

The Freethinker

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Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

Price Fivepence

WHILST IN GERMANY recently I passed through Munster en route to the north. Seen in the dim light of early dawn it appeared as a rather unusually dirty industrial town in no way distinguished from others. Yet it was once the scene of one of the most fantastic social and religious experiments in the annals of Christianity, so fertile in bizarre experiments. For it was in Munster in 1534-5

Babylon, Macedon, Rome and finally the millenarian reign of "King Christ".)

When Adam Delved

The religious underworld of the communistic sects of the Reformation and the later Middle Ages represents an historical underworld, as yet imperfectly studied, except, perhaps, in Russia. It is, however, known that both the Anabaptists and the Fifth Monarchy Men were offshoots of a religious subspecies in sharp opposition to both the prevailing social order and the official Churches. One of the more important of such heretical groups was that of the

— VIEWS and OPINIONS — *Backward to Eden* — By F. A. RIDLEY —

that a horrified Europe beheld a short-lived but sensational Anabaptist "Kingdom" with its apocalyptic reign of the "Saints" upon earth. In the inspired belief that the kingdom of God on earth was about to dawn, the Munster Anabaptists fought with frenzied valour that they held at bay for several months the combined armies of Catholic and Protestant Germany, leagued together against the Communistic heretics, and in the end Munster only succumbed to treachery from within. The ghastly finale, when Jan of Leyden, the Anabaptist King of Munster, and his principal lieutenants were roasted alive with red-hot pincers in the market square of Munster in the presence of the Bishop, who chanted the penitential psalms till the stench of burning flesh emptied the square, is one of the most spectacular and terrible crimes even in the bloodstained records of ecclesiastical persecution.

Lollards, who originated in England in the 14th century and who were probably responsible for the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, with Wat Tyler as titular leader. John Ball and other Lollard preachers were hanged for their participation, and soon afterwards Parliament passed a ferocious law, *De Heretico Comburendo* (For the Burning of Heretics), under which the Lollards were (literally!) reduced to ashes. The communistic philosophy of the Lollards has come down to us in a snappy jingle, "When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the Gentleman?" In more prosaic terms, where were your class distinctions in the beginning?

Back to the Golden Age

The above is actually most revealing as a *précis* of the species of religious Utopianism professed by all those communistic Christian sects during the "Age of Faith". Unlike modern radical movements they looked backward to a lost "Golden Age" in the past, the restoration of which, and of their alleged equalitarian conditions, it was their self-proclaimed object to restore. This Utopian attitude was common both to the Christian-communist sects of the Middle Ages and of the Reformation which included alike the Lollards, Anabaptists and Fifth Monarchy Men, and equally to their Pagan predecessors, the leaders of pagan slave-revolts. Upon this connection between the underground religious sects and the social upheavals of the age, the German freethinking scholar, Albert Kalthoff, remarks:

The "Kingdom" was one of the highlights of the 16th century and of the age of the Protestant Reformation, a handful of daring religious sectaries, iconoclastic rebels against Church, State and private property set up a communistic regime in which, or so it is stated, the precept of the Gospel, "The last shall be first and the first last", was carried out to the letter. The Munster Anabaptists put this precept rigorously into force. The Burgomeister of Munster became the public hangman, whilst the public hangman was duly appointed Lord Mayor! If chroniclers are to be believed, the Anabaptist "kings", like their Mormon antitypes, also practised polygamy literally naked and unashamed, for the "King" of Munster, following Biblical precedents, danced naked before the Lord in the presence of his numerous wives. Certainly the Munster "saints" appear to have been a peculiar bunch of fanatics, even if some of their more bizarre actions may have been "touched up" by their detractors for the benefit of posterity. Ironically the only surviving literary record of this fantastic episode is to be found in that highly respectable document *The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion*, the official formula of the Church of England, where we can still read that "property is not to be held in common as the Anabaptists do vainly boast", probably a direct allusion to the "Kingdom" of Munster, notorious only a few years before the Articles were first drawn up.

However much we may or may not be disposed to accept religious influences, it is at least undeniable that they must be regarded as a mighty lever in these, as in numbers of later popular movements for redemption from human misery and degradation. Just as the religious socialism of the Anabaptists is not an isolated phenomenon but a link in a great chain, so Eunus was not the last of his kind. The heroes of the second Sicilian slave-rising (104-99 B.C.), which seemed to follow the lines of the earlier one down to the smallest details, appeal also to the superstition of the masses. Even the strong figure of Spartacus was haloed, in the eyes of his followers, by the dim light of religious superstition. (*The Rise of Christianity*, pp. 8-9, trans. Joseph McCabe).

Survivors of the Munster "Kingdom" fled to Norwich, and the English 17th century sect of "Fifth Monarch Men", which also threatened "law and order" with its communistic tenets, was probably an offshoot of the Anabaptists. (The "Five Monarchies" were successively those of Persia,

Christianity and Class Conflicts

It is an old accusation against Christianity that it has normally been on the side of the rich and powerful, of the "Haves" as against the "Have-nots". As far as the official Christian Churches were concerned the accusation is undeniable, then and now! In pre-scientific ages, however, it would be truer to say that religion itself became an instrument of class conflicts, and that this reflected itself in the political field. Over against the official Churches of the ruling classes stood the revolutionary religious sects of the disinherited masses. However, while the latter type of religion was radical in opposing the then social order, even so it was not really progressive, as modern Christian Socialists claim. Contrarily it was backward-looking to the Garden of Eden in the case of the Christian sects; to the Golden Age in the case of their pagan predecessors. The effective motto of the Lollards and Anabaptists was "Back to the Garden of Eden". Such a social objective is both meaningless and reactionary in our scientific age, and would be repudiated by modern radical movements.

Foote's Contributors

By G. H. TAYLOR

(Concluded from page 174)

In 1891 Charles Watts began to write in THE FREETHINKER and soon became a regular weekly contributor till 1902, having contributed 553 articles. He was adept in scholarly combat with Christian Evidence, and he and Foote had a successful lecturing tour in America. He would follow his Christian opponents into the utmost recesses of their attempted argumentation, winkle them out and demolish them. He was undoubtedly one of the most effective writers and controversialists THE FREETHINKER ever produced, and that is saying a great deal. In the same year G. J. Holyoake contributed and continued to do so at lengthy intervals for several years. Another newcomer this year was F. J. Gould, most gentle of all militants and an educationalist before his time. Like Arthur B. Moss, he suffered professionally for his freethought—they were both in the teaching profession—but today Gould's heresies would hardly raise an eyebrow in a church school. A man of vast erudition, he paid the penalty in his own day for even the mildest of heterodoxy, inoffensively expressed, and the ogre of financial worry laid an ugly hand on him as on countless others of the movement. He, too, was recalled for the Jubilee Number and signed 228 articles in all, since 1891.

Yet another to appear for the first time in this year was Frederick Ryan, who contributed 101 articles, the last in 1906.

Chapman Cohen's first articles were an account of his lecturing activities in 1896, but on the death of Wheeler he began to write regularly, and when Foote's health broke down in 1913 he virtually began his editorship of THE FREETHINKER. Chapman Cohen's contribution to the movement is not to be assessed in an article of this nature. I stay only to note that besides unsigned matter he wrote 2,696 full-scale articles for THE FREETHINKER (1896 to 1950). His style is so distinctive that his noms-de-plume are easy to trace, and in any case he used them on very rare occasions.

Other writers of this period were Francis Neale, who wrote 152 articles between 1896 and 1902, a Welsh Socialist named Derfel (1903-5, 69 articles), and three who were destined to play a major part in the later editorship of Cohen: namely, Walter Mann, ex-Rev. J. T. Lloyd and "Mimnermus" (John Smith of Southend).

The latter was a professional journalist who would not keep his atheism quiet in his job, with the inevitable results. He knew Fleet Street and he knew the Church influences. He also shared Foote's great love for literature. "Mimnermus" was hard-hitting, even bitterly so, and though at times he perhaps descended to journalese, he was capable of some effectively sustained rhetoric. He began writing for THE FREETHINKER in 1898 and in Cohen's editorship became a weekly contributor. He died in 1941, having contributed more articles than anyone apart from the two editors (1,598).

Walter Mann wrote on a variety of subjects but excelled in scientific research, and in this sphere his opinions were never given without the backing of authoritative quotations, sometimes copious. What his articles lacked in "flow" they certainly repaid amply in study, and his tragic death in 1935 was a great loss to the paper. He had grown old with his books in the uninspiring town of Wolverhampton, where he was involved in two street accidents, the second fatal. Since 1902 he had written 667 articles and one or two booklets.

Lloyd knew the Church from the inside and was a great asset to THE FREETHINKER. From 1903 till his last illness he was a regular weekly contributor (1,250 articles—an exact figure, not a round one) and he died in the early days of 1928 at the age of 78.

In 1906 Joseph Bryce and A. D. McLaren (another who suffered professionally) began to write, and the following year there was the first of a number of articles by Mr. A. Thorn, who is still happily with us and living not far from THE FREETHINKER office. In 1909 Wm. Repton and T. F. Palmer appeared. Repton became primarily a book reviewer and wrote subsequently also in the name "C. de B." Palmer wrote till 1919 and then, after a lapse of nine years, from 1928 till his death in 1953 (889 articles in all). His articles were factual and rather gave the impression of notebook entries on books read.

To complete the records, Wm. Repton signed (including his nom-de-plume) 256 contributions (till 1937), McLaren 66 (till 1933) and Bryce 94 (till 1939). There were others whose work came to fruition in the later editorship of Cohen.

A consideration of Foote's contributors, together with a sample of their work soon dispels any notion that they were a mere bunch of Bible fiends in reverse. The Bible was certainly in the earlier days their main object of attack, but it was attacked from the standpoint of scholarship and science.

We salute their memory.

ANSWERING BISHOP WILBERFORCE

"I ASSERTED, and I repeat, that a man has no reason to be ashamed of having an ape for his grandfather. If there were an ancestor whom I should feel shame in recalling, it would be a man, a man of restless and versatile intellect, who, not content with an equivocal success in his own sphere of activity, plunges into scientific questions with which he has no real acquaintance, only to obscure them with an aimless rhetoric, and distract the attention of his hearers from the real point at issue by eloquent digressions, and skilled appeals to religious prejudices." PROF. T. H. HULL

We called in a London hairdresser the other day and, while seated in the chair, saw a leaflet on the mirror before us. The headlines read: ARE YOU CERTAIN YOUR SOUL HAS BEEN SAVED? Remembering we weren't in Fleet Street, we breathed a sigh of relief and asked for a haircut—not a shave!

—NEXT WEEK—

"LOVE IN THE SOUTH SEAS"

A REVIEW by ELLA TWYNAM

Aldous Huxley's Heaven and Hell

By C. G. L. DU CANN

IN HIS NEW LITTLE BOOK called *Heaven and Hell*, Mr. Aldous Huxley advocates getting to either of these interesting Promised Lands by more modern means than prayer, fasting or flagellation.

Nor need we wait for death.

Unlike Hamlet, he does not bid Ophelia get her to a nunnery. The aspiring mystic wanting to go either of the Other Worlds (on a return ticket) should get her, or him, to the specialists in bio-chemistry physiology, psychiatry psychology, and para-psychology. Excellent advice — if only these scientists could tell us what only Aldous Huxley knows! The plain fact is that if we did go to these folk, they would look upon us as a "case" needing "treatment" until we were sufficiently cured not to want to go anywhere except on a Cook's Tour, or to Clapham Junction or to hospital.

Like Dante and Mr. Huxley, I am perfectly ready to go both to Heaven and to Hell at any moment. We modern people are taught by advertising that anywhere is better and brighter than where you are; and can anywhere be less interesting than modern London in its drab and dim winter? However, heaven and hell are within us. So we have not far to go. The devil of it is that it is not so easy to find some "safe, easy and reliable method of transporting oneself" (within oneself) to the Other Worlds.

Still, let's go. No passports are required — which is something! There are no aeroplanes, steamers, trains or buses or taxis — alas! But there are two other carriers, according to Mr. Huxley. One is drugs: mescaline or lysergic acid. The other is hypnosis. But drugs are the better of the two. Like the old-fashioned fasting, these things remove nicotinic acid from the blood. Let's go by drugs. We now start "seeing things", "hearing things" and "having strange bodily sensations". (Reminds me of my last non-pressurised aeroplane flight to Egypt!)

"Seeing things, hearing things, and having strange bodily sensations" are phenomena associated with lunatics in lunatic-asylums (in the Welfare State called "mental hospitals" because in England a mind is, of course, a rare disease). Mr. Huxley does not mention lunacy. He is too busy describing (most admirably) what we shall see in our drugged Heaven or Hell. First, preternatural light and colour significance; then, preternatural, coloured, moving, living, geometrical forms; landscapes and buildings of grandeur; fabulous animals; heroic entities of the kind that Blake called "The Seraphim".

This is "a brute fact of experience" says our guide, philosopher and friend. For my part I say, "Who's-a-denying-of-it-Betsy Prig?" Mr. Huxley's discoveries seem to me to be no advance on De Quincey or even upon a case of *delirium tremens* and "pink rats with straw-hats on". Except for the all-important "significance!" But what is the significance? Most significantly — Mr. Huxley does not say.

This, too, is similar (as Mr. Huxley does say and very eloquently too) to the accounts of Other Worlds in all the religions. We are transported to the Hesperides; to the Isles of the Blest; to Avalon; to Horaisan; to the Garden of Eden — and, I daresay, to the Xanadu of Kubla Khan and my Silurist's "World of Light". Well, I am all for going to Heaven and Hell. (It is much better than going to the local Council office to pay the rates, or to the Post Office for a twopenny-halfpenny stamp, or similar modern British suburban excitements.)

It is quite true that fine jewels, strange pictures, and

poetic literature are vision-inducing and can take us out of this dismal world of here-and-now into the "Light that never was on sea or land". Beauty in all her myriad manifestations does perform that miracle. And it is here that, as Mr. Huxley finely says, "The fine point of seldom pleasure has been blunted" by modern technology making colour and light so commonplace as to be wearisome. Still, "the transporting-power" does exist, all must agree. It exists independently of Mr. Huxley's drugs and hypnosis. Indeed, Mr. Huxley seems to find transportation most in great pictures (which he describes entrancingly, as everyone knows).

So much for Heaven. Let us now go to Hell.

As we all know, visionary experience is not always celestial. It may be infernal. Hell, too, has its preternatural light and significance (colour is not mentioned, but let that pass!). The light is the "smoky light" of the Tibetan "Book of the Dead"; the "darkness visible" of the poet Milton; a "pays d'Eclairment". All is transfigured as in Heaven — but transfigured for the worse! "Everything in it is unspeakable, sinister and disgusting; every event is charged with a hateful significance; every object manifests the presence of an Indwelling Horror."

(This sounds to me like a truthful description of an English hospital or Income-Tax office in our day.)

We find it in Van Gogh; in Kafka's stories; in Geri-cault and in Goya; even in Browning's Childe Roland and the modern novels of Charles Williams. For my part, I should add, in the life and work of poor Guy de Maupassant.

Bodily sensations accompany these journeys. Blissful sensations separate one from the body and de-individualise one. But the infernal sensation increases body pressure and constriction and intensification of the individuality. It is somewhat disconcerting perhaps for the religious to learn that good deeds are no guarantee that their journey may not end in Hell instead of Heaven. For "mescaline tends to accumulate in the liver" and "if the liver is diseased the associated mind may find itself in hell".

Upon this I can only say: Do not "bring me my chariot of fire" that Elijah knew and that Blake wrote about. Instead, bring me my box of Carter's Little Liver Pills and my packet of calomel, good apothecary, that I may avoid Hell. Churches and chapels, on Mr. Huxley's evidence, must look after the livers of evil-livers and let their souls alone. We can agree with Mr. Huxley this far: to feel liverish is to feel hellish.

Mr. Huxley is original in that he does not (like the Christian religion) threaten us with Heaven or Hell. For him "heaven entails hell"; one may turn into the other. After a glimpse of the unbearable Splendour of ultimate Reality and after having shuttled back and forth between heaven and hell, the great majority may end up in the kind of word described by Swendenborg and the mediums and Sir Oliver Lodge, author of *Raymond*.

Well, I think all that very likely indeed. Just as there are "things far too bright and good for human nature's daily food", as Wordsworth says, so there are things far too dark and bad. Of which last imaginary hells are an example. Therefore, having carefully considered (and with admiration for his writing) Mr. Huxley's heaven and hell, I have decided that when I want to go to heaven, I will leave England and go to sleep, and when I want to go to

(Concluded on page 192)

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This Believing World

We felt certain it would come one day — a "Gospel Pen". At its top it has "a sensationally jewelled" cross fixed, as well as a tiny lens which, when looked through, gives you the Lord's Prayer in either the Protestant or Catholic version. The cross hooks on to your pocket for all, even God Almighty, to see that you are a perfect Christian. We are sure that the proud possessor will even take delight in signing income tax cheques with such a pen — or will he?

★

In case anybody is uncertain what are "the more common" sins for which the Roman Church excommunicates, here they are — heresy, remarriage to a divorced person, and abortion. But after a fling of this kind, you can be received back into the fold if you confess and are truly sorry. Just like the Prodigal Son who had a high old time wasting his "substance" and, completely broke, came back to the old man, and was immediately given the fat of the land. It is a beautiful story.

★

According to the Rev. James Keller, writing in an American newspaper, "the architects of our nation were men of vision. Above all, they had an innate religious conviction. . . . Every States acknowledges God as the Supreme Ruler of all men". That may be, but three of the men at the head of the American Revolution were Washington, Jefferson, and Paine. . . . Jefferson was as near atheism as was possible those days, and the deism of both Paine and Washington was very fragile. And many of the lesser leaders in the Revolution had similar non-beliefs.

★

And how much Christianity had the great American writers — Emerson, Whitman, Poe, Mark Twain, Jack London, and many others? Do we hear of them grovelling in church at prayer, and calling on God Almighty to save them from their awful sins? And the professors — how much belief had even a theist like Prof. John Fiske? His God was the Spencerian "Unknowable". Still, it must be admitted that the mass of the people in the U.S.A. are religious — hence Christian Science, Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, and dozens of other weird Christian beliefs.

★

By some strange oversight, the B.B.C. allowed a talk on Charles Bradlaugh the other Sunday, as a "non-conventionalist", by a Mr. A. P. Ryan, whose qualifications for such an estimate appeared to be nil. Mr. Ryan called Bradlaugh's opinions on religion, birth control and republicanism quite "absurd" but admitted coyly that *he* did not dislike the "non-conventionalist" all the same. We think that this was very noble of him. Charles Bradlaugh getting a pat on the back from Mr. A. P. Ryan! Wonderful!

★

We are apt to forget that apart from "spirit healing" and "divine healing", incurable cases of disease can always fall back upon Christian Science, even if this mixture of faith and folly is neither Christian nor science. Lady Astor was told at thirty-five she would always be a semi-invalid. Thereupon she was advised to go in for prayer and particularly the Christian Science brand interlarded with the Divine Name of Mother Eddy — and, heigh presto! she was cured, and is still hale and hearty. "God," she now tells us, "is a spirit, and man is his spiritual image and likeness. Therefore I have no need to feel sickness. . . ."

It is just as easy as that! Our huge Welfare State is completely wrong, for the people in hospitals have "no need to feel sickness", especially as God is a spirit and Lady Astor says so. No medical research, no medical training, no doctors or surgeons, no hospitals — these are Lady Astor's ideals because God is a spirit! Anyhow, Mother Eddy made a huge fortune out of people like Lady Astor, and there will be always plenty of "healers" like Eddy and "mugs" like those who believe her. And the Welfare State in spite of them.

The Rising Generation

VI—WHEN DID JESUS DIE?

JUST as nobody knows when the Saviour of the World was born, so nobody knows when he died. Assuming that there was an historical Jesus — which is mostly a matter of Faith — it is astonishing that the Gospels are quite unable to give us a definite date. They all agree, of course, that the Crucifixion took place under Pontius Pilate; but as to the exact year, neither they nor anybody else knows anything whatever.

As far as it is possible to get any date at all from the more or less confused narratives in Matthew, Mark, and John, the year may be any one between 26 and 36 A.D. Luke is perhaps a little more definite and the date may be deduced from his Gospel as the year 29 A.D. In his once famous *Life of Christ*, Dean Farrar thinks that the Crucifixion "probably" took place in March, 30 A.D. Following some Christian scholars, Renan plumps for 33 A.D. Other Christian authorities — like Kuenen, Oort, and Hooykaas — make the year to be 35 A.D. Actually, most of the various dates depend on a mixture of Faith and Fancy, for it is quite impossible to say.

But if all the Gospels and most of the Church authorities writing afterwards agree that it was under Pontius Pilate that Jesus was crucified — there is one eminent Father (and he is one of the most respected) who clearly and unequivocally repudiates the Gospel story. He is Irenæus — the first writer (about 180 A.D.) who names the four Gospels. In their present form they were quite unknown before that date. This is a fact which disturbs even some of our — dare I say it? — reverent Rationalists.

Irenæus (following a hint in John that Jesus was fifty years old or more when he was arguing with some Jews) insists that Jesus "passed through every age" — he was an infant, a child, a youth, finally becoming an old man for old men "that he might be a perfect master for all". If Jesus became an old man reaching "death itself" as Irenæus put it, it is obvious that this renowned Church Father could not possibly have believed that Jesus was crucified under Pontius Pilate when he was a little over thirty. Moreover, he claimed that he had all this from those who were "conversant with John the disciple of the Lord" and they surely should have known.

No wonder even Faith cannot vouch for us the exact date when Jesus died. H.C.

ALDOUS HUXLEY'S HEAVEN AND HELL

(Concluded from page 191)

hell, I will wake up and come back to England — which is hell enough, in all conscience.

And I have found, like Mr. Huxley, a "safe, easy and reliable method of transporting myself". I just go to bed — my safe, easy and reliable bed. There a pleasant dream takes me to Heaven. Or a nightmare takes me to Hell.

THE FREETHINKER

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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.

MARTIN BARRETT.—The practical aim of Behaviorist psychology is to train habits (modes of behaviour not hereditary) into organised habit-systems beneficial to social life.

W. BIRTLES.—Skoptski (i.e. the castrated) was a wealthy Russian religious sect of the last century. Every member was required to mutilate himself for the glory of God.

W. MILLS.—Your bare assertions cut no ice, because you do not support them with evidence. Write down your evidence, please, something concrete to deal with.

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 Week-day, 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 and R. POWE. 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.

West Ham Branch N.S.S. (Victoria Park).—Every Sunday, 7 p.m.: Various speakers.

INDOOR

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, June 17th, 11 a.m.: A. ROBERTSON, M.A., "Unexpected Assumptions in Ethics".

Notes and News

VISITORS to the Theatre Royal, Stratford, London, E.15—and we hope they will include many Freethinkers, because this is the home of the imaginative and talented Theatre Workshop—will notice, first of all, a friendly atmosphere which is rare in the English theatre and virtually non-existent in the West End. Then they will miss—no doubt, gratefully—the playing of the National Anthem. If theatre-goers were honest, they would admit that standing for "The Queen" just after they have settled comfortably in their seats, is a nuisance. In cinemas, of course, it generally concludes the show, and audiences make a dash for the exits to avoid it. At the Theatre Royal, the irritant is quietly and effectively subdued. In the programme we read: "In accordance with modern theatre practice, National Anthems will only be played in the presence of Royalty or Heads of States." We urge other theatres to conform with "modern theatre practice".

THE popular identification of religion and morality can have its amusing side. Witness the case of the man who ran a London model agency and published photographs of nude or semi-nude girls. Some of the photographs were described as "very undesirable" (*Daily Herald*, 18/5/56) by a representative of the L.C.C. Public Control Department, but the defendant pleaded that two of his clients were clergymen—"very keen photographers who exhibit, under pen names, photographs throughout the world". It availed him naught: his licence was revoked!

★

The *Socialist Leader* (26/5/56) contained a very nice tribute to the 75th Birthday of THE FREETHINKER. "The names of the great pioneers of free thought," it said, "Paine, Bradlaugh, Ingersoll, Foote, McCabe—are household words in every Socialist home, for the revolutionary movement has always recognised that free thought is one of the vital necessities of life, and that free thought is the chief concomitant of the economic and political freedom for which the socialist movement struggles. We add our congratulations to THE FREETHINKER." We thank *The Socialist Leader*, for which our own Mr. F. A. Ridley writes every week, and with which we have quite a large common public. We congratulate it, too, on the uncompromising stand which it has taken over Catholic interference in trade union affairs. This may have resulted in the loss of its Catholic readership, but it has also added to its prestige.

G. W. Foote on "Hell"

THE BIBLE always speaks of hell as "down", and the Apostles' Creed tells us that Christ "descended" into hell. Exercising his imagination on this basis, the learned Faber discovered that after the Second Advent the saints would dwell on the crust of the earth, a thousand miles thick, and the damned in a sea of liquid fire inside. Thus the saints would tread over the heads of sinners, and flowers would bloom over the lake of damnation.

Sir John Mandeville, a most engaging old liar, says he found a descent into hell "in a perilous vale" in Abyssinia. According to the Celtic legend of "St. Brandon's Voyage", hell was not "down below", but in the moon, where the saint found Judas Iscariot suffering incredible tortures, but let off every Sunday to enjoy himself and prepare for a fresh week's agony. The master of bathos, Martin Tupper, finds this idea very suitable. He apostrophises the moon as "the wakeful eye of hell". Bailey, the author of *Festus*, is somewhat vaguer. Hell, he says, is in a world which rolls thief-like round the universe, imperceptible to human eyes:

"a blind world, yet unlit by God,
Rolling around the extremest edge of light,
Where all things are disaster and decay."

Imaginations, of course, will differ. While Martin Tupper and other gentlemen look for hell in the direction of the moon, the Platonists, according to Macrobus, reckoned as the infernal regions the whole space between the moon and the earth. Whiston thought the comet which appeared in his day was hell. An English clergyman, referred to by Alger, maintained that hell was in the sun, whose spots were gatherings of the damned.

The reader may take his choice, and it is a liberal one. He may regard hell as under the earth, or in the moon, or in the sun, or in a comet, or in some concealed body careering through infinite space. And if the choice does not satisfy him, he is perfectly free to set up a theory of his own.

[THE FREETHINKER, September 21st, 1913.]

An Unproclaimed Freethinker

By G. I. BENNETT

(Continued from page 188)

But Amiel was a sad man, saddened as lonely men are wont to be who are given to recollection and reverie unmeliorated by sweet illusion. He was saddened by several things — his craving for perfection (a hopeless and necessarily unsatisfied craving, as he well knew, in an imperfect world like ours) being one of them. He was saddened also by reflecting upon the fleeting passage of our earthly span. In retrospect, youth is seen to have glided away swiftly as a summer's day. The middle years, and then the autumn of life, are with us all too soon. Time in its flight brings many changes, but none so painful — so desolating to the heart — as the passing of loved faces that we shall never see again.

Decay and death are the weird of man: that is the inescapable fact of existence. Apropos of our common mortality, Santayana has written that "the spirit and energy of the world is what is acting in us, as the sea is what rises in every little wave; but it passes through us, and, cry out as we may, it will move on". Yet in essence he is saying, and in words very similar, what Amiel many years before said: "Life passes through us; we do not possess it." Shakespeare expresses, through his Macbeth, this consciousness of mortality when he calls life a "brief candle" and speaks of man as "a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more". But the great dramatist's active genius does not permit him to linger over the thought. On the other hand, Amiel never forgets it. It is, as he puts it, an "implacable reality", for ignoring the existence of which he feels there is a "universal conspiracy", and it led him to write—

"Melancholy is at the bottom of everything, just as at the end of all rivers is the sea. Can it be otherwise in a world where nothing lasts, where all that we have loved or shall love must die? . . . The gloom of an eternal mourning enwraps more or less closely every serious and thoughtful soul, as night enwraps the universe."

A sombre view, you may say; and whether justified or not, it is one more indication, if more were needed, of the Swiss thinker's absence of fundamental faith. A Christian *qua* Christian could not possibly have written this: he, if he is true to his theistic professions, has hope amounting to certitude of life hereafter in which the wrongs, injustices, privations, sacrifices, and sufferings of this life will be recompensed. A comforting doctrine, to be sure, making for gladness, not gloom, but one with which Amiel never deceived himself.

Understandingly and illuminatingly as Mrs. Humphry Ward writes about Amiel, it must, I think, be laid against her that she attempts, while acknowledging his rejection of religious dogma and doctrine, to sugar-coat his unbelief by declaring that his "whole life and thought are steeped in Christianity". There is one sense in which this statement is true. This is that Amiel was brought up in an intensely Christian atmosphere, the emotional influence of which—as I have already said—lingered long after he had intellectually cast aside the religious beliefs that were part and parcel of that atmosphere. In this sense only could Mrs. Humphry Ward's statement be true. Everything clearly shows that the author of the *Journal Intime* did not only abandon the formularies of Christianity; he really abandoned theism itself, as Mr. John Middleton Murry in his essay on Amiel recognises. "What could God be for him?" he asks, and remarks that, "try as he may to give his God substance, the

deity in which Amiel would believe dissolves away into the processes of an indifferent cosmos.

From the material I have assembled here, this is just as we should expect. Amiel knew the transience of human life. He saw man as little more than an incident in the long drama of the planet. And he was keenly conscious how essentially isolated and to himself is every individual in the real crises of his journey through this world. I must be permitted a final quotation from the *Journal*. It is from the closing pages penned some three months before the end of one who had taken to himself the Stoic virtue of "manly resignation to the inevitable". There, when the shadows of mortal illness were falling thickly about him, he wrote: "There are thoughts which brook no confidant; there are griefs which cannot be shared. . . . We dream alone, we suffer alone, we die alone, we inhabit the last resting-place alone."

Charles Southwell

A Preliminary Check List

By VICTOR E. NEUBURG

CHARLES SOUTHWELL (1814-1860) is one of the obscurest figures in the history of 19th century Freethought and Radicalism. His publications are extremely scarce, and the present writer cannot claim to have examined all of them. The following check list is therefore offered tentatively, in the full knowledge that many details are lacking. The list is as complete as investigation over several years has been able to make it, but it is not unlikely that further titles and editions may exist. The bibliographical problems raised by the vast amount of fugitive pamphlet literature published during the last century, are enormous, and some may be intractable.

REFERENCES

- (i) *Our Corner*. Vol. xi. March 1st, 1888. p. 155 *et seq.*
- (ii) *The National Reformer*. Vol. iii. No. 69, September 7th, 1861, p. 2.
- (iii) *The National Secular Society's Almanac for 1870*. p. 38.
- (iv) *The National Secular Society's Almanac for 1881*. pp. 25, 27.
- (v) *A Bibliography of Robert Owen, The Socialist*. Second Edition. National Library of Wales. 1925.
- (vi) *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Writings of George Jacob Holyoake*. By C. W. F. Goss. London: Crowther and Goodman. 1908.

CHARLES SOUTHWELL — A PRELIMINARY CHECK LIST

A. PAMPHLETS

1. *An Essay on Marriage*. London. 1840.
2. (Another edition.) Eastcheap. 1840.
3. *Socialism Made Easy*. London: J. Watson, 1840, p. 16.
4. *Twopennyworth of Truth about Owenism and the Owenites*. London: W. Baker, pr., 1845. p. 12.
5. *Confessions of a Freethinker*. N.D. circa 1845 ?? "Badly printed." This date of issue suggested by George Standing in *Our Corner* (i), also by G. H. Taylor ("A chronology of British Secularism."—THE FREETHINKER, November 13th, 1953) is probably too early by four or five years. See *The Lancashire Beacon*, No. 14 in this list.

6. *An Apology for Atheism: Addressed to Religious Investigators of Every Denomination.* (1846) p. 96. Published by James Watson.
 7. *The Difficulties of Christianity: A Series of Letters to the Rev. Hugh M'Neile, D.D.* ?Date and printer. Reprinted from *The Lancashire Beacon*.
 8. *The Impossibility of Atheism demonstrated: With Hints to Nominal Atheists, in a Letter to the Freethinkers of Great Britain.* p. 24. London: J. Watson (1852).
 9. Another "Fourpenny Wilderness", in which may be found more Nails for the Coffin of Nonsense called Atheism... etc. p. 24. London: J. Watson (1852). Both of these pamphlets (8 and 9) are sharply critical of G. J. Holyoake. See *Goss Bibliography of Holyoake*, p. 86.
 10. *Supernaturalism Exploded, in a Review of the Famous Six Night's Controversy between the Rev. Brewin Grant, Christian, and George Jacob Holyoake, Secularist.* p. 40. London: James Watson (1853).
 11. *A Verbatim Report of a Two Nights' Discussion between Mr. Alexander Jamieson and Mr. Charles Southwell, Representative of the Glasgow Eclectic Institute.* (Glasgow, 7th and 9th November 1854). Conjectural; no particulars of this pamphlet have been traced.
- B. PERIODICALS
12. *The Oracle of Reason: or Philosophy Vindicated.* First issued in November 1841; it was the joint production of Southwell and William Chilton. No. 4, which appeared on November 27th, contained an article "The Jew Book". Southwell was arrested for blasphemy on the same day, and later sentenced to a fine of £100 and a year's imprisonment. *The Oracle of Reason* continued publication and finally ceased with No. 103, but Southwell was not connected with it.
 13. *The Investigator.* A publication commenced by Southwell on his release from prison, in 1843. It was discontinued after seven months. No copies have been traced.
 14. *The Lancashire Beacon.* Commenced in 1849. Published weekly. pp. 8, 23 ?. Nos. Part (? all) of *Confessions of a Freethinker* was serialised in it. A note in No. 14 (p. 112) implies that it was actually being written instalment by instalment. Manchester Reference Library has no copy. A run of numbers 1-23 is in the collection of the present writer.

who will not kneel before God, but only before the woman he loves.

It is a pity that the inevitable conversion is to follow; that in the end, the profligate atheist must find the soul to be the "only important thing"; the great lover recognises an "even greater love"! Thus is the mighty doomed to fall. But there are compensations to be found (by the audience) in a hell peopled by Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde, Lord Byron and, later, a Bishop who mistakes Satan for St. Peter and accuses him of looking and talking like a curate. The first three may not be the equals of their former earthly selves (that would be expecting too much) but they are good company, nevertheless. And Shaw's question regarding Satan—"Where would the Church be if anything serious should happen to him?"—still has point. So, too, has Byron's retort of "rhetoric" to Satan's mumbling about man "left conscious but bereft of purpose".

In short, these two related plays provide plenty of entertainment and a little food for thought. One can forget the occasional babbling and remember that it is man's disbelief that kills Satan. C.McC.

CORRESPONDENCE

OUR 75th BIRTHDAY NUMBER

ON behalf of the Freethinkers of America, I want to send you this belated note of congratulations.

May THE FREETHINKER live long to carry on its important work of mental emancipation.

You will not live long enough "to receive the thankfulness of nations", but you will have the satisfaction of having performed a great public service.

With all good wishes, we are

Sincerely,

JOSEPH LEWIS, President, Freethinkers of America.

The article by Mr. Cutner in your 75th Birthday issue must prove welcome to those like myself, who cannot forget an indebtedness to Chapman Cohen, which must continue down the years.

Fortunately, one's memories of Chapman Cohen are still vivid and one's bookshelves speak for themselves, but the writings of those like Mr. Cutner may prove necessary in the years ahead to remind those coming along of just what a debt independent thought has owed in the past, and no doubt will do in the future, to the work, talent and genius of Chapman Cohen. PETER COTES.

"THE FREETHINKER" DISPLEASES

As you are presumably sincere and honest people you might be interested to know why I simply can't stand a publication like yours. It gives me the impression that your whole philosophy is based on hatred; hatred not only of the Church which, as the Church is a real thing, is reasonable, but of God, which, as he is not, is unreasonable.

You indulge in the childishness of blaming God for the suffering cruelty and ills of the world, which is just as silly as praising him for the nice sunshine and flowers.

No benefit is to be obtained from trying to convince yourselves and others that all Christian priests are wicked; they are wrong—let that be enough. It doesn't shake my atheism to admit that Schweitzer is a good man or that many nuns and, for that matter, Salvation Army people, do much good in helping, comforting, nursing and relieving the sufferings of people. The trouble is, I believe, that your sort of atheist suffers from feelings of inferiority and a suppressed sense of guilt. Why else could you, in "This Believing World", talk of the neo-Mathusians as being "vindicated" because the Church of England Moral Welfare Council now admits that Christians are divided on the morality of contraception? "Vindicated" is a silly word to use in this connection—unless it is being used ironically, which, again, is possible, as one of the nastiest things about THE FREETHINKER is its abiding flavour of bitter sarcasm.

I remember once when I was about sixteen and had only just given up believing in things supernatural, that an atheist pamphlet came into my hands which contained this fragrant little gibe: "Jesus Christ died on the cross and parsons have been living on it ever since!" That seems to be about your level and, upon my soul it is almost enough to drive a decent fair-minded atheist straight into the arms of God!

JAMES OTTAWAY.

[Our correspondent is illogical. How can we "blame God" if we don't believe such an animal exists? We do not attack God; we attack the idea in people's minds that there is a God. Mr. Cutner wishes to reply to other points.—ED.]

THEATRE

Good Company

THE LATEST ADDITION to the English Stage Company's repertory season at the Royal Court Theatre, London, comprises two connected plays by Ronald Duncan, *Don Juan* and *The Death of Satan*—variations on the well-known legendary theme. The production is first rate, taking full advantage of the clever sets; and the acting, particularly that of Keith Michell and Michael Gwynn in the respective title roles, has exactly the right quality.

There is also much to affect the ear, notably Juan's outspoken atheism in the first half of the evening. "Religion," he says, "is nothing but a sense of sin": "Maggots," he suggests, may have "immortal longings", but "they do not make a dogma out of it": "There is no heaven," he cries: "Man has no soul." And when his beloved Dona Ana hopes to attain immortality through loving the immortal, he asks her: "What madness is this?" All this is fine stuff, and Juan is as attractive to the audience as he is to the women he seduces. One cannot fail to admire a man

ISLAM AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

With all due respect to your distinguished contributor, Mr. C. H. Norman, I do not really consider that his contribution to the June 1st issue invalidates my previous estimate of the socially and intellectually reactionary character of modern Islam. No doubt, Islam, like its Western opposite number, Christianity, has produced some brilliant intellectuals, such as the Moorish historian Ibn Khaldun, whom Mr. Norman cites. It is also true that Islam, again like Christianity, has some fine buildings to its credit. However, I submit that the fact—if it is a fact—that Khaldun anticipated Marx, does not prove that Islam is socially progressive, any more than the fact that J. H. Newman is held in some quarters—wrongly, in my opinion—to have anticipated Darwin, proves that Christianity is in the van of contemporary intellectual progress. These are merely, I suggest, the exceptions that prove the rule. As far as Islam is concerned, so widely-read a student of history as Mr. Norman will agree that, since the Mogul empire of Delhi in the 16th and 17th centuries, Islam has not been associated with any first-rate civilisation? In recent centuries, socially it has stood for a decadent feudalism, and intellectually for a sterile scholasticism; and where not influenced by outside forces, it still retains these characteristics. I repeat, there is a Rationalist movement in non-Muslim India, but *not* in Pakistan—or, to my knowledge—in any other Muslim land.

F. A. RIDLEY.

L.D.O.S. IN ACTION

May I draw the attention of all Freethinkers to another attack on the freedom of the individual by the Lord's Day Observance Society. I refer to the little-publicised conviction of six people for promoting a motor-cycle scramble on a Sunday. The result of this conviction, and the rejection by the Queen's Bench Divisional Court of the subsequent appeal, is that motor-cycle sport on Sundays is virtually finished until such time as the antiquated Sunday Observance Acts are repealed.

I am, of course, aware, that this particular sport is of interest only to a minority, but what if, encouraged by their easy success, the L.D.O.S. extend their field of activity? R. D. MARRIOTT.

INTERLINGUE

For the last eight years I have read and written Interlingue almost every day. I have corresponded with people in many different countries in Interlingue and spoken it with Englishmen and foreigners. On May 14th this year our representative in Brazil presented a drama in Interlingue before a select audience. A chess magazine in this same language has been started this year. From Switzerland comes the news that a commercial film is already using Interlingue to advertise its wares. A new complete manual for English students has just been published. Last Easter a man from Vienna called upon me and for an hour we conversed in Interlingue. Were we talking in a project or a language? These few facts show how groundless is Mr. Auld's antithesis, *project and language*. It is, moreover, an old Esperanto propaganda "chestnut".

Interlingue, being based firmly on the international elements in European languages, has thereby a vast potential audience. It will, no doubt, not be so easy for orientals, but no language can be equally simple to all. Do Chinese, who have no accusative themselves, revel in the Esperanto accusative? Mr. Auld writes that in certain respects "Interlingue is infinitely less easy than Esperanto". How does he know? Has he learned Interlingue? I tried both, abandoned Esperanto 1949, and find Interlingue easier to read, to write and to speak.—Con cordial salutations,

Sincerimen vor,

WILFRED E. REEVE,

Secretary, British Interlingue Association.

MALTHUSIANISM

I fully agree with Mr. Reader's article, "Beyond Malthus", but, alas, I ask with becoming humility, which end would these disciples of Malthus prefer: To be driven mad by the increasing rush and struggle in an overcrowded world, as Mr. Reader believes will happen, or to be slowly starved as the world's food supplies fail, or to be overwhelmed by Roman Catholicism, which will inevitably happen if the more sensible part of the world's population cease to multiply whilst the Roman Catholics obey the priests and multiply.

C. F. BAUSE.

CATHOLIC MENTALITY

In *Espero Katolika* (Catholic Hope), April 1956, journal of the International Catholic Union of Esperantists, appeared a short article under the title "Two incredible blasphemies", which contains the following:

"In Geisenfeld (Germany) a book has been published, *The Absolute Laws of Happiness*. The author would have been quartered had he lived in the Middle Ages, for not only does he 'preach' revolution against the state and society; he violently

attacks the Christian religion, in particular the Catholic Church. . . . It is obvious that the writer of the article, poor frustrated soul, deeply regrets the "decadence" of modern times, which does not allow a man to be tortured to death for daring to express his thoughts!"

W. AULD.

PORT-MORTEM JOURNEYS

"WHERE do we go after death?" overlooks the question, "Do we go anywhere after death?"

At a recent seminar held as part of Religious Emphasis Week, as reported in the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, March 2nd, four religious leaders replied to the first question as follows:

Rabbit Alexander Segel, of Temple Emanu-El: "Whatever is in store for us (after death) will be more wonderful than we can imagine."

"The next world is a place the "eye has not seen", a place "God has prepared for us".

The Reverend Daniel Dever, superintendent of Catholic schools: "Every thought, act and deed" on earth will "determine our life hereafter." By doing things to please God, however, we should have no fear of death.

Lieutenant Colonel Ernest F. Kendle, Protestant chaplain of Tripler Army Hospital: "The proper preparation" for death is to accept Christ and be obedient to Him and His principles.

If you do this you will experience only "first death", or the separation of soul from body. Second death is eternal damnation or separation from God entirely.

The Reverend Ronald Lin, Honpa Hongwanji Temple priest: There is no after life since there is no factual knowledge about it. It's anybody's guess and we won't accept others' beliefs and revelations. Therefore, there is no answer whether there is life after death or not." —*The Truth Seeker* (U.S.A.)

FRANKLIN ON PAINE

"We never had a sounder intelligence in this Republic. He was the equal of Washington in making American Liberty possible. Where Washington performed, Paine devised and wrote. The deeds of the one in the field were matched by the other with his pen. I consider Paine our greatest political thinker".—Benjamin Franklin

THE BIBLE HANDBOOK (10th Edition). By G. W. Foote and W. P. Ball. Price 4/6; postage 4d.

GOD AND THE UNIVERSE. Chapman Cohen's criticism of Professors Huxley, Eddington, Jeans and Einstein. Price: Cloth, 4/6; Paper, 2/6 Postage 4d. and 3d. respectively

GRAMMAR OF FREETHOUGHT. An outline of the philosophy of Freethought. By Chapman Cohen. Price 4/6; postage 5d.

ROBERT TAYLOR—THE DEVIL'S CHAPLAIN. By H. Cutner. Price 1/6; postage 3d.

SHAKESPEARE AND OTHER ESSAYS. By G. W. Foote. Price 3/9; postage 4d.

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