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Friday,
June 14, 1968**HUMAN RIGHTS YEAR****Sir Robert Birley Addresses UK Committee**

ON May 7 I wrote to the General Secretary of the United Kingdom Committee for Human Rights Year 1968 to ask that provision be made on the agenda of the Plenary Meeting of May 28 for discussion on censorship in the UK pursuant to articles 19 and 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Gordon Evans, the General Secretary, wrote back on May 9. His letter, which defined the intention of the meeting, included the following extract:

"I am afraid this will not be possible. There are some 170 affiliated organisations, each with a particular Human Rights concern. This will be our penultimate Plenary Meeting before the end of the Year. In addition to domestic business we shall be concentrating upon our three main concerns as set out in our terms of reference, of which the immediate urgent one is the Race Relations Bill. It is felt that we shall not have justified our year's existence unless an Act with the maximum possibility of effectiveness becomes law this year, so that the Government can ratify the International Convention against All Forms of Racial Discrimination. As the United Nations is continually pointing out to all Member Governments, it is in the field of race relations all over the world that civilisation is presented with its greatest danger and greatest challenge."

I still went to the meeting along with some 150 members of other supporting organisations and local committees. We met in the Grand Committee Room of Westminster Hall. We were welcomed by Jocelyn Barrow, a vice-chairman, who said that it was her duty to introduce our new Chairman, Sir Robert Birley.

The former headmaster of Eton rose to tell us that we were not in the midst of an active campaign and that some events had given disservice to Human Rights; but there were two main objectives: a final event on Wednesday, December 18, at the Royal Albert Hall, in the presence of the Committee's patron, Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh; and a plan to set up a British Human Rights Institute as a follow-up to Human Rights Years.

It was the job of the National Committee to act as a catalyst and encourage Human Rights activities in existing organisations and individuals. Many of the national organisations had undertaken special applications; although there was only six months left in Human Rights Year, there was still time for more local committees to be established and do valuable work.

In the field of education and information, pamphlets and teachings kits had been widely circulated to schools, colleges of education, universities, teachers and individuals.

Sir Robert felt that the concept of 'human rights' involved certain great principles which applied to all men because they were men, and that these principles had been

adopted by Christianity and other religions. It had found a beginning in the statement "The Lord said 'I am the Truth'"—not "I am the custom, or the constitution"; it had been developed as a law of nature in the Renaissance, and it had found expression in the Declaration of Independence, in which "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" was defined as an "inalienable Right of Man".

This was easy to say, but how far did we really mean it? In the United States it had not applied to negro slaves. It was easy to talk about equality, but mere statement was not enough. He remembered that when he was in Africa, the Africans had admired the Chartists for giving one man one vote; but they were not so sure about giving one woman one vote. A long process of education was necessary, and there would be many setbacks.

The record of the 20th century had not been very pleasant; there was not much to be proud of; so often human prejudice was seductive; a defence of a way of life meant a defence of a privileged position.

The rights of discrimination and of freedom of speech had immense values—but some speech had to be limited; Milton did not suppose that there were no limits to freedom. In studying the essential problems of his age, Camus had found an incompatibility between justice and freedom; the reconciliation of justice with freedom was the great task of this generation. Socrates would suffer martyrdom many times again before this was achieved.

The Russian Revolution—which he said was a movement for justice—had shown that freedom had to be sacrificed to get justice. For us, some simple things were demanded: imagination and sympathy.

He had found that the 'laws' were defined in the Old Testament; the quotations that came to his mind from *Deuteronomy* told us to leave something for the stranger. The answer was that "thou shalt love him as thyself"—and this meant that we had to put ourselves in other people's places and accept the equality of men and women.

We were a spoilt nation; we hadn't been invaded; our villages had not heard the sound of shot and shell; but we did have the traditions of Milton and Shelley.

Sir Robert sat down. Questions were asked for, but there were few. Most of the clearly 'equal' women, who were representing local committees, clapped and said nothing. David Rose, of the Camden Campaign for Human Rights Year, asked a difficult question. How was it that Article 13(2) of the Universal Declaration was being

(Continued foot of next page)

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: Messrs. CRONAN and MCRAE.

Manchester Branch NSS, Platt Fields, Sunday afternoon, 3 p.m.: Car Park, Victoria Street, Sunday evenings, 8 p.m.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Bristol Humanist Group, Kelmescott, 4 Portland Street, Clifton, Wednesday, June 19, 7.30 p.m.: Rev. PETER BROOK, "Seven Years a Prison Visitor".

London Young Humanists, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London, W8, Sunday, June 16, 7 p.m.: MARVIN PERELMAN, "An American Looks at Britain".

Portsmouth Humanist Society, College of Education, Locksway Road, Portsmouth, Friday, June 21, 8 p.m.: RAY BOTT and PETER MITCHELL, "Should Religious Education be Taught in State Schools?"

South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1, Sunday, June 16, 11 a.m.: RICHARD CLEMENTS, "S. K. Ratcliffe Centenary Lecture".

HUMAN RIGHTS YEAR

(Continued from front page)

ignored by the Authorities' refusal to give an Englishman a passport to leave the country?

The Plenary Meeting had not been prepared for such pragmatic problems; Sir Robert remembered that Ernest Bevin's concept of freedom was to be able to go to Victoria and buy a ticket for Paris without a passport; a voice from the body of the hall remembered when this was possible; but John Ennals, the other vice-chairman, supplied an answer: "The legal committee are looking at this". It was good to hear that someone, somewhere in the background, was looking at Article 13(2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

JEAN STRAKER

CONFRONTATION I

CONFRONTATION, first announced in the FREETHINKER on May 3, begins below. *Confrontation* is a specially constructed debate between believers and non-believers in which the former pose questions for the latter; a test and a challenge to non-belief. Everyone is urged to participate by contributing questions and answers.

Because of the special structure for *Confrontation* (see FREETHINKER, May 3, for details), your contributions may not appear in print in the form in which you compose them; a single, simple question—or series of questions (as below)—will be drawn from a range of questions compacted and amalgamated; if some of your points appear while others do not, this may mean some are being reserved for a later stage; all this applies both to questions and answers.

Because the debate is constructed to *progress*, there can be no returning to an earlier stage once that has been passed; it is therefore vital that all responses are made quickly.

Despite the fact that many believers (and non-believers) are poised, ready to participate, few were willing to contribute to the opening questions; no doubt their number will be increased as *Confrontation* progresses.

All questions have been numbered and it is important that all answers should be correspondingly numbered thereby showing to which question a response is being made. If any non-believer wishes to respond to the questions below—*do it now, without delay!*

* * *

Believers' contributions

If we had no belief in the authenticity of any sacred writings, in the reality of eternal life, in the existence of a Supreme Being and no belief in a code for behaviour sanctioned by the Supreme Being, then perhaps some of us would have to satisfy ourselves with something like secular humanism. But we, who put our faith in Revelation, and in our personal observations and experiences, feel we have something more authentic, more reasonable and more valuable than secular-humanism (which, latter, we find arid, superficial, and requiring a far greater strain on our credulity than is required by our own faiths). Since discord between believer and non-believer is undesirable and often dangerous, we welcome this opportunity to participate in "Confrontation", and we hope that, by a rational examination of the case for atheism, we may expose every flaw it may conceal.

Here are our first questions:

1. Would you reject our claim that the Bible derives from manuscripts originally composed—for the most part—prior to A.D. 150? (In short, would you deny the Bible's antiquity?) If so, upon what grounds?
2. Would you reject our claim that the Bibles we have today are—for the most part—true to the original manuscripts? If so, on what grounds?
3. Would you reject our claim that historical evidence firmly supports and attests the existence of the Gospel Jesus? If so, upon what grounds?

C. Black.

I.N.L. (Church of England).

M.M. (Baptist).

F.Y. (Christadelphian).

G of E QUESTIONARY ON RE

ANSWERS by the National Secular Society to a Questionary issued by the Church of England Commission on Religious Education.

The National Secular Society is glad to accept the invitation of the Church of England to submit evidence to its Commission on Religious Education. It is encouraging that the Church is anxious to obtain the views of those who may be presumed to be out of sympathy with it.

To hazard a guess at the sum total of evidence would be both premature and presumptuous, but I rather imagine it will be substantially different today from what might have emerged four years ago when the NSS began its new campaign for secular and moral education. Christians themselves are gradually coming to see that a system of indoctrination—often followed by teenage rebellion—cannot be justified on any grounds. In the last analysis a belief must rest on its inherent goodness and not on the way it is imposed.

DAVID TRIBE, *President, NSS.*

* * *

1. *Should Religious Education, however defined, form part of the curriculum of all types of primary and secondary schools?*

Religious education in the form of a series of propositions about the existence and attributes of God should not be given. However, it is desirable that school leavers know what members of different religious groups believe. This information could be given either in a course on comparative religion, or as part of history, literature or social studies courses.

2. *If it should not form part of the curriculum of such schools what kinds of moral and ethical instruction, if any, should replace it?*

The most important contribution the school can make to moral education is through example by teachers, and the fostering of an atmosphere of generosity and consideration for others in the school. In the secondary school there should be plenty of free discussion of moral questions. Fund-raising for charities and practical help for local old or blind people should be encouraged.

3. *If, on the other hand, it is a part of the curriculum is it either desirable or essential that its position should continue, in any future legislation, to be supported by 'compulsory' provisions similar to those of the 1944 Education Act?*

There should be no compulsion.

4. *If Religious Education continues to be 'compulsory' how would you improve or modify existing safeguards for the rights of those parents who on grounds of conscience do not wish their children to receive it?*

Parents should be asked in a neutral way whether or not they wish their children to have religious instruction. Schools should be required to provide adequate accommodation for withdrawn children, who are at present too often left standing in a draughty corridor. Assemblies should be split into a religious and non-religious part, and withdrawn

children brought in for sports notices, etc. Fifth and sixth form pupils should make their own decision as to whether they will attend religious assemblies.

5. *Are any additional safeguards required to protect the position of teachers who, on grounds of conscience, do not wish to take part in Religious Education and school worship?*

Appointing committees should be forbidden to ask candidates questions about religious affiliation. Genuine protection for teachers is virtually impossible as long as there are legal requirements regarding assemblies and religious instruction which make it inconvenient to have heads or junior class teachers who will not participate.

6. *In any future provision for RE (on a compulsory or non-compulsory basis) should anything be done to protect the rights of children (most immigrants) of other faiths? Should provision be made, in fact, where circumstances appear to justify it for religious education other than Christian education? (c.f. some existing maintained Jewish Schools).*

The best safeguard would be to remove religion from school altogether. Otherwise the proposals under 4, above, are the best that can be done. The idea of setting up special schools for children of other religions is appalling. Children should never be segregated according to their parents' religion.

7. *Should a daily act of corporate worship (subject to the conscience clause) be a statutory obligation upon all Primary and Secondary Schools?*

No. (One of our members writes: "Invite the Archbishop to sit in mufti at the back of the hall and watch a secondary school audience, bored stiff or actively defiant.")

8. *If not, should all schools continue to make regular provision for acts of corporate worship, e.g. on a weekly basis, or on an age-group basis?*

No.

9. *Is there still a place within the English educational system for the continuance of denominational schools, e.g. Church of England Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled Schools?*

No. We consider that denominational schools are inherently wrong, as they mean the segregation of children by religion, and the religious training given in them usually takes the form of indoctrination. We are particularly concerned at the position in single-school areas, and feel that schools in these areas should be transferred to local authority control immediately.

10. *Would you favour a complete 'secularisation' of public education involving the progressive dismantling of the traditional 'dual' system and the prohibition of religious teaching of all kinds?*

We do favour complete secularisation, but prohibition of religious teaching of all kinds would be wrong. We want teachers and pupils of all religions and none to be able to express their opinions, and compare and contrast views in an atmosphere of freedom.

MAN THE FAILURE

Michael Gray

Part II

DISCARDING supernaturalist ethics I have to seek a rational morality by which to live. What is, or should be, the aim of morality? (And I, along with Bertrand Russell, must admit that I can find no rational reason to explain how we get from what *is* to what *ought* to be.) The aim surely ought to be that suggested by the Utilitarian—the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Now I do not suggest that this is the perfect answer. Since forsaking Christianity, in particular Roman Catholicism, I have learned that there is no such thing as the infallible or the absolute. Utilitarianism has its flaws and abuses like everything else, as many have been quick to point out. Obviously it cannot be moral to persecute a minority to keep the “fool multitude” happy. But this does not altogether invalidate the Utilitarians’ rule of happiness as a general principle to use as a guide. (Not to be confused with the rule of pleasure of the hedonist, which is not at all the same thing and has been unjustly used to discredit Epicurus and the Epicurean school of philosophy.)

The aim of the greater happiness of mankind is essentially a part of the Humanist morality. Clerical morality does not have this aim; it seeks to please God, not man. It debases man as a slave by telling him to obey blindly the dictates of his divine Master; it makes him selfish and careless of other men by preaching morality as merely the means to achieve his own personal salvation.

Now the curious thing about the rule of happiness, which once again demonstrates the foolishness of maintaining ‘absolute’ standards, is that what cannot be justified in principle *can* be justified in practice. Take for example the controversial subject of abortion. I have read much in Freethought/Humanist literature, indeed in these very pages, on this subject. Try as I might I have never been able to rest content in my own mind that abortion can be justified on any grounds other than that of protecting the mother’s life. (I know the majority of Humanists will disagree with me, but that is nothing new.) In particular I have been concerned about abortion for ‘social’ reasons. Nevertheless I must refer to my rule of happiness, which may be stated in another form as freedom from unnecessary suffering. It is no good moralists and philosophers thinking up various abstract arguments for or against abortion; we have to deal with people the way they are, not the way we think they should be, and must legislate accordingly. Whatever condemnations may be presented in principle, in reality women are still going to seek abortions. If they cannot get them legally then they will go to the illegal back-street abortionists and as a result many will

suffer horribly, and some will die. What will our conventional morality have achieved? Simply more human misery. Clerics no doubt will see this as just retribution for sin. I am not concerned with punishment; I want to alleviate suffering, not increase it. I have seen the results of illegal abortion. How, after that, can I oppose its legalisation? What right have I, has anyone, to pass such a sentence on womankind? If abortions are going to be procured, and demonstrably they are, then we must ensure that the best medical attention is available—and available for all women, not just the rich as is the custom in this sick capitalist society of ours.

Similarly, if we apply the rule of happiness to many other controversial subjects instead of letting prejudice or tradition (which is inherited prejudice) cloud our judgement, we often find that what those pillars of virtue—our judges and magistrates—deem to be immoral is not so. Examples are sex outside marriage (of course), ‘pornography’, soft drugs, ‘indecent’ and ‘obscenity’ in the arts. All these things, in one way or another, bring happiness to some people and do not cause suffering for anyone else. Thus there should be no moral objection to them.

What we need more than anything in this world is a rational ethic. We, as Rationalists, are in a position to lead the way in the quest for its attainment. I cannot think we will ever be anything other than a minority. But that is no reason why we should cease trying. Man as a species is a failure; there is no reason why every individual man should be so. We have produced more Aquinuses and Hitlers than Voltaires and Russells, but we *have* produced *some* of these latter. Let us stop pretending we are noble creatures, or pitiful sinners. In truth we are neither; perhaps something somewhere in between. Let us seek to put some meaning in our meaningless existence. If Humanism is believing in man’s ability to make this world a better place by human endeavour alone then let us not simply pay lip-service to this ideal as the Christians do to Christian charity, while continuing to make other people’s lives a misery. Let us stop wearing labels and talking about it, as if that were sufficient, and try a little more often to *do* something about it.

(Concluded)

Message from WUFT

THE World Union of Freethinkers have circulated the following message in three languages.

Dear Friends,

Information from France show us:

The struggle of the majority of French people against the personal power and for freedom requires our support. Send telegrams and letters to the French brother-organisations and the President of the World-Union.

Addresses:

President der Weltunion,
Jean Coterau-Viala,
7, Bd. Henri-Ruel,
(F-94) –Fontenay-s/Bois – France.

Administration,
Maurice Azoulay,
12 Rue Taylor,
Paris – 10, France.

Mit kameradschaftlichen Grüßen!
Wolfgang Runeg,
Informationssekretär de WUF.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

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DANGER!—MEN TALKING

Isobel Grahame

ON page 75 of *Introduction to Moral Education** three essential rules of morality are listed: (a) that we should stick to the laws of logic, (b) we should use language correctly, and (c) attend to facts.

Rule (b) has received insufficient attention for several school generations. Time was when 'Eng. Lit.' exams required people of my age to learn lists of classic clichés by heart for prep, and a class which showed up a bunch of compositions almost identically phrased was commended and allowed to go home 10 minutes before the bell. The consequent revulsion against dogma and the yearning for free expression which followed, swung linguistic communication almost off the pivot of comprehension (jknowtie-mean?), and we suffer now from crippling ambiguity produced by incompetent or lazy use of language.

Words in themselves have no precise meanings other than those of contemporary common usage, though there are origins and roots. This natural restlessness is lively and exciting provided most people know the vox pop trend and have considerable agility of mind. Condensation of the written word which results from tightening economic necessity has almost banished literature from printed publications but, on occasion, does provide some unexpected manna of whimsy. After a windy day during the last election I puzzled delightedly over 'Liberal cushions blow to Conservative Party' in an evening paper, and 'Police lift jams', glimpsed over a shoulder on the Underground, has teased me for years—did the constabulary *really* pinch the preserves or had they gotten themselves stuck in their elevator?

Again, careless juxtaposition of homonyms may open a schizoid rift between the meaning and the message as in the news item head: 'Earl's seat burnt, complete destruction of ancient pile'. All good clean fun and stimulating to jaded imagination. But what of the deliberate misuse of words to suggest some non-existent quality or guarantee of durability? The Sale of Goods Act reinforces the customer's right to expect a new pair of stockings to be free from ladders, but 'ladder-free' is often printed on the wrapper as though it meant ladder-proof. 'Pure' is sometimes used to suggest wholesomeness although many poisonous and corrosive substances are produced in pure states.

The front door was fortunately chained against a pressurised peddler of 'waterless cooking units'. When asked if he meant saucepans he replied that pots and pans were tinker's terms, but units were scientific. After much persuasion he produced a unit from his bag and it was an ordinary stainless steel pan which reminded me that we would be more rational to follow continental usage and call such hollow ware and cutlery rust-free—an expression which does not raise false hopes.

'Purpose built' is a very attractive term, but one should be careful to see that it does not mean over specialised. Remember that pheasant which developed huge wing tufts by natural selection for mate attraction and now finds it can scarcely get itself airborne? It should be possible to work out some ratio between the structural survival expectation of large buildings (even if they are only domestic accommodation units) and their adaptability potential. I am thoroughly suspicious of 'under-floor' heating cables which in fact are not under the floor but fossilised inside concrete and require pneumatic drills to get them out if they fail.

By what strange sophistry do some people distinguish between 'medical' and 'social' abortions? Medicine, however financed, is and always has been a product of mankind's social way of living. (Perhaps a vision is conjured up of randy socialites having after-cocktails sex orgies in penthouse?) What is the difference between the house agents' 'exclusive residential development' and a segregated area or ghetto? And why for silly sakes call socialism 'labour' at a time when everyone is determined to cut unnecessary labour out of all forms of human endeavour from childbirth to coalmining?

Cling resolutely to your open mind when reading reports of court cases in small provincial papers or the more lurid Sundays which revel in the peculiar terminology of the law. The big word ASSAULT when coupled with the adjective 'indecent', only rarely relates in kind, magnitude or violence to a layman's normal expectation of such a word, and such expressions as store-breaking and larceny may actually mean little more than the nicking of a bottle of pop from a carelessly secured shop as a dare. These sonorous accusations make juicy reading for the locals when there isn't a good murder on the go, but they can seriously damage the reputation of a Dan Dare teenager long after he has become a solid citizen.

A much more sinister neologism is creeping into the English language. Everyone is familiar with the priestly habit of augmenting the meaning of meaningless words by resounding repetition piling adjective on adjective and praise upon praise; prophets of woe use the same thunderous technique to belabour the sinful and apathetic populace. However, it is becoming customary for civil and military authorities, hoping to keep the populace apathetic or at least unsuspecting, to miniaturise their most frightfully doomladen and hugely threatening concepts into such verbal nutshells as 'overkill', 'accident-rate tolerance', 'disaster-survival ratio' and so on. Even among the apparently pro-human sciences a kind of anti-personnel terminology is assuming nightmarish proportions. For instance can we safely distinguish between aversion-therapy, corporal punishment and torture?

Depersonalising words and phrases always seem to be used for saying something very nasty so that we shan't notice so much. Their very precision, economy and snappiness matches that most dangerous quality of lethal weapons which, by extending the distance in space and or time between the doer and his deed, actually inhibit our natural revulsion from personally performed atrocity.

*Pelican Original—*Introduction to Moral Education* by Wilson, Williams & Sugarman. A preliminary report of the Farmington Trust's enquiry into methods of moral education.

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THE EVOLUTIONIST'S BEST FRIEND

A. J. Lowry

A Tribute to the Rev. Strother

I PERUSED with much merriment the confusions and illogicalities of the Rev. Strother contribution of May 24, wherein he vainly attempts to extricate from the contradictions implicit in the basic axioms of his argument.

To begin with, he states that on April 26 I charged him with being in error over the date of Sir Arthur Keith's book—an amazing accusation indeed, in view of the fact that at that time my opponent had made no reference whatsoever to the date of this work. How then, could I be charging him with error on a point on which he had kept silent? The real reason why I mentioned the date was simply to inform the public that the Rev. Strother's source of reference was 37 years out of date: but my antagonist has now kindly revealed that he was using an even older version, which is 43 years behind the times! Since on p. 474 of his book *New Discoveries Relating to the Antiquity of Man* (1931), Keith states that primitive men had considerable physiological differences from their modern descendants, it is clear that the Rev. Strother's curious belief in their close similarity receives no support from that quarter, and against the unequivocal evidence to the contrary unearthed by Dr Leaky, we are left with only the authority of that well-known palaeontologist, the Rev. Strother.

The differentiation of the species by sub-species variation is by no means an unproven hypothesis, as the work of Stegmann (on *harus argentatus* and *h. fuscus*) has already shown. The Rev. Strother will find all the relevant facts on pp. 185-187 of John Maynard Smith's *The Theory of Evolution*.

My critic's charge that I am continually changing my ground on the subject of industrial melanism, hardly warrants serious consideration. In my original article of January 12, I explained that the gene responsible for this effect was by no means new, but had been "previously kept in check in natural selection"; though this did not prevent the Rev. Strother in his contribution of February 16, arrogantly informing me of what I had informed him six weeks earlier. On March 1 I explained to him at some length that I was already perfectly well aware of the antiquity of the dark 'spots', but all in vain, for on April 5 he charged me with having introduced a 'subtle

change' into my argument. Having an optimistic nature, I thought that if I repeated myself yet again (April 26), even the Rev. Strother could not fail to see my point—but alas he has, and now thinks that I am 'slyly' returning to my 'original thoughts on the matter'; thoughts which, in the original article, I explicitly disclaimed!

It is, of course, the Rev. Strother who is changing his ground, and is executing this performance with the minimum of subtlety and discretion. On April 5 he informed me of his confidence "that Mr Lowry's public library will be able to supply him with a standard manual in which he will find the Archaeopteryx . . . fully classified", but I observe that in his contribution of May 24 he goes to considerable lengths to substantiate my original point that this animal defies classification. This is a magnificent *volte-face*, but leaves the Rev. Strother in the embarrassing position of having to explain the transitional features of this animal by the creationary hypothesis. I have already pointed to the weakness of this explanation of transitional forms in all my previous articles in this debate, and having received no relevant response from my antagonist, I can only conclude that he does not have an answer to give.

As to the Rev. Strother's ludicrous suggestion that the Archaeopteryx could have been a bird in the process of evolving (?) into a reptile, it must be pointed out that evolutionists do not subscribe to this view for the most excellent reason that at the time of this creature, there existed no birds for it to be evolving from.

Shortage of space alone prevented me from giving full references in my previous article. The first appearance of members of the phylum Chordata, and especially the sub-phylum Vertebrata, will be found in the following places: *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 'Evolution', II 4; *Everyman's Encyclopedia*, 'Ordovician'; *Chamber's Encyclopedia*, 'Ordovician System'; *Collier's Encyclopedia*, 'Evolution'; H. G. Wells *The Science of Life*, p. 670; F. H. T. Rhodes *Evolution of Life*, p. 154; W. C. Osman Hill's *Man's Ancestry*, p. 44, and *Encyclopedia Americana*, 'Palaeontology'.

Finally, I should like to utilise the last word in the debate to thank the Rev. Strother for so vigorously expressing the alternative view to that held by evolutionists. I do not doubt that the readers of this paper will employ their intelligence and discernment in judging between them.

[This debate is now concluded.—Ed.]

Stop Press

THE Rev. J. J. Thompson, who recently held the first of his Sunday (secular) services, is to attempt through his Philosophian Church to initiate a 'Second Reformation'. Like Luther, he will be posting his own 95 Theses upon the door of his chapel at 3.30 p.m., Sunday, June 16. The Theses, whatever else one may say, are very impressive, are sure to raise a few eyebrows—and may even succeed in bringing about a Reformation. The press is likely to be taking an interest, and any readers who may care to attend this event should endeavour to arrive early at the Rosslyn Hill Chapel, Hampstead (corner of Rosslyn Hill and Willoughby Road) on Sunday.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

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REPRESSION

Kathleen Bal

MAN'S evolutionary development depended to a greater extent on the repression of inferior genre. As time went on, the social development of men involved the repression of any personality or act which threatened their stability as a cohesive and co-operative unit. It lay the foundation for an ethical cult.

In the process of human mental development the repressive tendency has been augmented by so-called political and economic necessity and by religious opportunism in which gods were invented by men to keep other men in subjection.

The antithesis of repression is revolution and this is taking place in America, Europe and Africa on racial grounds alone. Perhaps it will come also within the political framework of certain Middle Eastern countries where slavery still exists, in every family where the wives, mothers and daughters are in extreme subordination to the male members of the household, and also in the more pernicious degradation of bought and sold items in the human category of merchandise.

Repression on religio-philosophical grounds resulted in the religious wars and persecutions which figure throughout human history and which intermingle with the 'balance of power' struggle today—as in Vietnam.

Some sections of European society question the origin of the student revolt. If we are to believe that it is to be pinpointed in certain immediate and environmental issues such as unpopular regimes and bureaucratic interference in the intellectual integrity of the universities, and also in protest against a hated war, we miss the point.

It is the protest of the intelligentsia against political repression, a basic lack of freedom, a permanent infusion of soporifics through mass-media, and the propagation of a state of permanent delusion resulting in false aims, false hopes and false values.

SLIMY TWO-HEADED TOAD FROM AHOGHILL

CAPTAIN Terence O'Neill was thus described by the Rev. Wylie, a colleague of the Rev. Paisley, at a prayer meeting. The meeting was organised to counter a demonstration called by the Republican Commemoration Committee in Armagh on Easter Sunday. Both were banned and both took place. The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association sent observers and confirmed that on the Republican side there was no threat to public order. In fact the girls in the

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AS an extra inducement to gain your help in widening sales of the FREETHINKER, a free copy of *Credo: The Faith of a Humanist* (net 3/-), a book of Humanist poetry by A. A. H. Douglas with a foreword by E. M. Forster (generously donated to the FREETHINKER by A. A. H. Douglas), will be sent to each new subscriber and to the reader who introduces the new subscriber. New subscribers will be those who have never before subscribed to this journal. Subscriptions, introductions and all correspondence in connection with *Credo* should be addressed to the Editor, FREETHINKER, 103 Borough High Street, London, SE1.

local hurling team were asked to leave their bats at home to avoid frightening the police.

The following day 12 members of the Republican Committee were arrested but not charged and 11 released on bail of £50. The men finally appeared in court on May 20 and the charges against all but 3 were dropped. None of the Rev. Paisley's associates were arrested. In view of the colourful description quoted above the Prime Minister should consider where the threat to public order lies and should persuade the Minister for Home Affairs, Mr Craig, to lift the ban on Republican Clubs imposed under the Special Powers Act.

A Belfast Magistrate is reported as saying that decent youngsters don't talk about civil rights and civil liberties. "Those who protest about such rights are always suspect, in my view", he added.

Report from the National Council for Civil Liberties.

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

F. H. Snow

An appeal to Secularists

MY article, WHAT OF THE FUTURE? which appeared in the FREETHINKER of November 24, 1967, stressed the essentiality of a massive income for the dynamic propagation of atheism. I now return to that theme and, with the kind permission of the editor, make a proposal to fellow workers and well-wishers for the best of all causes. It is a self-evident fact that without a massive income, Secularism cannot impact the general public, and that, without that impact, elimination of religious public, which is a prerequisite for the establishment of a humanitarian society, will be indefinitely deferred. Do we care about this sufficiently to create the means of setting up a really destructive challenge to superstitious doctrine?

The means, to my mind, are at hand in the harnessing of our movement to commerce. Despite the times, much money is being made for private profit. My proposal is that we emulate the trading fraternity, and establish a chain of retail businesses. I project no mushroom enterprise, but one that would take some years to fully function. The chain I envisage would be constructed link by link. Commencing with the acquirement of one soundly-attested business, efficiently run, a second could be added, and so on, until, with wise purchase, progressive methods and shrewd management, a fleet of prosperous businesses would be established, and a powerhouse provided for the financing of an all-out campaign to educate the people as to the noxious fallacy of religious belief, and pave the way for a radical betterment of human conditions. This campaign should embrace nation-wide distribution of *gratis* booklets and pamphlets, the sale of our journal more cheaply and with increased space, and the holding of meetings throughout the country. These are, at least, some suggestions. Secularism must make a big noise or remain in the backwater of scarcely audible movements.

Opportunity knocks for Secularism to take hold of the means to make itself powerful, either by the scheme I propose or one conceived by abler brains. In regard to my proposition, should there be guarantee of sufficient capital for the purchase of the initial business and its efficient running, a committee could be formed to consider procedure.

I shall be glad to hear from those who may be interested at 67 Broadmead Road, Folkestone, Kent.

REVIEW

Barbara Smoker

H.G. AT THE END

"The Last Books of H. G. Wells", ed. G. P. Wells; The H. G. Wells Society, June 1968, 84 pp., 30/-. Distributors: Michael Katanka (Books) Ltd., 160 Edgwarebury Lane, Edgware, Middx.

THIS slim, but very handsome, publication has the look of a prestige volume from the catalogue of a leading publisher, but in fact bears the imprint of the H. G. Wells Society, who are to be congratulated on an ambitious project so well carried out. The price of 30s seems high, even today, for a book of 84 pages, and this may deter the general reader from buying a copy, as opposed to borrowing one, but no keen Wellsians will remain bereft of ownership for long—and it may be that there are more keen Wellsians around in 1968 than might be supposed, for I understand that pre-publications orders for the book ran into five figures.

The book consists basically of H.G.'s last two works, *The Happy Turning* and *Mind at the End of its Tether* (both of which have been out of print for some years); but it also includes a most enlightening ten-page Introduction by G. P. Wells, son of the author, and an Appendix explaining how and when the two works were written and listing the changes made by H.G. when part of the 1945 addendum to *A Short History of the World* was reprinted as Chapters 4 to 8 of *Mind at the End of its Tether*. In the present volume, these four chapters precede Chapters 1 to 3—that is, for the first time they appear together in the order in which they were written, and this arrangement helps to bring out the closing stages in the evolution of H.G.'s ideas, to show how they were affected by the war and his own ill health, and to solve the uncharacteristic inconsistencies inherent in the work.

It has become almost a cliché to say of *Mind at the End of its Tether* that it was H.G.'s final despairing recantation of all the optimistic prophecies for mankind that had permeated his work for half a century. But, as Professor G. P. Wells points out in his Introduction, the truth is quite otherwise: although certainly grim, *Mind* "includes no apology, no recantation, no surrender". The first three chapters do indeed predict that "the end of everything we call life is close at hand and cannot be evaded", but, by the time he came to prepare the material for press, H.G. must have passed through the lowest waters, for he tacked on to these dead-end chapters the forward-looking material he had previously written as the conclusion of *A Short History*, so that the book concludes with the prophecy that a highly adaptive minority of our own species will survive the imminent catastrophe and continue the long evolutionary story in which dominant forms of life have eventually become senescent and made way for their evolutionary heirs, very much as ageing people must make way for the young. Although this prophecy is clearly inconsistent with the one voiced in the first three chapters, the unifying message—with echoes from the Epilogue of Well's first book, *The Time Machine*, written fifty years earlier—is that, even if faced with inevitable destruction, we must live as we would were it not so and "die fighting for life", ending our story "in dignity, kindness and generosity, and not like drunken cowards in a daze or poisoned rats in a sack".

The other book, *The Happy Turning: A Dream of Life*, is, as Professor Wells puts it, "a suite of essays in contrasting moods, in which H.G. pretends to describe his dreams—not by any means the first time that he had dressed up his ideas in a transparent disguise of fantasy". However, in Chapter 8, "A Hymn of Hate against Sycamores", H.G. drops the dream device and gives vent to a curse against sycamores, in fine biblical style. At about the time he wrote this, he had a photograph taken, shaking his fist at the sycamore tree in the next-door garden, and this portrait is used for the frontispiece and dust-jacket of the volume under review. In another chapter of *The Happy Turning* there is an autobiographical passage that reads:

"Merely dirty stories disgust me, and when sexual jokes have an element of laughter in them almost always it is dishonouring and cruel laughter. But theology has always seemed to me an arena for clean fun that should do no harm to any properly constituted person. Blasphemy may frighten unemancipated minds, but it is unbecoming that human beings should be governed by fear. From first to last I have invented a considerable amount of blasphemy".

And there is some very excellent blasphemy in these last books of a great man, dying but defiant.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A 'Worldist' solution

YOUR correspondent Eric E. Barker (May 17) has mistaken the purpose of the worldist approach which I proposed because he obviously thinks that I, like himself, desire a "lasting and peaceful international society". I do not. I want a world nation.

The whole point is that I regard the internationalist way to world peace as fundamentally unsound and self-contradictory—and because of this I am putting forward a "worldist" solution which is fundamentally different in approach insofar as it asks all persons to give first priority to the fact of their existence in the universe—rather than to their membership of this or that traditional section or "national" part of the world.

May I point out that people in Scotland can regard themselves as being primarily human beings and then go on to deal with local needs in the light of that fundamental priority.

If the secular and humanist societies in the world would all insist on this among their followers or adherents we might begin to see the possibility of political action against the many sectional political parties which naturally get mass support because they appeal to local greeds and parochial pride which may well be a basis for an atomic war of the "nations".

Internationalism must be exposed as the most dangerous social delusion which can be presented to the minds of men in this nuclear age. The cult of the sectionalisms must be banned and replaced by the cult of wholism in politics.

E. G. MACFARLANE.

Axillary depilation

I SHOULD like to know whether Jean Straker's models shave their armpits.

D. M. CHAPMAN (Canada).

Perambulatory priorities

IN the *Guardian* of May 31 we read that Dr A. J. Forbes, the Australian Minister of Health, was asked in Parliament to protect the country's pram manufacturers whose sales are being gravely affected by the sale of birth-control pills.

Their priorities Down Under seem about as muddled as those of my copper-bottomed kettle makers. Over-production of human beings must be kept up in order to maintain commercial over-production!

ISOBEL GRAHAME.

CHALLENGE FOR SIR CYRIL

IN the March 8 issue of the *FREETHINKER*, you published a *FREEDOM OF VISION* report of my address to the Diploma Students at the Wimbledon College of Art, which is situated in Sir Cyril Black's constituency.

Sir Cyril has shown himself to be a vocal member of Parliament deeply concerned with the preservation of certain tenets of Christianity in our society, and on a number of occasions our differing attitudes have conflicted.

It would, I think, provide a meaningful dialogue to examine, in the context of our times, the nature of the concept of 'sin' which is not only the starting point but also the climax of much Christian anxiety. What I said to the students was:

"You can see that my battle with your MP is not only a battle on artistic intent, but also a battle between a certain concept of Christian morality which Sir Cyril seems to uphold and the attitude of mind of the secular-humanist-freethinker who rejects completely any concept that sex or knowledge of sex is sin.

"I take the attitude that it is wrong to falsify pictures of the human body, that it is wrong for a photographer to issue visual statements which are fraudulent, that it is wrong for an artist to be compelled by law to evade any part of his emotional or expressive desire and present pictures which are not true to his feelings and understanding of the subject".

Can I, as a congenital atheist, now ask Sir Cyril Black—through the columns of the *FREETHINKER*—or someone who thinks like him, to say why they think that my attitude is wrong?

JEAN STRAKER