achieving them differ. The one thing that will certainly not contribute to practical progress is the sort of untrue and uncomprehending comment that the FREETHINKER has made.

TOM VERNON (Press & Publications,
British Humanist Association)

FACTS

A. E. Carpenter

"Let there be light"—those words of might he started with;
His unshared place in empty space he parted with;
Cosmically clever, the maker never needed a lever to move it
with—
And all man's lacked is one small fact to prove it with.

SERMON

A. E. Carpenter

As a metaphysics master in a backward, rural reach,
I nearly met disaster in the matter of my speech;
A sermon somewhat prosy, containing scraps of thought,
Was not considered cosy, so I made it sweet, and short.
Ambiguity evading, I bluntly said my say,
Found congregations fading, and calling it a day;
Now, at last, I'm poised and posted, my sermon's made my
chance—
I had the thing re-ghosted by a medium in a trance.

OBITUARY

Mrs Elizabeth Aris Ditch has died in hospital after a long illness. She was the mother of Mrs Ruby Seibert, manageress of the Freethinker Bookshop. The funeral took place at South London Crematorium on March 4.

WHERE ARE THE DEAD

James MacAlpine

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from
whence cometh my help"—Psalm 121, 1.

Prologue

Where are the dead;
What of the spoken words,
The prayers thus said;
The knowing commentaries
On contemporary affairs;
The lively looks,
The talk of books;
The idiosyncrasies,
The loves and sympathies,
The smiles, the tears,
The wiles, the fears,
The humour and the tragedy,
The laughter—their hereafter—
And their cares,
Which are ours today ?

The Funeral

And now, Dear God,
If such may be
From Genesis and Galilee,
The holy rood
Evokes a mood
As a crucifix in wood
In the dim nave
Near the grim grave
Where the body lies,
And the light dies
From the misty eyes
As the voice intones
How the cross atones
With a paradise
From a sacrifice.

By the calmed sea
As of Galilee
The rooks cry,
The waves sigh,
The gulls float on high
In the blue sky
In an infinitude of bliss.
In my reveries they scream
As in a dream
Down the centuries of time
Of a black impassioned crime,
With betrayal by a kiss,
And fly and cry
Thy forgiveness for this.
So Nature wears an aspect of our grief;
Thus I, as I, exist with light of sun
A brooding spirit in a vacuum,
Surrounded by a silence that enthrones
Credulity as faith . . .
With brief access to wanton gaiety
Sponsored by the wind
Which works the bellows of the lungs.

And so I pray,
Although I know not thee
In christian trinity,
Yet in a religion of humanity
For the songs, the music, and
The artistry of man;
For man and woman,
And for the eternal child,
Forever looking forward,
Through Jesus Christ, the man,
In his mission unto men;
Now, as then, Dear God, amen . . .
And for the fulfilment of his promise,
Made manifest in spring:
"He that believeth in me,
Though he were dead,
Yet shall he live."

Epilogue

"Earth to earth,
Ashes to ashes,
Dust to dust."