

# The Freethinker

Vol. LXXVI — No. 22

Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

Price Fivepence

WHEN I WAS IN GERMANY recently, passing down a street in a Hamburg suburb my attention was drawn to a rather ordinary looking house near the fish market. "Had you been here twelve years ago," my guide informed me, "you would have seen a yellow star on the door. This house is where they kept the Jews before sending them to the gas chamber." A terrifying reminder that "progress" is not inevitable and that the Inquisition had no monopoly of horrors! The Nuremburg Laws which condemned non-Aryans to permanent inferiority in the Nazi state and in their projected "New Order", in which they would become "lesser breeds without the law", represent a monument to an old religion, that of Racism, the dogma that salvation and ethnic superiority lie neither in Faith nor in works but only in the sacred and unpolluted racial bloodstream.

In April, I was privileged to interview the widow of one of the conspirators of "July 20th" (1944) whose plot to kill Hitler so narrowly failed. She told me that all those who tortured and killed her husband and his fellow conspirators, and who escaped hanging as war criminals, were again back in positions of power. Among these ornaments of the Adenauer regime is the individual who is alleged to have actually drafted the Nuremburg Laws! One can hardly, therefore, regard the danger of anti-Semitism as a dead issue.

## Anti-Semitism, Race and Religion

The terrible massacre of "non-Aryans", chiefly, of course, Jews, besides gypsies and others, has tended, by its sheer mechanical efficiency, to throw into the shade all previous anti-Semitic holocausts. Only the age of mass techniques made the new crime of genocide (race-murder) possible. However, in proportion to its population then, it is quite possible that the eleventh century Catholic Crusaders, en route to the Holy Land, actually killed as many Jews as the modern Gestapo. But the actual motives behind anti-Semitism, practised respectively by Christians and Nazis, proceeded from widely different causes.

## Anti-Semitism and Decide

The Christian, in particular the Catholic, attitude to the Jews was classically summarised in the words of a fictitious character of Anatole France's, an irate soldier who said to the Jew: "Wretched man, you have killed my god and now I am going to kill you." In other words, every Jew was a decide, a god-murderer! One may relevantly add that still current Catholic ceremonies such as "The Stations of the Cross" keep alive vivid memories of this perhaps mythical crime. It was as decides, held collectively responsible for the murder of the god-man Jesus Christ, that the Christian Crusaders burned alive the Jews in their synagogues when they entered Jerusalem in 1099. Similarly, it was as god-killers that innumerable Jews perished in the Tsarist pogroms of the "Black Hundreds". Anti-Semitism

in Christian lands was, of course, a complex business into which many non-religious motives entered, but at least, as far as the Church itself was concerned, its directing motive was essentially religious. "You have killed my God", so—*Kaput!* Incidentally, since Christ's death is supposed to have been an absolute necessity for human salvation, ought not the Jews to have been regarded, theologically, as benefactors? Did not the Inquisitors owe to the Jewish deicides not only their salvation, but their jobs?

## Racial Anti-Semitism

The Nazi mass extermination of the Jews rivalled in intensity, and surpassed in actual quantity, all earlier persecutions of the Jews.

The details were unutterably terrible: discounting war propaganda altogether, I know personally former German inmates of concentration camps who were taken out periodically into the prison yard to watch Jews trampled to death as part of prison routine. However, the motives behind this mass exhibition of "man's inhumanity to man" differed widely from those of the Christian persecutors, whether Crusaders, Spanish Inquisitors or Tsarist Cossacks. In the writings of the arch-apostles of Nazi anti-Semitism, H. S. Chamberlain, Alfred Rosenberg and Hitler himself, what is wrong with the Jew is *not* that his race once killed God; it lies in the present fact that he *is* a Jew. In his veins there flows a polluted oriental tick in lieu of the sacred "Aryan" blood, biologically needed for the production of the "Master Race". By an ironic paradox this attitude is much more like that of the Jews themselves than their Christian persecutors. The modern "Aryan" Germans, like the ancient Jews, prided themselves on being a "chosen race". Hitler's *Mein Kampf* has much in common with the Biblical *Book of Ezra*, both manuals of racial exclusiveness and intolerance. On the subject of Christ the Nazis differed. Some, like H. S. Chamberlain, regarded the Gospel Christ as an Aryan. But those who regarded him as a Jew, no doubt, far from horrified by his death, considered that as a Jew he probably got all he deserved!

## "I belong to the elect"

As the American anthropologist Ruth Benedict has aptly commented, the racial creed can be summarised in five words: "I belong to the elect." It was in the name of this sacred formula that the ancient Jews hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord and cast out the unclean Gentile women from their midst. This formula recoiled like a boomerang on the heads of its originators three thousand years later.

## "The Socialism of Fools"

Having noted two main ideological causes of anti-Semitism, there is also an economic one that has proceeded concurrently with both. The recurring manifestation of anti-Semitism has been classically summarised by the famous German Socialist August Bebel: "Anti-Semitism is the Socialism of fools." The ignorant masses throw the blame

VIEWS and OPINIONS

## Anti-Semitism and Religion

By F. A. RIDLEY



for their economic depression upon the Jews! This apt definition of "National Socialism" was brilliantly illustrated by Hitler's own propaganda during the lean years of the "Great Depression" (1929-33), when all the miseries of mankind, and in particular of the German workers, were ascribed to the Jews! Incidentally, while Hitler appears to have firmly believed in his Aryan nonsense, that astute demagogue publicly recognised the propaganda value of anti-Semitism to his movement.

#### Anti-Semitism and the Future

The Jews are not, of course, the only racial religious minority to suffer periodical persecutions at the hands of alien

neighbours. The gypsies, also persecuted by the Church and more recently by the Nazis, are a case in point; so, much more closely on both economic and religious grounds, were the Armenians, so savagely oppressed both by Muslim Church and Turkish Empire. The Armenian massacres of Sultan Abdul Hamid were on the Nazi scale. In Europe the Jew has been the principal scapegoat since the Christian cuckoo first emerged from its Jewish nest. Nor is anti-Semitism merely an old unhappy memory. With the R.C. Church, now more powerful in Europe than at any time since the Reformation, and Nazism reviving rapidly in Germany, it is much to be feared that the Odyssey of the Wandering Jew is far from its end.

## Foote's Contributors

By G. H. TAYLOR

IT WAS, of course, quite impossible, even in an enlarged issue, to pay tribute to all concerned in the early history of THE FREETHINKER. There are some names, however, which at this juncture should not pass unnoticed. First and foremost is that of J. M. Wheeler, to whom Mr. Neuburg has devoted an article.

The relationship between Foote and Wheeler was as perfect as one could wish. This is particularly worth noting because, as Mr. Cutner indicated, Foote was an individualist not always easy to get on with amicably. At various times Mrs. Besant, Holyoake, Watts and J. M. Robertson came under his displeasure. This was no doubt because Foote, on principle, always put the Cause before the man, and did not lightly regard those who, in his view, were "letting the side down". In the case of Holyoake, his estimate was most obviously justified. Yet Wheeler, who was working side by side with him continuously for sixteen years, retained his warm admiration and friendship to the end. When Wheeler died, Foote's reference to "the empty chair" rang true; it was no mere formal obituary. Wheeler had shared his struggle, his sufferings and his poverty, and had not complained. Lacking the qualities of his leader, Wheeler had been content to play second fiddle, while bringing to THE FREETHINKER a scholarship in certain directions which even Foote himself lacked. They had dovetailed perfectly. Is it too much to say that today THE FREETHINKER lives because of that early association?

I count 891 full-scale articles by Wheeler in THE FREETHINKER up to his death in 1898, and to these may be added a good deal of unsigned matter as sub-editor, some articles under assumed names, and some printed posthumously from his notes. It is not extravagant to say that with a university education and social background Wheeler would have been one of the best anthropologists, if not the best, of his day. Some day a fuller tribute must be paid to this scholarly, modest — even self-effacing — figure. Chapman Cohen, who knew him for several years, spoke with the utmost admiration for him.

When Foote went to prison for blasphemy in 1883 the editorship passed to that maligned figure, young Dr. E. B. Aveling, who married Eleanor Marx, daughter of Karl Marx. Whatever Aveling's personal shortcomings, he wielded a fluent and effective pen, and there was no loss of touch with the imprisoned editor. While contributors were hitting the Christian Bible from the point of view of its absurdities, Aveling and Moss reinforced the attack from the standpoint of scientific facts.

The year 1884 was one of many changes. Foote and Wheeler (who had now recovered from a breakdown last-

ing some months) renewed their partnership, while the newly formed Fabian Society took Aveling out of the Free thought movement. In this year, too, "Big Joe" Symes, who had been a Methodist minister at Leeds prior to his conversion to freethought and atheism, left for Australia, having been a contributor since the first number, and Foote picked up a new and valuable writer, W. P. Ball, the industrious compiler of *The Bible Handbook*, with Foote himself adding most of the comments. Ball used two Bibles from which he cut with his penknife the extracts he needed for the handbook. He contributed virtually weekly to THE FREETHINKER till 1888, and thereafter at rare intervals, his last article being in 1911.

Symes continued to send occasional contributions from Australia, where he did fine work for freethought, till he returned in 1906. His articles then flowed into the pages of his favourite journal once again but unfortunately he died very soon after his return.

For the first ten years of its existence THE FREETHINKER was virtually written by seven men: Foote, Wheeler, Symes, Heaford, Aveling, Moss and Ball. There were also a few articles from others, notably the birth control advocate George Standing.

In all, Foote signed his name to 2,055 articles and "shorts", Symes to 184, Heaford to 139, Aveling to 74, Moss to 321 and Ball to 266.

Heaford and Moss were recalled by Chapman Cohen for the Jubilee Number in 1931 as the two oldest contributors still living. They both died in 1937, at practically the same age (82).

(To be concluded)

#### EXALTATION (after Baudelaire)

Up over earth, over marshes and meres,  
Over forests and seas, mountains and clouds,  
Above the sun, above the wheeling crowds  
Of orbs, beyond all bounds of starry spheres,  
Mount, steed of my soul! a swift flame of fire,  
A giant delighting in surge of the wave,  
Heav'n's azure abyss eager to brave  
On wings of divine undaunted desire.

REX CLEMENTS.

—NEXT WEEK—

THE MYSTERY OF MAY 22nd

Why was the N.S.S. Secretary excluded from  
the TV recording???



# Democracy in Christianity

By C. G. L. DU CANN

IN A DECK-CHAIR out-of-doors I sat down to write this article. Then . . .

A friend of mine who, through no fault of his own, is a garden worm by birth and occupation, was going down my garden path on his lawful occasions when a blackbird — one of those "aggressors" politicians talk about — swooped, and incontinently devoured him. Naturally I was horrified at such human behaviour. But I had no time to proffer the poor worm the consolations of the Christian religion or to enquire of him whether a Jesus-worm died for his salvation, and whether he thought he would rise again and go to heaven. And when I angrily quoted "Thou shalt not kill" to the blackbird, he merely flew off, doubtless to find "another of God's creatures" for his dinner.

What could I do? Nothing. Except sigh and think myself lucky that no Government or bacillus had similarly devoured me—yet! And, of course, get on with my article.

\* \* \* \* \*

Strenuous efforts are made from time to time to persuade us all that Christianity is a democratic creed.

Decidedly it is nothing of the kind, as any examination of its basis shows. But the human mind is a dishonest machine, deceiving and self-deceived. When it wishes to believe that black is white, that yes is no, and that the aristocratic Christian religion is democratic (democracy being the fashionable cant of our times), the mind performs these miserable antics with ease.

But God, as conceived by the Christian tradition, is not yet a committee. Nor even a trade union of three persons — of a superior sort like the late Lord Curzon. For the present, God remains our super-Stalin. So does his opposite number, the Devil. There is nothing democratic about these twain or their respective *entourages*.

Indeed, the very reverse! In Heaven, we have a "Big Four" of Archangels: Saints Michael, Gabriel, Raphael and Uriel. (Of these, most Christians have never even heard, so ill-grounded are they in the tenets of their own faith.) Also in the Kingdom of Heaven there are the Cherubim and Seraphim. There are "Thrones, Dominations, Principalities, and Powers"; as well as angel-messengers, guardian-angels, and those least, rank-and-file angels who "also serve who only stand and wait" as the Christian poet John Milton finely said in that sublime sonnet on his blindness — one of the genuine glories of Christianity.

Certainly on this showing, we can hardly conceive Heaven as a republic. Or even a political jumble like our British Commonwealth, which is like a box of liquorice all-sorts, mostly black.

Heaven, indeed is a veritable House of Lords. Perhaps that is why so many members of the Labour Party religiously believe in both. The "many mansions" in the skies and the two Houses at Westminster are both hierarchies of inequality; and one can well understand (from the well-known human propensity of preaching one thing and practising another) why professed egalitarian-socialists hanker for personal inequalities, both terrestrial and celestial.

But how absurd are those Christians who, in face of the tenets and traditions of Christianity, pretend to believe "We are all equal in the sight of God". It is a poor compliment to God's eyesight. The Pope with his Cardinals and papal-nobility, the Archbishop of Canterbury with his bishops and deans and vergers, do not countenance such nonsense.

Even the most enthusiastic Communist does not believe that Harry Pollitt was the equal of Stalin (while Stalin lived) or that the late Harold Laski was equal in writing to the late Karl Marx. Why, therefore, anyone should pretend that Almighty God is so incredibly foolish as to think all men equal, is hard to understand. It is a sad blasphemy. But orthodox religionists are often guilty of blasphemies at which atheists and agnostics stand aghast as too dishonouring to the Concept and too dishonest in themselves. No unbeliever blasphemes, like the believer at his worst.

The worship of majorities — one of the most idiotic and immoral tenets of democracy — is utterly un-Christian. (It is a doctrine of force, at bottom.) Jesus Christ was quite certain that the mob would never go to Heaven; he said so in the plainest and most downright terms. Like Stendhal (and, incidentally, my wicked self), he was all for "the few" who enter in "at the strait gate" and by "the narrow way". The "many" on "the broad way" are, according to Jesus, destined to "destruction", to "everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels", a fate every bit as bad as hydrogen bombs.

Jesus, too, did not choose the majority, but a small coterie of Twelve Apostles. That is easy to believe; probably there were only that small number worth choosing amongst the Jews of Palestine. What I personally find incredible is that there was only one Judas Iscariot amongst the Twelve, because in real life there always is at least eleven Judases out of twelve friends of any great man. And very often the twelfth has more than a touch of Judas in him. Those of us with wide experience of humanity know that before we are forty, the age of perception and discretion as Marcus Aurelius thought.

The beloved, whom Jesus sought, was the *one* sinner, the *one* lost sheep who to the Good Shepherd was more than "ninety-and-nine just persons" or sheep safe in the fold. I can well believe that too. One sinner (like myself, for example) may be full of fascination. But a congregation of ninety-nine, or even 100, in church is a dreary and uninteresting spectacle, as any officiating clergyman contemplating them knows only too well. And for my own part, I have noticed that Jesus was more sympathetic in his conversations with the sinning Mary Magdalene than with his own saintly mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary. I have always been a trifle shocked by his impolite words "Woman, what have I to do with thee" to his mother.

There is no doubt about it at all that Heaven (as depicted by the Bible and Christian teaching) is an old Tory Party paradise. Of course, the merely rich will be excluded (under the camel's eye rule) just as the merely *nouveaux riches* are very properly not allowed to join the Carlton Club. Those who know how detestable merely rich people tend to be will rejoice at this heavenly embargo — so unknown in the Church on earth. The poor (who are often of good family, today) will be admitted, like Lazarus (who may perhaps have been well-born but in reduced circumstances). Rank will be respected; law and order will prevail; and the vote will (I am glad to think) not exist. There will be no Opposition and no pretended democratic Government — in which respect the Kingdom of Heaven will be some improvement on our House of Commons.

In face of these Christian traditions (which I have faithfully set out) how can it be honestly claimed that the Chris-

(Concluded on page 176)



## This Believing World

**Should cricket be played on the Sabbath**—God's Holy Day which Christians changed from the day commanded by God to be the Sabbath Day, to the day on which pagans used to worship the Sun—Sunday? The Rev. D. Sheppard—once a Test captain, now a Man of God—bitterly opposes it. Mr. Sheppard knows perfectly well that Sunday is *not* the Sabbath Day of the Bible, but he appears to be very hurt, as a "matter of principle", that Christians spend the day "on the beach" or "on the road". He does not like this "open-air religion". And he wants to know, "How much does it bring us nearer to Jesus Christ?"

★

**Pontifically, he announces that** "if we do not want an utterly ignorant people knowing nothing of why Jesus came and died, we shall check the secularisation of Sunday". Well, most people—including Mr. Sheppard—don't know why Jesus came and died. All he knows is what the Churches have told him, and they have been utterly unable to produce any *evidence* for their belief or for their statements. As for the "secularisation" of Sunday, that has been going on for centuries. Not even the outrageous fines and other punishments which Christians have always gleefully imposed on "Sabbath breakers" have prevented people from spending Sunday—the day of Sun worship—as they liked.

★

**In that all-believing town of Barnsley**—probably unknown to most of our island's other towns—resides a very "disgruntled" Mr. Henry Irving, and he has sent a shuddering letter to the Editor of the *Barnsley Chronicle* that the BBC is going to allow an atheist two minutes on the air to propagate "his pernicious doctrine". Mr. Irving thinks a determined effort by mass prayer may cause the electricity supply to fail just at the moment the wicked atheist is speaking, for "faith can move mountains". We think that, headed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Griffin, and the English boss of Jehovah's Witnesses, such a bombardment to God Almighty could quite easily cause havoc to our electricity supply, and we heartily commend the idea. For if something drastic like this is not tried, the BBC may actually allow another atheist to air his views. And what would Barnsley do then?

★

**According to "The People" Sunday newspaper**, the *greatest* miracle of modern times has happened recently. It is attested by Dr. K. Symonds, who is the senior medical officer of the Bible College Hospital at Swansea, and as such ought to know. A 35-year-old lady, Miss Melita Floyd, a complete cripple for thirty years, had the healing hands of Mrs. Salmon, the wife of a Methodist minister, placed upon her and "at once the miracle happened". The "at once" actually took three years, but Miss Floyd suddenly saw the head and hands of "the Saviour" and that settled it. She was soon cured—though what the Saviour thought of his own marvellous cures thus being at least equalled we are kept in ignorance.

★

**Cures of sick people without any miraculous intervention** have been reported through the centuries, and it is quite possible that Miss Floyd could have been cured years ago. Elizabeth Barrett was almost a hopeless bedridden invalid until she met Robert Browning, and her elopement with the poet provided a perfect cure without either God or medical spirits.

★

**As we have often pointed out** in the case of Mr. Harry Edwards, Mrs. Salmon, who performed this particular

miracle, could multiply it by the dozen and prove to the world what "faith cures" it is possible to perform with the help of Jesus. There are many homes in the country for people with quite incurable diseases, and there is a long list of unfortunates waiting to be admitted. Why do not Mr. Edwards and Mrs. Salmon specialise on these? Why do they not each take a ward in our hospitals, full of very sick people whose beds are wanted for thousands of others, and with the help of Jesus cure them? What has Dr. K. Symonds to say?

### DEMOCRACY IN CHRISTIANITY

(Concluded from previous page)

tian religion is democratic? The Dictator—God; the absence of any elected representatives; no voting system; no political criticism allowed; no trade unions, but the entire population going about with crowns on their heads and harps in their hands, in a perpetual music festival, with one signature tune and theme song, "Holy, Holy, Holy; Lord God Almighty". That, we are told, is Heaven. But it is certainly not Democracy. Does Democracy believe in babies being born in stables, and masquerading as being poor and lowly, when the one in question is really a King and Lord of the whole Earth and the rest of the Universe?

Christianity is a mere posing at proletarianism and an obtaining of democratic credit by false pretences.

Those Anglican clerics like the late Dean Inge and haughty Calvinists who have both pointed out that Heaven, by predestination, is for "The Elect" (a very different category from the elected, by the way) and not for the vulgar majority of dead men, women, children, and babies, were perfectly right. For the majority of us, the bells of Hell go ting-a-ling. You may say this is unjust. But where in the whole of Creation, groaning and travailing, is there justice, my friends?

Nowhere.

From the lowly worm devoured by the bird up to the noble British taxpayer devoured by the Inland Revenue, we are all alike, victims destined to serve appetites and purposes other than our own. We have our little day and cease to matter like the voting-fodder of Democracy after election day. There is no real democracy in the Christian religion.

### BRANCH LINE

#### SUMMER PROSPECTS

FROM a number of Branch reports received recently it would seem that, whilst there is no room for complacency, the immediate prospects of the National Secular Society are better than at any time since the war. Several branches which have been comparatively inactive have recommenced propaganda; others which formerly depended upon one lecturer now have several younger men able to support or deputise for him. In Bradford, Mr. H. Day has been joined by Messrs. H. Newton and W. Sheppard (the former now the Branch Secretary); in Nottingham, Messrs. R. Morrell and R. Powe are alongside Mr. T. M. Mosley; while on Merseyside, the local Branch can boast four able speakers in Messrs. A. J. Henry, T. Hogan, C. T. Salisbury and W. Thompson.

In London, it is our intention to reopen old lecture sites, while continuing the present ones at Hyde Park and Hampstead. Central London and West Ham Branches are giving special attention to this, the latter to supplement a useful indoor season at Wansford Community Centre. Kingston Branch has commenced its usual outdoor propaganda with Messrs. J. W. Barker and E. Mills as the principal speakers; while, in the industrial North, Manchester has the services of two young men, Messrs. J. Cavanagh and G. H. Mills. Scotland, unfortunately rather dormant at present, will receive visits from E.C. speakers, as will the West Country, and it is hoped that such visits will stimulate local interest. Co-operation between Midland branches has led to the fixing of a special demonstration in the Leicester Secular Hall on Sunday, June 10th. Speakers will include the N.S.S. President and Secretary: Birmingham, Leicester and Nottingham Branches will be represented, and other branches are invited to participate.

C.M.C.C.



# THE FREETHINKER

41 Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1.  
Telephone: Holborn 2601.

THE FREETHINKER will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad): One year, £1 10s. (in U.S.A., \$4.25); half-year, 15s.; three months, 7s. 6d. Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 41 Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS

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

Mrs. G. E. FULLER.—See article on Esperanto by W. Auld (May 25th). Our space is too limited to allow further extensive discussion at present.  
W. MILES.—Your "evidences" have frequently been demolished. Have you anything new to say for the Bible stories?

## Lecture Notices, Etc.

### OUTDOOR

Bradford (Broadway Car Park).—Sunday, 7.30 p.m.: Messrs. DAY, NEWTON and SHEPPARD.  
Kingston Branch N.S.S. (Castle Street, Kingston-on-Thames).—Every Sunday, 8 p.m.: Messrs. J. W. BARKER and E. MILLS.  
Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Deansgate Blitzed Site).—Every Wednesday, 1 p.m.: G. A. WOODCOCK. Sunday, 7.45 p.m.: Messrs. CAVANAGH and MILLS. (Platt Fields), Sunday, 3 p.m.: Messrs. CAVANAGH and MILLS.  
Merseyside Branch N.S.S. (Pierhead).—Meetings most evenings of the week (often afternoons): Messrs. THOMPSON, SALISBURY, HOGAN, PARRY, HENRY and others.  
North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY and A. ARTHUR.  
Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square).—Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY. Sunday, 11 a.m.: R. MORRELL and R. POWE.  
West London Branch N.S.S.—Every Sunday at the Marble Arch from 4 p.m.: Messrs. ARTHUR, EBURY and others.

### INDOOR

Birmingham Branch N.S.S. (Satis Café, 40 Cannon Street).—Sunday, June 3rd, 7 p.m.—Mr. E. RAVENHILL, "Some Myths Exposed."  
South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, June 3rd, 11 a.m.: CHRISTMAS HUMPHREYS (President), Buddhist Society, London), "Buddhism in the World Today".

## Notes and News

This is the opening paragraph of an article, "The Responsibilities of Intelligence" by the Bishop of Salford, *The Tablet*, April 21st, 1956:

"Commentators on the attitude of modern society to religious teaching, whether making use of general impressions under the 'Mass Observation' technique, or of more personal experience, as, for example, that of the Catholic Evidence Guild speaker, all come to the same conclusion. For the vast mass of modern men the teaching of religious truth and the consequences of divine revelation, are simply irrelevant to the question of living. The 'so what?' attitude, the 'couldn't care less' reaction, have long succeeded the attitude of hostility or even of cynicism to Christian and Catholic teaching. The Church, at least as a teacher, is just another museum piece, a milestone at the side of the road along which mankind has passed on its onward march."

Out of thine own mouth . . .

★

The President of the N.S.S., Mr. F. A. Ridley, addressed the Hammersmith Branch A.E.U. on May 11th as a further step in the Society's policy of enlightening, and enlisting the aid of, the trade unions in the struggle for greater freedom of the air. The following resolution was sent to the

Executive Council A.E.U., the Trade Union Council, and the BBC: "That the Hammersmith Branch A.E.U. deplores the fact that minority movements have not more freedom of the air, in putting forward their views on religion, economics and strike action."

★

*Reveille* (15/5/56) contained a full-page illustrated article dealing with some of the exploits of Major Christopher Draper, D.F.C., known — because of his daring feats — as the "Mad Major". Readers may remember that, three years ago, he flew his plane under 15 Thames bridges to draw attention to the fact that people are not "finished" at 61. Major Draper — one of three pilots still flying who got their licences in 1913 — is a member of the N.S.S. and is on the Executive Committee. He recently broadcast under the appropriate title "Underneath the Arches".

★

THE invitation to the Dagenham N.S.S. Branch to meet the Christians in discussion at the Dagenham Town Forum was naturally accepted, and an interesting and profitable evening resulted. The suggestion was made that a "return match" should be arranged, the Secularists this time to provide the opening speaker. This idea met with popular approval.

★

## THE CHAPMAN COHEN MEMORIAL FUND

PREVIOUSLY acknowledged, £1,075 17s. 1d.; Anfyddiwr, £1; D. Deacon, 3s. 9d.; A. Hancock, 5s.; North London Branch, £1 1s.; J.M., 4s. 6d.; A. Cope, 5s.; L. Sanderson, 10s.; F. Muston, 2s. 6d.; D. Shipper, 5s.; W. Bennett, £1; J. Kirkham, £5 5s.; T. Roberts, 5s.; R. DeSalle, £1 1s.; A. and W. Rowlatt, £1 10s.; E.C.R., 1s.; G. Hooker, 5s.; W. E. Huxley, 10s.; I. Newman, 9s. 10d.; W. J. Lamb, £1. —Total, £1,091 1s. 8d.

The above closes the Chapman Cohen Fund and once again we thank all who have subscribed. Many readers have expressed their intention to continue their occasional contributions and these will be gratefully accepted and acknowledged for THE FREETHINKER Sustentation Fund.

## Conference Week-End

WARM, SUNNY WEATHER prevailed once again for the Annual Conference of the National Secular Society on May 19th-21st, at Liverpool.

This was the best attended N.S.S. Conference since the war, but perhaps the happiest sign of all was the very high percentage of young people present. In this respect the meeting was one of the best, if not the best, within memory of the older members in attendance. During the past eighteen months many younger speakers have emerged and this was shown on the Sunday evening, when the Pierhead speaking site was practically taken over by Secularism. Even with two platforms in operation there were so many speakers available that several of our more experienced propagandists gave way to the younger element, and no less than fourteen N.S.S. speakers were heard from the platforms. The crowds were large and well conducted, and to complete the total effect there was a large sale of the 75th birthday number of THE FREETHINKER.

The social gathering on the Saturday evening was exactly the sort that Secularists enjoy, with plenty of time for conversation, plus a little entertainment, mostly home-made.

The Conference, unfortunately once again, found the time inadequate for getting through the business, and less than half the agenda was dealt with, despite an extension of time at both ends of the afternoon session.

There was a pleasurable outing to Otterspool Park for members who remained in Liverpool on the Monday.



## Y Golofn Gymreig

WITHIN THE LAST FOUR YEARS the citizens of Cardiff and Swansea have won the right to have cinemas opened on Sundays. Last year games facilities were granted in Cardiff parks and this summer Swansea will enjoy similar benefits. All this has been accomplished in the face of very strong Church propaganda and is welcome evidence of the existence of a large number of people prepared to oppose religious leaders. Among these rebels there cannot fail to be many potential N.S.S. recruits.

The repercussions of the Cardiff and Swansea battles are now being felt in other Welsh towns. In Merthyr Tydvil, after a long drawn-out struggle, the Sunday Cinemas Association recently presented their petition to the Council with 12,000 signatures. A petition of similar strength was received by the Port Talbot Council but a "gerrymandering" snap vote defeated the citizens' demand by three votes.

There has also been an application at Neath and a refusal at Llanelly. There has, however, been a notable success at Haverfordwest, the county town of Pembrokeshire, and usually considered a chapel stronghold. With 35% of the electorate voting there was a majority for Sunday cinemas. All the previous "town meetings" had been, as usual, packed by the chapelgoers and their friends in an endeavour to prove there was no demand. This result will probably set off new demands in neighbouring Milford Haven (where the Council refused previously), Tenby and Pembroke.

★

Rather incongruously, although Sunday boating has been allowed at Cardiff for the last two years, the City Parks Committee will still keep the ban on Sabbath bowls and tennis. Bad enough that citizens are permitted the utter degradation of rowing on a fine summer day. Far worse those sacreligious heretics who would encourage the bacchanalian revelries of bowls and tennis — those notorious corrupters of the morals of our youth. We have to draw the line somewhere! Meanwhile the tennis enthusiasts of Cardiff have to sneak away guiltily to Barry or Newport to indulge their vice.

★

Recently the Licensed Victuallers' Association circularised all publicans in Wales and Monmouthshire inquiring as to their attitude to Sunday opening. The reason for this was that the sabbatarians have characteristically claimed that the licensed trade itself did not, as a whole, want Sunday opening. It is obvious that in some backward areas a publican will deem it impolitic to offend the local clergy, whatever his private opinion of them might be. Of the publicans who received the inquiry, between 70% and 80% replied, and of this number 81% favoured Sunday opening. A petition form placed in public houses obtained 135,000 signatures for Sunday opening, a fair number in view of the absence of propaganda to encourage them. To date, 36 Welsh M.P.s have been approached to put the matter forward; the 17 who replied refused to do anything. Who shall say where the power of the Church ends?

★

Far more alcohol is sold in the clubs in Cardiff on Sunday than on any other day of the week, and it would seem that the only people who suffer by this outdated Sunday Closing Act are the publicans themselves. There are, in fact, various ways of circumventing these Sunday restrictions. Coachloads of people leave the Welsh valleys every Sunday morning, many stopping just over the alcoholic border in Herefordshire or Gloucestershire: in such places the Welsh accent predominates on Sunday evenings. The

poor Monmouthshire publican can often look down the road to see his English neighbour doing a roaring trade.

★

Recently a statue of Robert Owen was unveiled at Newtown, his birthplace. In paying a tribute to Owen as "one of the world's greatest men", an estimate which Secularists will hardly wish to dispute, Lord Williams, a past president of the C.W.S., said Owen was *not* irreligious, because no man *could* be who loved his fellow men! Thus do we see the precursor of the National Secular Society shamelessly stolen for the glory of Christianity!

★

A minor storm has been created by a letter to *The Times* by a churchwarden at Usk, leading to a controversy between himself and the Bishop of Monmouth. The churchwarden, Major Bull, wants the silver plate lying dormant in churches to be sold to meet church and cathedral repairs. Tempers apparently became frayed. "This is not the end of it," declared the gallant major. "I am replying to the Bishop . . . and I have not put all my cards on the table yet." A new heating system was needed by the church at Bettws Newydd, and here he found another antagonist in the Dean of Llandaff. "Obviously the Dean thinks it does not matter if everyone sits in church with cold bottoms."

This is serious, and I suggest that if an appeal to the Almighty cannot produce the desired result, then his infamous cross-partner, Old Nick himself, should be appealed to, for he has (so the clergy tell me) a most efficient heating system.

However, if the worst comes to the worst, better to sell the silver plate than the collection plate. In the meantime, my heartfelt sympathies to the icy-posteriod parishioners of Bettws Newydd.

★

The British Railways Executive has told the Central Electricity Authority to remove two pylons at Portskewett, Mon. The reason? They are within 200 yards of sidings used by the Royal Train. One Chepstow councillor, when the matter came up, had the impudence to count the cost of removal, estimated at a mere £1,000.

As a compromise, why not festoon them with red, white and blue so as to be less offensive to the Royal Eye?

★

For the visit of Princess Margaret to Port Talbot I naturally took the day off and, waving my six-foot square Union Jack on its ten-foot gold-knobbed pole, was soon immersed in the happy crowds. As she drove swiftly by in her luxurious saloon we all cheered and I waved my flag frantically. The Princess smiled in my direction and I returned home quite exhilarated after my delirium of joy.

★

The Registrar of the University of Wales, speaking at a meeting of the Cardiff Rotary Club, asserted that without the refining influence of the chapel the Welsh would have become louts with whippet breeding as their only pastime.

We have long been waiting for some man of courage to denounce this vile Cymric Canine Cult, the worshippers of which are to be regarded with horror. Enlightened men like the Registrar know there is no limit to the debased depth to which these damnably deplorable doggy delinquents will descend. Through the refining influence of the Chapel these whippet-worshippers were first converted to cat-cuddlers, then to budgie-breeders, later to goldfish-gazers, and finally taught to worship none but God. Thus was the Devil defeated!

DAVID SHIPPER



# Jehovah's Witnesses

By JAMES HERVEY JOHNSON

(Concluded from page 170)

The sect is divided into companies, of not more than 200 each, with an elected leader. The director leads in quoting from literature of the sect, and discussing doctrinal matters needing explanation. The meeting usually consists of a question and answer session, something like the Communist "brain washing" sessions. Behind the scenes, as it were, is a representative from the main society in New York, who guides the activities of the group. Stress is laid upon the members giving so many hours a month, unpaid, toward spreading the literature. The members are fanatical and earnest in carrying the message—in fact they are probably the most aggressive and persistent in the United States.

The sect is conducted along somewhat secretive lines. No general information as to finances or membership is available. Those who seek to gain information except that which is available in the literature are looked upon with suspicion. In fact the members themselves probably know little about the inner working of the sect.

Their second Leader, Joseph Franklin Rutherford, who "ruled" from 1917 until his death from cancer in 1942, coined the slogan "Millions now living will never die", which was plastered all over the U.S.A. for a few years, and many believed that the end of the world would come soon and that the Witnesses would live while those who refused to believe would be wiped out. During World War I, Rutherford, called "Judge" by his followers, was jailed for opposition to the war effort and his activities "to cause insubordination in the military and naval forces of the United States".

Like most religionists, the Witnesses live in an illusory

world of unreality—looking to happiness as promised by Jesus Christ and their leaders—and doing little to improve conditions here and now. They tend to look on those who reject their doctrines as condemned by Jehovah, their God, to extinction.

Scores of thousands of them meet in County Fair grounds or in such huge meeting places as Madison Square Garden for their annual conventions, where many are baptised and where their strength is shown. They may number 200,000 but the actual figures are unknown except to the headquarters in New York, if it is kept at all. A list of workers is kept.

Observers say that they contribute little to human progress, that they are of doubtful value in the protection of the country and that they innocently serve the interests of the Communist conspiracy because of their refusal to support public defence or fight for their country. In Communist countries they are jailed and their activities banned—as well as in all totalitarian or Catholic-ruled lands. But so strong is the religious plank in the U.S. Constitution that they are given free rein to practise and expand their strange and fanatical creed.

A victim of a family broken up by his wife's belief in the doctrines says, "The general public has been taught by the Christian religions ("Devil's organisations" to Jehovah's Witnesses) to regard the Bible as God's word. They are not aware of how Jehovah's Witnesses use the Bible to worm their way into the confidence of Christians and subtly 'brain wash' them into becoming fanatical robots the same as they are".

## Position of Islam

By C. H. NORMAN

WITH ALL RESPECT to Mr. Ridley, I doubt whether his general strictures on the social philosophy of Islam are quite justified. It is true that there is no Freethought or Secularist movement in the European sense of the term in Muslim countries; but is not that explained by the fact that European Freethought and Secularist movements have directed their artillery at all the various forms of Christianity, ignoring Mohammedanism completely?

On the social aspect, the following extracts from the Prolegomena of Ibn Khaldum of Tunis (coram 1332-1406) may interest your readers: "God created for man all that is in the world... and men possess in partnership everything in the world... Gain can only come about by effort and labour... This is obvious in the crafts where the labour is apparent. It is also true of income derived from minerals, agriculture, or animal husbandry, for without labour there would have been no produce or profit. The income which a man derives from the crafts is, therefore, the value of his labour. In certain crafts, the cost of the raw materials must be taken into account, for example, the wood and the yarn in carpentry and in weaving; nevertheless, the value of the labour is greater because labour plays in these crafts the dominant part. In other occupations than crafts, the value of labour must be added to the cost of the produce; for without labour there would have been no produce... It is clear, then, that all, or most, incomes and profits represent the value of human labour." This is

a very early and concise statement of the Marxian theory of labour value. He quotes the statement: "The worth of every man lies in his skill", commenting: "That is, that the craft which that man has mastered is the measure of his value, or rather of the value of his labour, which is the source of his livelihood." These quotations are taken from a chapter on "Labour and Value".

Two other quotations are very timely today. "Price. Customs duties raise the price of goods. For all middlemen and traders add to the price of their goods all that they have spent on them, including their own expenses. Consequently, customs duties are also included in the value and price of the goods sold." Hence, indirect taxation like the purchase tax is a most powerful element in creating inflation, though the Government pretends to be against inflation. The author then has a section which sufficiently explains itself in the heading: "Wealth is a social, not an individual, product."

The last paragraph I wish to mention is headed "State Expenditure on Social Services", and reads: "Take care of the poor, the widows and the orphans; pay them special pensions from the Treasury. Do the same to the blind and to those who can recite the Koran. And, provided this does not overburden the Treasury, build hospitals for sick Muslims, with a staff of physicians and attendants who will cure them and minister to their needs." This latter passage is a citation from a letter by General Tahir ibn al Hussein (775-822) to his son. Ibn Khaldum was Chief Justice in Egypt on his death in 1406, aged 74. These passages are extracted from *An Arab Philosophy of History* (John Murray).



# Diabetes v. Christian Science

By K. M. WHITTEN

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE took the count in a recent bout with diabetes in Swarthmore, Pa., a college town in the Philadelphia area. A seven-year-old boy was allowed to die by his parents, who refused to allow insulin to be administered after they had been told by a physician that their son was a diabetic.

According to the report of the case (*Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*) the parents noticed a couple of months ago that their boy was losing weight and having difficulty in breathing. Although it is stated that the parents are Christian Scientists and that they preferred their own practitioner to a medical doctor, for some reason, not stated, they had the child examined by a physician, who diagnosed the case and had him removed to a hospital. He remained there for ten days while insulin was administered and then was removed to his home, greatly improved. The physician is reported to have informed the parents that their son had diabetes and would require regular injections of insulin, which, however, they did not permit. Instead, they had him removed to a Christian Science Nursing Home. Apparently he died there, as the Philadelphia Medical Examiner stated in a court hearing that death ensued from "diabetic coma" with broncho-pneumonia a contributory cause.

Assistant District Attorney Thomas Masterson charged that this "persistent and wilful refusal" to follow reasonable medical treatment constituted a *prima facie* case of involuntary manslaughter and asked that the parents be held in \$1,000 bail each. A continuance of the case was granted at the request of the parents' attorney.

Will they be prosecuted for this inhuman cruelty to their own son, in letting him die without the treatment which in all probability would have helped him live a normal life-span? Will the "practitioner" whose silly prayers were of no avail be stopped from further mischief?

It is very unlikely! This would constitute an interference with "religion" and this must not be. An awful yell would go up from all the C.S. believers and the politicians would run for cover.

If these simpletons and others of their ilk (snake-handlers, for example) want to commit suicide they should be permitted to do so, but not to let their helpless children die. This should be prevented by force, if necessary.

[*Liberal*, April 1956.]

## CORRESPONDENCE

### THE COLOUR BAR IN S. AFRICA

In Cape Town the South African Minister for External Affairs and Finance has announced that he had ordered his eyes to be removed after his death in order that the corneas might be transplanted to someone who was going blind. The Minister expressed a "deep feeling of sympathy for the blind" in a letter to the *Cape Times*. This humanitarian concern for his fellow-men after his death comes as a surprise to me. Will there be any colour bar stipulation attached to this gift? This racial fanatic would be better employed doing something active to aid South African natives in this life. But, of course, the whole educational and economic policy of the Union is to keep the Bantus *mentally*, if not physically, blind. However, he need lose no sleep. For any colour-bigoted clergyman of the Dutch Reformed Church will no doubt reassure this Nazi throwback that God is on his side. And what greater comfort could the Minister have than the knowledge that the God-in-Triplicate, originator of colour, is an active supporter?

D. SHIPPER.

ADDITION to "FACTS FOR FREETHINKERS — 10"

HOLLAND

*De Vrijdenker (The Freethinker)*. Amsterdam. Weekly. 15c. 8 pages.

## Points from Letters

I see the Lord's Day Observance Society have been condemning Sunday sports again, but nothing is said about the slaughter of animals and the shooting of birds on the Sabbath. Apparently what gives pain is approved and what gives pleasure is condemned.

L. STARLEY.

Until we have a World Government, those who seek the adoption of Esperanto or any other auxiliary language are just wasting their time.

CONSTANCE FRAZER.

Man is slowly evolving to higher attainments... and can himself condition his own further evolution. Any technique which assists him in this task can be defined as a religion.

D. J. GIBSON.

No one would condone the use of *agents provocateurs* to detect homosexuals but it seems to be an accepted practice in many lands... Homosexuals should be given all possible treatment to bring them back to normal.

ALEX TALBERG.

The intellectual level of the nation will rise in proportion to the fall of idolatry and superstition.

—SEABURY EDWARDS.

There are Protestant Churches so alike in their creeds that it is difficult for an outsider to see any difference... Generally it is a matter of mere administration; purely a secular affair.

—LEONARD MARTIN.

Humanity is still run by feeling rather than reason, though we're "getting there". Man is a reasoning animal — in spots!

—J.F.K.

## OBITUARY

THE death of W. Edward Meads, which took place last month, will recall to many readers his excellent (and original) articles written a few years ago in these pages. Mr. Meads had the happy knack of combining simplicity of statement with erudite scholarship and they were much admired. To his wife and family we send our sincerest sympathies.

H.C.

ON May 14th, before a small gathering of relatives and friends at the Downs Crematorium, Brighton, the General Secretary N.S.S. bade a last farewell to the charming lady he had known a quarter of a century before, but whom he had never seen since.

Edith Annie Sutherland came south with her husband in 1930 from Manchester, where both had been prominent in the N.S.S. branch. She died on May 8th, 1956, at the age of 73, staunch as ever in her Freethought, requesting,

"And may there be no moaning of the bar,  
When I put out to sea."

Moaning there will not be, but mourning is inevitable. It is the genuine expression of love and affection, qualities which Mrs. Sutherland impelled in those who were privileged to know her.

C.McC.

WE regret to announce the death of Mr. W. A. Vaughan, which took place on March 8th last at the age of 85. Few Freethinkers could have had so long a connection with the Freethought Movement, and in his long life he collected a fine library of rare books, many of which he annotated with valuable notes. He knew Saladin (W. Stewart Ross), G. W. Foote and Chapman Cohen and wrote many scholarly and out-of-the-way articles for *THE FREETHINKER* as well as for other journals. By profession he was a schoolmaster and he served in World War I. But he had many other interests — conducting tours, lecturing on eugenics, etc. Mr. Vaughan was always a great reader and knew three languages. His death narrows the few remaining veterans of the Bradlaugh-Foote era. He was cremated at Woking, and to his wife and family we tender our deepest sympathy.

H.C.

## STOP PRESS

WILL readers make a special note of the talk on Charles Bradlaugh by A. P. Ryan in the Home Service Programme on Sunday, June 3rd, at 4.45 p.m. This is the last of Mr. Ryan's talks on "New Conventionalists" and it will be intriguing to see what he makes of the uncompromising atheism of "Iconoclast". One thing is certain — not even the BBC could make Bradlaugh uninteresting.

THE West Ham Branch N.S.S. is to commence outdoor speaking in Victoria Park East, beginning this Sunday, June 3rd, at 7 p.m. The speaker will be Mr. J. L. Shephard, with the branch president, Mrs. E. Venton, in the chair. It is hoped that all freethinkers in the Bethnal Green area will take note and attend whenever possible.

FRIENDLY informal international house. Plentiful food, company. Moderate terms.—Chris & Stella Rankin, 43 West Park, E14 6JH. S.E.9. Tel.: ELT 1761.