

# ICONOCLAST

FOR RATIONALISM, SECULARISM, FREETHOUGHT & SOCIAL PROGRESS

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## Home News:

### TOWARDS MILITANT ATHEISM

When a certain statesman was told of the progress of atheism he exclaimed: "Whatever will become of the bishops?" What indeed? The modern bishop no longer dares to assert the fundamental (and fundamentalist) tenets of Christianity. No doubt the average "wheel Christian" - whose connection with the church is by pram, wedding carriage and hearse - can afford to believe in Adam and Eve, and heckle atheists on the fact that Jesus must have existed because all twelve Apostles could not be wrong. There are fewer bishops who can go this far.

They cannot parade a lack of scholarship inconsistent with high office in the church, even though the existence of the church depends upon it. So long as Theology dominated the sciences, bishops could be scholars and Christians. Today, they must choose, and the Woolwich line prevails increasingly amongst the clergy (if it has yet to percolate to the believing or to the occasional-Christians). Only in the Church of Rome can the Bishops maintain their ignorance cheerfully secure in the smug knowledge that they are required only to maintain the authority of the church and not produce reasoned argument.

#### Bishops And Bunnies

What then is to become of the bishops?

What is the role of the Church? As it cannot any longer defend religion, it defends Christian morality. The very bishop who agrees that Jesus might well not be a historical character, defends all the more militantly the teachings of this mythical figure. The outraged moralist becomes an increasingly important figure as the mysteries of Christian ritual evaporate. The clergy in America moves into the civil rights business; at another level we get demands from the laity to clean up TV; scores of parsons play at amateur psychology with junkies, prostitutes, would-be suicides and youth generally (there are sometimes more sordid reasons for this); and our generation is nagged and nattered at as never before by Church moralists. Why? They are trying to give secular excuses for supernatural taboos.

Just as the so-called "liberal Jew" tries to maintain that he circumcises his sons for 'hygienic reasons' and feels that pork may go off in the hot weather, so the 'liberal Christian' finds humane arguments against adultery - it may cause the children to be neglected and have you thought of the dangers of promiscuity?

Lord Fisher of Lambeth, former Arch of Cant, indeed complains of the London Playboy Club that being served drinks under soft lights by sparsely clad Bunnies - to which delights he was invited under a blanket circular to top people - was hardly compatible with Britain's economic crisis. Bereft of traditional Christian arguments, he uses the arguments of class war to denounce the Bunny clubs that pander to rich businessmen. Such an ally is the kiss of death of us as militant atheists.

What Is Clericalism? There is a danger that so all-round

a victory over entrenched superstition may make atheists complacent. Look to the Common Market. It is easy to laugh at the fanatical Protestant who regards it all as a Papist plot. But clericalism is entrenched in all the Common Market countries. In France, Belgium and Holland, the organization of Roman Catholicism has nothing to do with belief or disbelief in trans-substantiation or apostolic descent. It is a political belief which unites those who are opposed to working-class collectivism. The Catholic parties do not press for religious concessions. The Church in those countries has all it wants. If that were the objective, Catholic Parties would exist in England and America and not on the Continent.

In the Common Market we will find governments that are Catholic by political conviction, whatever may be their personal religion (usually a mild astrology). We will find that amongst our faithful allies, such as Germany, there will be regimes that indulge in such quaint practices as deducting from the workers pay a contribution to the Church of his choice, where all junior education is in the hands of Romanist and Evangelical nuns, and where the contracting-out of religious observance or contribution is confined to a few rebels. (cont.pg.8. col.1.)



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EDITORIAL:

The first Annual Conference of the Secular League took place on Easter Monday, 11th Apr, at the White Hart Hotel, near Hampton Court where the Thames forms the Surrey-Middlesex borders. A beautiful and historic site for an excellent and undoubtedly historic conference. Whereas the hotel is only reputed to have been the base of several famous highwayman, Henry VIII was the undoubtedly Catholic usurper of Papal dominancy in England, and perhaps it was also ominous that Gerard Winstanley and his Digger Movement were also de facto quartered nearby? Whatever the case, we were agreeably surprised to find as large a gathering as has attended any secular conference, and certainly one of the most enthusiastic we have encountered for a long time. It was indeed gratifying to see so many old stalwarts and friends of the British freethought movement, as it was sad to note the absence of our recently deceased friend Mr P. Turner, and those who for a variety of reasons could not be present.

Probably no other conference could boast of so much modesty in proportion to the degree of ability present. After discussion we had to practically press-gang a chairman. Mr J.W. Barker, whom it would be superfluous to eulogise, was unanimously voted into the chair and accepted on condition that it be mandatory to vacate the position after a term of office. Jim Barker then explained the position of the Secular League as a loose amalgam of individuals and autonomous local groups, united for the common purpose of propagating secular-free-thought, with the League acting as much as an instrument for effecting economy in local and national group activities, as a unifying force.

He also congratulated the Editorial Board of the Iconoclast on their achievements to date and it was proposed and unanimously accepted that the Iconoclast be adopted as the official organ of the movement.

Tony Morgan, our enthusiastic treasurer, did point out that financially the paper is none too sound, but (as he has been doing for the last forty years) Len Ebury - staunchly backed by Eva and his North London Group members - sprang to the rescue with a handsome donation to our press fund. There was a fair amount of constructive criticism which was gratefully received and as a result, we hope to make great improvements during the coming year.

The secretary, Mr J.A. Millar, reported a steadily growing membership which included members in Austria, Canada, America, New Zealand and other parts of the world, and after heated discussion, it was decided to accept in broad principle only, affiliations to the League by other bodies. Proposals were made for the carrying out of an intensive campaign of outdoor meetings throughout the provinces, but were defeated as over-ambitious. It was felt that we ought for the time being at least to cut our coat according to our cloth and allow a little longer period for consolidation in those areas where we are already strong.

There was a good deal of criticism at our alleged fear of the word "atheism". As a body of militant atheists it was generally considered that we should say so in unequivocal terms. After much discussion it was decided to give greater publicity to our militancy and atheistic viewpoint than hitherto.

A large number of other matters were amicably discussed and the conference concluded with a report of our mass rally at Hyde Park the previous day, where four speakers had addressed large crowds for several hours. Altogether, it was a well attended, lively, intelligent, good humoured, conference which got through all the business on hand in good time. What more could one desire?

Secular League Membership: Full details of the aims and objects of the Secular League, including application for membership form, can be obtained from Mr J.A. Millar, Hon. Secretary, Secular League, 139, Elm Road, New Malden, Surrey.

The hon. secretary will be pleased to hear from any members or supporters who have any proposals for the development of group activities in any area of the country. He will also be pleased to receive the names and addresses of any likely contacts of prospective members from any area. Your fullest co-operation in extending our field of activities will be greatly welcomed.

TWO SECULARIST TRADITIONS (2) - THE PROLETARIAN

The modern proletariat is a new class in social evolution. For it has nothing in common with its titular prototype, the Roman proletariat, except its name. This decisive difference was tersely summarised by the Italian historian Sismondi, "the classical proletariat lived on society; modern society lives on the proletariat". Like its class enemies, the bourgeoisie, the modern proletariat originated (first in England) at the time of the industrial revolution, which may be approximately dated as the half century between 1750 and 1800.

Proletarian Secularism One would naturally expect, from the current circumstances of its origin, the first movements of the modern proletariat, in both politics and religion, took place in the shadow of the bourgeoisie. For it is only during the past century or so that the working class has put forward any ideas of its own, for example, the European Revolution of 1848, in which the proletariat first participated as a class, was everywhere led by bourgeois radicals, the militant advance guard of the then revolutionary bourgeoisie. Even in England, the cradle of the Industrial Revolution, the Chartist movement (1837-1850), sometimes referred to as the first "independent" movement of the modern workers, was actually a hybrid movement in which bourgeois radicals like Feargus O'Connor and Ernest Jones led a predominantly working class following. Even the military textbook used by the Chartist movement was originally drawn up by a former colonel in Napoleon's army! And this was so in the numerically strongest and most advanced proletarian class that had existed. In the sphere of religion, it was again the writings of the bourgeois freethinkers like Voltaire, Volney, Paine, and Owen, that chiefly circulated in the radical working class.

Coming Of Age It was only in the second half of the nineteenth century that the proletariat first planted its feet firmly on the political ladder and became conscious in a coherent form; from 1848 onwards the social revolution began to separate itself from the preceding revolution of the bourgeoisie. Men like Marx, Engels, Proudhon and Bakunin put forward revolutionary ideologies in sharp contrast to those of bourgeois society. And the bourgeoisie "arrived" in the country after country during the second half of the nineteenth century as I pointed out in my previous article, it became more and more a "satisfied" class and consistently parted company with the ideas of social revolution. "The world looks so different after dinner." More and more, the trends of social revolution passed from the bourgeoisie to the proletariat, between say 1848 and 1917. For the Russian Revolution, in this last year, led by Lenin, the greatest exponent of atheism in this century, first definitely succeeded the bourgeois tradition by a proletarian tradition that stemmed from the working class.

Two Anti-religious Critiques Both bourgeois and proletarian secularism agree, of course, upon certain modes of criticism. For both reject the "dead hand" of clerical dogma and mediaeval ideology. Both are atheistic in rejecting the "scientifically unnecessary hypothesis" (as the mathematician Laplace described it to Napoleon) of a personal Deity and of posthumous rewards and punishment. Neither the bourgeois nor the proletarian atheist accept any supernatural authority whether in the form of Holy Scripture or the infallible Church or Pope, or in non-Christian lands, of any other species of religious authority. This species of unbelief is, of course, common both to bourgeois atheists like Bradlaugh and Haeckel on the one hand, and to proletarian atheists like Lenin and Bakunin on the other. Both the bourgeois and secular traditions repeat with fundamental approval the inspired slogan of Karl Marx that "religion is the opium of the people", or perhaps that even more incisive epigram of Bakunin "if God exists, it would be necessary to abolish him". But whilst both bourgeois and proletarian ideologists, upon these and indeed upon many other aspects of religious ~~beliefs~~ **beliefs agree**, points of view are nevertheless by no means identical. For example, the bourgeois critique of religion is mainly intellectual. It confines its criticism almost entirely to the obvious absurdities in most religious beliefs.

In Christian lands, the Holy Trinity, the Creation story in Genesis, Transsubstantiation, or the Miracles of Christ, are to be found. Proletarian secularism, of course, also exposes the manifold and manifest absurdities that are inherent in such outmoded doctrine, but unlike bourgeois secularism, the proletarian critique of religion is not entirely, or even necessarily chiefly concerned with the numerous intellectual criticisms to which a comparative study of religion must necessarily lead. For intellectual criticism, however brilliant and learned, as many of the bourgeois specialists in religious fields have undoubtedly been, will after all only take one part of the way to the final elimination of the supernatural from human society.

(cont. pg. col. )

Two Secularist Traditions, cont. from pg 3:

For fundamentally, religion is not something separate from human society in general and/or the current social order in particular. For religions, after all, rise, expand and eventually decline and ultimately disappear in a social milieu. Thus, not only religion, but the secular criticism of religion, is ultimately determined by a social consideration, as much as, or perhaps even to a greater degree, by considerations of a purely intellectual character. For as Aristotle remarked long ago, "man is a social animal" and he is so in all his activities, including religion.

A Socialist Critique With the subject of religion in the contemporary world, a surely still classical statement has been enunciated by Lenin. A critique of religion which may surely be said to define accurately the essential and decisive difference between proletarian and bourgeois atheism in relation to the fundamental criticism of religion in this present age. For religion is primarily, at all times and places, the historical product of ignorance and fear, a fact demonstrated long before Lenin by bourgeois freethinkers from Spinoza to Voltaire. But as Lenin went on to demonstrate, whereas in primitive societies, ignorance and fear, those spring foundations of religion, sprang mainly from natural causes, from the fear aroused in a state of primitive ignorance by such misunderstood natural phenomena as volcanoes, hurricanes, earthquakes and the like. Where in a modern, scientifically equipped society, such primitive terrors largely lost their primeval significance. For in modern times, fear and ignorance (and accordingly religion also) still persist, as we see today in such a technically advanced country as the USA. They persist in quite different forms, however, for mankind today fears social forces far more than natural ones; that is, forces ultimately engendered by mankind itself in its own current social order. For today it is war, unemployment, the nuclear holocaust in particular, and such man-made horrors, which rather than natural phenomena, are nowadays the cause of ignorance and fear, and accordingly of religions still in existence in this so-called "scientific age".

Bourgeois Society and Religion Seeing that the state of things criticised by Lenin becomes more and more universal with the present world-wide expansion of modern science and technology, it is surely clear that any intellectual critique of religion is no longer adequate? For seeing that nowadays the roots of religion lie deep in the defective structure of bourgeois society itself, and spring from the social order invariably characterised by human exploitation, inequality and artificial scarcity;

it is surely obvious that it is only by the revolutionary overthrow of the outmoded social order that in this twentieth century it is possible to abolish religion? For bourgeois secularism has only uprooted the intellectual pretensions of religion, but is necessarily compelled to leave untouched its permanent social basis. For ignorance and fear of the kind described above are inevitable in a state of society like capitalist society based upon class rule, exploitation, permanent economy and a recurring fear of war waged with suicidal weapons. Thus it is clear that bourgeois secularism has had its day. The future of secularism and of the effective criticism of religion are today inseparable from the ultimate universal victory of the social revolution. Consequently, it is now more than ever necessary for all secular movements which look towards the future rather than towards the outmoded past to recall the classical revolutionary slogan: "Socialism spells republicanism in politics, communism in economics, and atheism in religion". For henceforth in this twentieth century, any effective secularist movement must be as inseparable from the social revolution of the proletarian as its bourgeois predecessor in past centuries was inseparable from the then evolution of the bourgeois revolution itself.

LONDON SECULAR PRESS

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 139, Elm Road, New Malden, Surrey.

Correspondence:Sin of Pride and Self-Seeking

As one who would describe himself as an agnostic rather than an atheist yet who has "written-off" orthodox religion and is passionately devoted to freedom, may I comment upon two sentences of your editorial?

You say: "We are the enemies of all who want to decrease the sum of human happiness and the friends of those who would increase it. In actual fact, this leaves us with few opponents outside the churches and embraces the bulk of the working class."

The working-classes are unsurpassed in their ignorance, apathy and self-seeking. They are politically their own worst enemies. Witness the lower use of the vote - not due to anarchist views; witness the low pay of nurses - why do not all the other trade unionists strike on their behalf?; witness the fearful, irrational, unprincipalled working-class reaction to coloured neighbours and workmates.

The trouble is that the "workers" and thousands of their religiously non-committed "exploiters" are, like the Christians, morally primitive. Discard the theology and eschatology if you like but the idea of the fundamental sins of pride and self-seeking remains valid.

It seems to me that only an individual change of heart, a purification from preconceptions, an individual acceptance of a social responsibility and the need for loving our neighbours - only the cumulative effect of innumerable such individual changes can significantly improve the state of man.

Yet who can see these conversions coming about in sufficient number? Meanwhile man breeds apace. Is there any reason for hope? Can any reader tell me why I am not best-advised to adopt an attitude of beneficent withdrawal from society?

Peter Dace, Henby-on-Thames, Oxon.

Where Shall we Get Married?

I would like to express my disagreement with "Freethinker" in the April Iconoclast, that we should not concern ourselves with "conditions that RCs lay down under which it is prepared to marry those who seek its blessing", that our only objection" is when these rules are imposed on those outside the Church".

Apart from the fact that in speaking of "the right of mixed marriages" the imposition is obviously on one party of the marriage who is outside the Church, marriage is a social requirement within existing laws, and

the fight for civil marriage, divorce, etc., has been a secularist aim since secular societies have been permitted to exist and propagate their ideas. "Freethinker" may be right in not caring whether a wedding ring is worn in the nose or on the hand but he is wrong in not taking his stand on the complete divorcement of religion from marriage. Roman Catholicism has never allowed itself to be sidetracked into such false liberalism. Whenever and wherever it is powerful it insists on all "marriage rights", bastardises the children of long-standing civil marriages, e.g. Dollfuss in Austria, commandeers the offspring of marriage and imposes restrictions on parental rights.

To allow any religion to take over what by its very social nature should be a purely civil function, is to retreat from the position begun by the work of our secularist forerunners, the separation of Church and State.

Eva Ebury, London, N.W.6.

Freethinker comments: Agreeing with Eva Ebury that marriage must be separated from religion, I must repeat that this is a battle not only begun but won by secularists in all countries with a modicum of secular civilisation. In England, the C of E is merely a "first class compartment" of the registry office; the only need to go to it is pure snobbery, or occasional genuine religious scruple. In all other cases the "social requirement within existing laws" of marriage is a function of the registrar. The registrar legally marries R.C.'s, Jews and Nonconformists; where a minister officiates, he is merely a deputy for the registrar. Only in R.C. dominated countries (such as Ireland) is it necessary to go to church to get married, other than for religious scruple or social snobbery. Where I disagree with Eva Ebury is in her assumption that in a country such as England, there is any chance of the Roman Catholic Church to impose rules of mixed marriage on outsiders. It would, if it could but it can't; unless, of course, they voluntarily submit, either out of social snobbery or a desire "not to offend the relatives". These are the only two possible reasons. A priest accusing the children of a non-religious marriage of "bastardy" could be sued for slander. Do not let us attribute to the clergy powers they have lost (and which some of the faithful think they still have). So far as I am concerned, if Protestants or some secularists want to go to the Romans out of social snobbery or a desire to please Grandma, they cannot very well complain at any mediaeval nonsense they put up with. Let them think themselves lucky the Roman Catholic Church do not insist on a painful operation as the Jews do in such circumstances!

Viewpoint:

By J. Davis.  
(Birmingham)REPEAL THE BLASPHEMY ACT

There is general agreement among rationalists that a given legislative act, even though it has fallen into disuse could well be used again at an appropriate time whilst it remains on the statute book. This is so even if it be hundreds of years old. Legislation in this category is the Blasphemy Act of 1698.

An Offence The 1698 Act makes it an offence to: "By writing, printing, teaching or advised speaking, deny the Christian religion to be true or of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be of divine origin."

Believer's Offence Some 40 years ago, the late Mr Chapman Cohen made the observation that the curious features regarding blasphemy is that it is one of those offences that cannot be committed by anyone but a believer. How, he asked, can a person speak disrespectfully of something which he or she honestly believes does not exist? How can one speak irreverently of a myth or a delusion?

Last Case Under Act Incidentally, the last known law case of blasphemy in Britain was in Birmingham in 1921. The judge, Mr Justice Salter. We should publicly demand the annulment of this 17th century obsolete act of parliament. By doing so we can expect to incur the hostility of all the Christian demoninations and chiefly from the Roman Catholic hierarchy. The Roman Catholic church still hopes for changes in the social-religious climate in Britain, changes favourable to them. They would then, with increasing strength, be enabled to use the Blasphemy Act again. First against the atheists, then, if successful, the agnostics' turn would come. We should demand of all the political parties to state clearly their attitude to the Blasphemy Act of 1698. Should they equivocate, as is usual among politicians, categorical answers should be required from them to the following questions? Do they fear the priests would influence their faithful flocks to vote against them? Do they fear the wealth, power and influence of the established Church of England and of the Roman Catholic Church?

Christian Minority Our emphasis should be put on the main criterion for what constitutes a "Christian" country. It is not the ownership of great wealth, property or fields of investment, but the number of regular church goers. In Britain, approximately eight per cent of the population and most of those Roman Catholics are churchgoers. Christian believers should be accorded the democratic rights of a minority but no more. Such are the unpalatable facts political bureaucrats are reluctant to accept. Hence the need to repeatedly remind them that

they now live in a secular scientific age.

Law Commissioners One other approach for secularists to pursue their case is via the English Law Commissioners. In the early months of last year, it will be recalled, the government enacted the English Law Commissioners Bill. The act set up the law commissioners, consisting of five lawyers under the chairmanship of Mr Justice Scarman. Their task: to study the whole mass of legislation enacted since 1235 A.D., then, from time to time, make recommendations to parliament for the amendment or annulment of obsolete or unjust laws. This is a vast undertaking and will take many years. However, a short time ago the Law Commissioners issued a press statement inviting the public to write in to them, giving their personal views on the kind of laws that needed to be changed; an invitation to individuals as well as to organisations.

Action Urged I would urge all atheists and agnostics, all of secular convictions, to write to the Law Commissioners as I have done. The address: The Chairman, English Law Commission, Lacon House, Theobalds Road, London, W.C.1. Must the whole question of the Blasphemy Act of 1698 be allowed to go by default to the religious obscurantists?

Secular League Meetings: Outdoor Meetings sponsored by Kingston, North London and Camden groups: Marble Arch, every Sunday from 4.0 pm. Speakers J.W. Barker, L. Ebury, C.E. Wood, J.A. Millar, H. Timmins, and others.

Tower Hill Every Thursday, 12.0-2.0.

Indoor Meetings: Kingston and Surbiton group meetings every Friday, 8.0 pm. - the White Hart, Hampton Wick, Middlx.

Secularists living or working in the Borough of Camden, are urged to send for particulars of meetings of the Camden group of the Secular League.

The Secular League can supply speakers to organisations on all aspects of secularism.



WEALTH OF THE VATICAN

It will come as no surprise to those who have read the first three "Iconoclast" articles on the "Wealth of the Vatican", to learn that: "Lord Hill stops TV report on Vatican's Wealth" and "A few hours before 'The Vatican Millions' was to have been shown in Granada's 'The World Tomorrow' series the ITA intervened." (Daily Mail, 8th Apr, 66.) The report then went on to say that the script was sent to the six members of its religious advisory board who will be asked to report on whether the programme should be screened. As these gentlemen are "purely religious advisers", I will personally volunteer my services as auditor in order to check the additions and figures, contained in the script!

Satire, Sex And Sin In these enlightened times when even the said gentlemen of the BBC allow a programme (softly, softly) to be screened at the peak viewing hour for children showing the enlarged close-ups of a masculine hand caressing a female pubis and only reserving for the late-night rebels anti-royalist satire, one is tempted to wonder exactly what was in that programme. Something so terrible it requires no less than six religious censors to decide if the unbeliever could see it. What could it have been? The Pope touring Italian brothels to collect the night's take? The bishops importuning in order to earn a little extra for the Cistine chapel restoration fund? Or perhaps it was a close-up of the murdered victim of a priestly assault? Hardly. It was probably none of these things. For although the church hates satire, sex and sin (in that order), it will not only tolerate, but will actively support any of all of these, if it is to the church's advantage. But one thing she cannot and will not tolerate - a naked balance sheet! She will bare her breasts, posterior and navel before she will allow the tiniest glimpse into her treasure chests.

Defence of Private Property According to the Black Book, between the years 1797 and 1818, 313 persons were convicted of murder. Over the same period, no less than 4,035 persons were executed for sheep-stealing, forgery and petty larceny. Although in some parts of the world rationalism has proved a force for improvement, the Church of Rome in 1966 still teaches that "it is lawful to kill in defence of valuable private property".

Bigger And Bigger The stark horror from which we the viewing public had to be protected by the full power of the ITA was nothing less than the truth about the Vatican millions. James Burke, who wrote the script of the banned programme stated: "My case is that the money is not being used to good effect. To be blunt, the only thing all that money is doing is getting bigger." He quoted the Vatican's income as being £200 million a year from investments alone. Another newspaper quoted the treasures of the Sistine Chapel alone at about £5,000 million

- although in fact, one of the largest firms of valuers in the world recently refused to undertake the task of valuing the treasures in the Sistine Chapel on the grounds that it would have taken them all their time for many years to complete the task.

Universal Bankers Perhaps we would also have been told that the Holy Apostolic Church at Rome owns the banko di Roma, the Banko di Santo Spirito - or "Bank of the Holy Ghost" - the Banko Ambrosia, the Banko di Navorro, the Credito Italiano, the Banca Commerciale Italiana of Milano, the Credito Centrale dei Lazion, the Bastrogi Finance and Holding Company, the Vatican private "house bank" owned by the Society of Jesus, the Schweizerschen Kreditanstalt I Zurich, the Opera Religiosa - the Pope's private bank, in which he keeps large deposits of internationally negotiable papal poverty presumably - and the Bank of America, which is one of the world's largest banks. This list is by no means exhaustive! Clearly one may include the entire banking facilities of the fascist Catholic states of Portugal and Spain, as well as increasingly large sections of the French, Dutch, West German and entire Belgian industries. To this we must add almost the entire Gas, Electricity, Water, Public Transport and Public Service industries of those areas, about 50 per cent of the mineral resources of Katanga - i.e., half the wealth of the Congo - and to quote the American "Liberal": "There are very few realty companies in Italy that the Roman Church does not own bonds and stocks in."

Jesus Biz Is Good Biz We should perhaps not overlook the fact that the Vatican owns a large number of churches throughout the world also. It is easy to overlook the fact that it is supposed to be primarily a religious organisation. We have often pointed out that the "Jesus business" is a particularly lucrative one, if for no other reason than that the goods which the church sells, do not have to be delivered until the buyer is dead - terms under which even the most incompetent of us could successfully trade. Even Fords have to produce a motor car before they get their money! (cont. pg.8.)

Towards Militant Atheism, cont from pg.1:Viewpoint:

At this point the bishops will be something more than ennobled busybodies in the House of Lords, and the fact that not one jot or tittle of the Bible is left standing will not matter a damn or a blessing.

Albert Meltzer.

Wealth of the Vatican, cont from pg.7:

What sort of money does one get from a dead Jew? Well, according to a Sunday Observer article entitled "Riches in a Poor Parish", one poor district of Liverpool raised no less than £40,000 for a new church. And this from an area where the children may be seen literally half-starved and half-clothed. This sum is only the amount collected for the building fund. Surely the smallest fund of the many of which the Church of Rome is so fond? But it does not end there.

The Living Rock Throughout the world Roman Catholic churches occupy many of the most valuable sites in cities, towns and countries. They occupy dominant and central positions and they have big strong wooden doors. These doors are important; for inside these churches there are priceless treasures. Chalices of gold encrusted with precious stones. Crosses of gold and silver, plates of precious metal and every device that avarice has ever employed to defeat an inflationary economy. Every bit of it, from the carved stone walls, to the timber roofs, is the blood and flesh of man, sacrificed at the altar of this pagan god. Nothing can bring back the lives that have been so ruthlessly smashed against the "Rock of Peter". It can be prevented from happening again in the future. But first the truth must be told.

Secular League: Many thanks to Mr J. Davis of Birmingham for books for our Library and Literature Fund.

The Secular League will pay postage and packing charges on any donations of books to this fund.

Iconoclast Printing Fund: Many thanks to the North

London Secular Group and to Mr Len Ebury for the donation of £10 towards the Iconoclast Printing Fund. To the Kingston and North London Groups for their donations of £8 each to the Secular League propaganda fund. More acknowledgements in our next issue. The building of the fund will not only enable us to enlarge the size of the present Iconoclast but will also lay the foundation for future developments.

THE HAMMER OF THOR

The Papacy is the richest, the most powerful and most experienced political force in the world. As history shows, it has always had a fixed mania for world dominion. It has been and still is the chief barrier to human progress. Even in modern times, it persists in the brazen attempt to dominate the mind of man through the medium of religion. It ever seeks to perpetuate existing society on the basis of a lie.

Christianity has been rightly called the "slaughterhouse religion" for it has waded through blood to a throne and shut the gates of mercy on mankind.

Each century produces its crop of Iconoclasts and each in turn but sketches in the more vividly the shape of things to come. Rome was not built in a day, nor can Jerusalem be built in England's green and pleasant land in a hurry. We must do our bit of sketching in the present. There are many false images around us that must be broken with the "Hammer of Thor."

In the past people had a great slogan of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity - we have the best slogan of all, Atheism, Secularism, Freethought. Atheism is the natural ideology, the birthright of every man, which he ought not to sell for a mass of religious pottage. Atheists are men who are seated, clothed, and in their right minds. Like Ingersoll they are aware that the place to be happy is here and the time to be happy is now, not in some mythical hereafter. Of Secularism, it can be affirmed that it is now on the side of history and history is now on the side of Secularism. Science is now the main tool in the secular process; the increasing use of the scientific tool guarantees the success of secularism. Freethought is that superior thinking, clear, and articulate, which is freed from any admixture of religion. It rejects the old edict of "thus saith the lord," and places its emphasis on man.

The urge for social justice, the cries for various reforms, the desire for the various freedoms, the right of free speech, free assembly and the right to criticise, are all manifestations of freethought.

In the old Norse mythology, the hammer was the weapon of Thor, which he used to reduce his enemies to nothing. Atheism, Secularism, Freethought is our hammer, as we go into the fray. No better weapon could be ours for breaking down false images, and building a better world.

Idris Jones.