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HELL UPON EARTH

IN A HALL packed to bursting, with people sitting on the floor in the aisles, Lord Ritchie-Calder made the presidential address at the Annual General Meeting of the Conservation Society. His address was entitled "Hell upon Earth" and justifiably so. I for one thoroughly agreed with Lord Kennet who addressing the meeting afterwards said, "My heart was in my boots throughout your president's speech". But that was precisely where Lord Ritchie-Calder wanted every heart in that room to be. By giving a most forthright account of what will soon happen in this world if no action is taken, he achieved his purpose, namely to goad the hitherto small group of people concerned about these, the world's greatest problems, into spreading the word, into getting things done.

At the start he stated, "I am not promising hell-fire in the hereafter; I am warning about hell here on earth". He went on to give the frightening facts concerning the world in the future if present trends continue. He showed that within the lifetime of a child born today there will be 15,000 million people to be fed and housed, nearly five times as many as now. "The whole human species would be living in cities of a million-and-over inhabitants. That means 186 times as many as there are in Greater London.

Lord Ritchie-Calder stressed that these and many other equally horrifying statistics which he gave are "predictions". He said that he had given up talking about "predictions" and now talked about "prognosis". The difference is best illustrated by his statement, "We don't have to plan for trends; if they are socially undesirable our duty is to plan away from them". Next, he pointed out how figures are "difficult to grasp" and how one tends to "forget that they refer to men, women and children . . ." "If you have ever seen a dead infant taken from a mother's empty breast, you won't ever forget . . . ever . . . what hunger and famine mean."

He went on to link over-population with pollution, "The world is a community so interdependent, that every mistake we make is exaggerated on a world scale". He pointed to many ways in which the over-eagerness of scientists has already polluted the earth. "You will remember also that in the secret work which produced the bomb the biologists were never consulted. It was the physicist's bomb just bigger and better and taking no account of the genetic effects." He made clear that the disposing of radioactive wastes from atomic stations, peaceful and military, is a highly risky and improperly researched business.

He then mentioned the serious increase of carbon dioxide in our air, which may cause "the mean annual temperature all over the world to increase by 3.6 degrees centigrade in the next 40-50 years". This would in turn cause untold catastrophes, due to melting glaciers and ice-caps. The distribution of rainfall is likely to change causing excess rain in some parts and aridity in some now fertile regions. He continued with more specific examples mentioning the unlined canals in the Indus valley which cause an acre of land to be lost every five minutes, and the unrestrained drift of insecticides and pesticides, which having been used in one place to good cause are moved on by nature. (They have been found in the fauna of Antarctica and must have come from farm states of the Northern Hemisphere.)



Lord Ritchie-Calder.

"We have had the Freedom from Hunger campaign presently we shall need a freedom from thirst campaign . . . yet we are squandering, polluting and destroying water." "Always and everywhere we come back to the problem of population—more people to make more mistakes, more people to be the victims of the mistakes of others, more people to suffer Hell upon Earth." . . . "Pope John called for children to be brought up in human dignity. His successor bans birth-control. There cannot be human dignity without birth-control, because every child beyond the wanted ones means an increase in family indignity. The parent cannot provide. There is not enough to go round. Squalor increases."

Early in his speech Lord Ritchie-Calder had referred to Doxiades "Ecumenopolis—World City—in which, like confluent ulcers, our urban area would ooze into the next". This could be only seventy years away.

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Freethinker

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Editor: David Reynolds

A MILLSTONE FOR CHRISTIANS

FOLLOWING Mr Enoch Powell's recent speech at Eastbourne, the Anglican Council of King's College, London, have withdrawn an invitation to him to explain how he reconciles his views on race relations with Christianity. This is a pity since it would make very interesting listening. The official excuse given by the Council was stated by Mr Richard Titchen, a twenty-two-year-old second year theology student, who was one of two out of fifteen to vote against withdrawing Mr Powell's invitation. He said, "The meeting decided to withdraw the invitation because the council could not, as a body, guarantee Mr Powell's safety or that of the congregation. They also did not want him to use the church as a political platform".

An interesting point is that Mr Powell was originally invited before he had made either of his two major speeches on race relations. Since those speeches, almost anything Mr Powell says anywhere seems to be reported in the press. Perhaps there was a fear that the glib member for Wolverhampton South West would have come up with a good argument linking Christianity and his euphemistic "views on race relations". That would have been embarrassing for Anglicans everywhere, particularly those who provided him with a platform.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

National Secular Society. Details of membership and inquiries regarding bequests and secular funeral services may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High Street, London, SE1. Telephone 01-407 2717. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to the NSS.

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

OUTDOOR

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

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

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

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

INDOORS

Brighton and Hove Humanist Group: Regency House, Oriental Place, Brighton: Sunday, December 1, 5.30 p.m.: "A topical subject viewed from a Humanist angle", FRANK MARYFIELD (Chairman, Southampton Humanist Group).

Cardiff Humanist Group: Glamorgan County Council Staff Club, Westgate Street, Cardiff: Wednesday, December 4, 7.45 p.m.: "The Status of Women", ELAINE MORGAN (TV Dramatist and Playwright).

Leicester Secular Society: 75 Humberstone Gate: Sunday, December 1, 6.30 p.m.: "Sense and Nonsense about Space Flight", F. J. BEER (Leicester Astronomical Society).

London Young Humanists: 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London, W8: Sunday, December 1, 7 p.m.: "Bradlaugh and Besant: Blasphemy, Birth Control and Other Battles", NIGEL SINNOTT.

South Place Ethical Society: Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1: Sunday, December 1, 11 a.m.: "Is Science Superstitious?", Dr JOHN LEWIS. Admission free. Tuesday, December 3, 6.45 p.m.: Discussion (December's subject: Israel Today) "Politics and Way of Life", MAURICE ORBACH, MP. Admission 2s (including refreshments). Members free.

The affair does make one wonder, however, just what equation Mr Powell would have made. We can set aside strictly biblical analogies for none seem to fit. There is a tenuous similarity between Michael X and Moses but that would be making out that the coloured population were destined to triumph in the end—not Powell material at all.

Perhaps he would argue that if God had meant all humans to live together he would have made them all the same colour. But again one would presume that, despite the nearsightedness which he has displayed increasingly in recent months, he would have a less naive answer than that. It is more likely that his line would be that Christianity demands us to behave in a Christian manner and that we cannot do this if there are too many coloured people in our country and he then would go on to quote his now familiar misleading figures, and examples of 'decent folk' being upset by their coloured neighbours.

Whatever his argument is or could be, as a Christian he should be reminded of what is possibly the most well-known and valid piece of advice the Bible has to offer, "Love thy neighbour as thyself" (Leviticus 19:18!). No special provision is made for neighbours whose skins are of different colours.

Personally I hope Powell will never be able to establish a convincing link between his policies and Christianity. For, though this would cause the general regard for religion to sink even lower and we would thus be that much nearer establishing a secular society, the Christian church would have been dealt a blow beneath the belt. Although we want to win the fight, it is much more satisfying to win it fairly.

RITUAL SLAUGHTER

THE COUNCIL of Justice to Animals and Humane Slaughter Association have produced a concise and convincing pamphlet to support the bill to be introduced into parliament by Mr David Ensor, MP, with regard to the Jewish method of slaughter. The case is best put in the following extract:

"For many years those in authority in slaughterhouses, and in a position to give an expert opinion, have been convinced that to cut the throat of a fully conscious animal is an act of cruelty.

"Their expressed views, supported by public opinion, resulted in the placing of the Slaughter of Animals Act, 1933, on the Statute Book. By the passing of this Act (now embodied in the 1958 Act) all animals killed in slaughterhouses for Gentile consumption must be humanely stunned before their throats are cut.

"The provisions of this Act exempt more than 200,000 animals slaughtered each year for Jewish consumption. The Jewish method of cutting the throat of an animal from ear to ear while it is fully conscious and allowing it to die from loss of blood has been condemned by veterinary surgeons, doctors and slaughtermen on account of its cruelty."

There is also an exemption applying to animals slaughtered for Muslim consumption, but Muslims have generally been convinced of the cruelty involved and have agreed to render animals unconscious before slaughtering them.

Having proved that these practices really are cruel, despite Jewish arguments to the contrary the author points out that Jews only consume the forequarters and that the hindquarters are sold to Gentiles. The Government have

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A STUDY IN INDIAN HUMANISM

F. A. RIDLEY

THE HINDU practice, or discipline of Yoga has unfortunately acquired a rather dubious deputation in rationalistic circles of the West. The name recalls associations with such dubious occult cults as Theosophy, and conjures up a mental picture of a long-robed Oriental quack giving "spiritual" instructions (at a suitable remuneration!) to wealthy old women of the leisured classes. Altogether, one of the more doubtful exhibits of Oriental culture to be imported into the West.

An Indian Humanist

The above however, merely represents one aspect, perhaps even a caricature of what is according to its most recent exponent, a profound mental and physical culture. A system indeed, that represents a valid Oriental demonstration of the classical injunction about "a healthy mind in a healthy body"—*Mens sana in corpore sana*. In his recently published booklet *Yoga?*¹ Mr Vidya Sagar Anand, the rising young Indian publicist; an earlier work of whom I have reviewed before in these columns; presents Yoga under the purely rational guise of a system of applied psychology: of in fact, a philosophy—an Oriental discipline of self-control. One might say, an aspect of Indian humanism. Mr Anand, who has already several books to his credit upon the interaction of East and Western culture, is evidently aware of the dubious reputation that has accrued to Yoga as the result of the activities of some of its self-styled exponents. Such people, he admits, do actually exist; but are in no way representative. One could say that they live *on* the movement and not *for* it! As such, our author condemns them severely. Upon this point indeed, he expresses himself forcefully: "As when one learns to swim, one needs an instructor. So it is always helpful to have somebody to initiate one in Yoga. But this initiation should not be confused with the methods which have become household words in the West. The 'salesmen of Yoga', promising heaven through their institutions and schools, in fact look upon the helplessness of their fellow beings as the source of their livelihood. These men, with their institutions and 'publicity wizards', soar up in the imagination of the people and are able to attract a lot of attention. They disappear as quickly as they appear" (pp. 8-9). Or in other words, *corruptio optima, pessima!* (The corruption of the best becomes the worst.)

What is Yoga?

What then is Yoga in reality? Since it is by no means the same as its Western image. Basically, as our author goes on to demonstrate, it represents a means of self-control. Expressing himself in picturesque analogy: "A true Yogi lives his life in the world, like the rays of the sun, so to speak, shedding lustre and life wherever he goes, having no vested interest, keeping himself at the disposal of truth, in the realisation of his own self, looking at nothing from the stand point of momentary gain or to gratify his own ego or impulse. To a Yogi, a mind full of impulse is like a damp match, a mind free of impulse is like a dry match. While the first is struck in vain, the latter ignites quickly" (p. 9). But, urges our author, it is precisely this kind of self-control that human civilisation in its present phase so desperately needs. Particularly perhaps, in the contemporary western world.

Wanted! A Moral Revolution

It is today, almost a commonplace amongst rational

thinkers that the supreme paradox of our epoch: one indeed, that is unique to our epoch; is currently represented by the startling disparity between the respective speeds of its moral and technical progress. It is a truism to state that the incredibly rapid advances made in technique during this present century; culminating in the suicidal potentiality of a nuclear war; have far out-stripped mankind's still tardy moral progress. Such is indeed, the precise dilemma that nowadays threatens both humanity and civilisation with destruction. Wanted! A new ethical code. Since perhaps the major tragedy of our time lies in the increasingly obvious fact, that, while the old religiously-inspired morality, has largely collapsed, along with the out-moded world view upon which it was originally based; a new higher secular morality based upon the sounder foundations implied in a scientific technique, has not so far been able to succeed the old morality at all adequately.

An Indian Contribution

It is here that our Indian author advances the claims of Yoga as a rational system of moral self-control. "Animals," he notes, "have to be subservient to their surroundings . . . while man by controlling his impulses is almost master of nature." Translating abstract speculation into the current language of concrete reality, by the practice of self-control and moral awareness as recommended by the philosophy of Yoga; if mankind in the abstract can control nature, mankind in the concrete may also hope to control, say, the nuclear menaces. Our author urges strongly that in this moral revolution; one is as vitally necessary as is its technical counter-part, if humanity is to survive and to escape destruction; the ancient Indian discipline of Yoga, properly understood and freed from western distortion will avail much. Be that as it may, Mr V. S. Anand's eloquent and persuasive advocacy certainly deserves an attentive hearing among the liberally minded thinkers of both East and West.

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¹ Phoenix Press, London. 3s.

FREE WILL

G. L. SIMONS

IF A MAN exercises his free will and chooses wrongly he is to be condemned and if rightly to be praised. Such is the traditional view—a view essential to the belief in the salvation of the soul and to the idea that criminals and childish miscreants can be justly punished. God, we are told, deals in eternal punishment: magistrates are more limited, but the principle is the same. In instances where free will is lacking, e.g. in cases of established insanity, the idea of “extenuation” is introduced, and the person is said to be “not responsible”. Thus a preliminary definition of free will may be “that entity which, in certain circumstances, justifies the infliction of punishment”.

If it can be shown that there is no such entity then a Christianity that depends upon the concepts of sin, atonement, salvation, heaven, hell, etc., must collapse, and the traditional penal attitude to delinquency is similarly undermined. It is the purpose of this article to show that it is impossible to give a meaningful definition of freewill which goes any way to satisfying the theologian or traditional moralist.

Free will is significant only in so far as it is intimately associated with the concept of *choice*: a free will which never manifests itself in an act of choosing is necessarily an empty concept. Let us examine the nature of choice.

Any individual act of choosing—whether expressing a moral inclination or some other preference—is an event, and as such is either *caused* or *uncaused*. This is true since a state and its negation constitute a Universal Class and exhaust the logical possibilities, providing the state operates in the correct logical field, e.g. it is nonsense to say that gravity is either green or not, but not nonsense to say that every man is either six feet tall or not. It is clear that the idea of cause is applicable to events, i.e. it can operate in the logical field of which they are members. Hence every event is either caused or uncaused. Before considering these two possibilities in more detail, a word must be said about the concept of causation.

Historically, causes and effects were regarded as discrete entities, in some sense self-contained and exerting influence at a distance. Today this approach is convenient in some sciences, e.g. sociology and anthropology, but less so in others, e.g. physics and chemistry. In nuclear physics, for instance, the concept of “predictable change” is more useful than the idea of cause and effect. With change so regarded, the causes and effects are infinitesimal and run into each other—which is why differential equations are so useful in representing physical change. For this reason it may be more accurate to say that all events are “predictable in principle” or “unpredictable in principle”, rather than to say “caused” or “uncaused”. But the decision is only linguistic and in no sense affects the logic of the argument.

Let us first consider *caused* events. To say of an event that it is caused is to say that it is determined by earlier circumstances, that it owes its nature to what has already gone before. This is the scientific approach and it leads to the notion of an infinite regress. According to this view there are no miracles or spontaneity: everything happens because it must, because matter/energy has properties that define natural law, and because such law governs the course of physical change.

Thus if human choice is a caused event there is no sense in which a person can be justly praised or blamed for his actions. Any choice he may make is inevitable in the personal and environmental circumstances: for the choice to have been different the circumstances would have had to have been different. Clearly such a view makes nonsense of the ideas of religious salvation and punitive penology.

Consider the other possibility—that human choice is an *uncaused* event. This involves the notion that a choice is made *for no reason*; for if we give a *reason* for a choice then we are introducing a causal factor. If a choice happens for no reason, then it is quite independent of moral consideration, assessment of consequences, personal knowledge, religious belief, upbringing, education, etc. And in such a case the person can have no control whatever over his actions, simply because the notion of *control* is a causal concept. Hence in this case too there is no crumb of comfort for the theologian or traditional moralist.

Whether human choice is regarded as a caused event or an uncaused event we cannot derive a meaning for free will which legitimises punishment, either heavenly or earthly. This is not to say that punishment cannot be justified in another way, for example as a causal entity discouraging bad behaviour. But if it is to be justified in such terms then it must be regarded as an unfortunate necessity, to be dispensed with as soon as we have discovered ways of achieving good behaviour without having to inflict suffering. According to this approach the infliction of pain as a reward for misdemeanour, as a means of making a man “pay his debt to society”, can never be justified.

Some people are confused as to how a person can choose without exercising free will. A couple of examples may help. First a crude one: if we roll a ball down a hill there are in theory an infinite number of paths it may take. The *actual* path taken is determined by the laws of dynamics and the characteristics of ball and hill. There is a sense in which the many paths were possible: the ball “chose” the one it had to, its “personal” and environmental circumstances being what they were.

The second example is the behaviour of a digital computer. In any complex computer programme there are a number of “jump” instructions which enable the computer to obey programmed instructions out of sequence: it is this convention that gives the computer its “decision” facility. The jump instructions are usually “conditional”, i.e. the jump (to another place in the programme) only takes place if certain conditions are satisfied. This means that when the computer reaches a jump instruction it “decides” what action to take on the basis of the value of certain parameters. The computer operator often does not know what decision the computer is about to make. Clearly in these circumstances the computer *chooses*, but few people would suggest that it had free will.

If the objection is raised that the computer has already been programmed and so its behaviour is in some sense determined by its programmer, it is sufficient to observe that the human brain has also been programmed by natural selection and responds according to sensory data: we have eyes, ears, etc., the computer has paper tape—they serve the same function, i.e. to supply data to an organised entity capable of purposeful activity.

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IN COMMEMORATION OF CHARLES BRADLAUGH

MARTIN PAGE

FREETHINKER AND DEMOCRAT

"WHEN, in September 1892, twenty months after his death, a gathering was held in his memory, the enthusiasm was as strong, the throng as dense, the tributes as warm, the sympathy as keen, as on the day he was struck down." Thus wrote one great freethinker of another: the words are those of J. M. Robertson, writing about his departed chief, Charles Bradlaugh (1833-1891), whose memory he cherished and whose reputation he defended till his dying day. And the enthusiasm and devotion that Robertson so eloquently described were recaptured last Sunday (November 17, 1968), when men—and women—from all over England flocked to Northampton to commemorate the centenary of Charles Bradlaugh's first election contest in that historic town.

They came, they saw, they conquered. Shortly before noon a coach-load of members and friends of the National Secular Society at Northampton. Out they came, sporting, to a man, the white, green and mauve of Bradlaugh's electioneering colours; and they made straight for the Central Library in Abington Street where a Commemorative Exhibition had been mounted jointly by the NSS and the Northampton Public Libraries Committee. And what an Exhibition! The visitor was immediately struck by the profusion of the material on display, the evident artistry of its lay-out and the exceptional preserved quality of most of the exhibits. There were 166 items in all: photographs, posters, paintings, poems, cartoons, engravings, illustrations, articles, and personal effects of Charles Bradlaugh (such as walking sticks, a sword and scabbard and a "Book of Common Prayer"). Immense care and skill had obviously been devoted to the layout of the Exhibition, which comprised ten sections in the following sequence: "The 1868 Election", "The 1874 Elections", "The 1874 Riots", "Election Success", "The Oath Controversy", "In Memoriam", "The Statue", "Bradlaugh Cartoons", "Portraits of Bradlaugh" and "Gifts from India". Much credit must go to Mr J. B. Stafford, the Local History Librarian.

After a brief relapse into the twentieth century for lunch, Bradlaugh's men marched on the Guildhall, where they joined an already substantial audience, waiting, with growing excitement, for the unrolling of a great drama. As the clock struck three, seven men and one woman—all wearing the white, green and mauve—climbed on to the platform, to tumultuous applause. What was this, a meeting of a people's tribunal during some latter-day French Revolution? Not exactly; but distinguished speakers and music-lovers had come to honour the memory of a man who enjoyed the confidence of the people in a way that few British statesmen did in the nineteenth century.

After a few words of welcome from our worthy Chairman, Councillor R. P. Dilleigh, we were introduced to our first speaker, Mr Stephen Jakobi, a prominent Liberal lawyer. Mr Jakobi stressed that Bradlaugh was a Radical Liberal all his life, a man who bravely opposed the peerage system, who postulated the equal rights of labour and capital, and who, in his concern for the underdog abroad as well as at home, was known as the Member for India. He was, in short, a great Victorian. Our next speaker, the Rev Lloyd Jenkins, began by quoting Bonhoeffer and Emerson on integrity and applying their observations to Bradlaugh. He recognised that Bradlaugh, a sturdy atheist, opposed the Church, and he candidly admitted that the

Church was wanting in charity and understanding and lacked true courage in the face of the nineteenth-century unbelief exemplified by Bradlaugh. But to our speaker Bradlaugh was a man who could not be claimed exclusively by any one group: he was a far greater man than that.

Our third speaker was Mr David Tribe, President of the NSS. Mr Tribe reminded us that Bradlaugh was elected for Northampton because of the nonconformist vote, and to bring home to his audience the horror with which respectable Victorian society regarded Bradlaugh, he declared that CB was rather like Tariq Ali, John Calder and Margaret Knight rolled into one! Then, drawing on his experience and evident skill as an actor, David gave a thrilling recital of some of Bradlaugh's speeches to the electors of Northampton—speeches that powerfully revealed Bradlaugh as a master orator, as eloquence incarnate.

There following a musical interlude appropriate to the occasion: Derek Wilkes gave a suitably vigorous rendering of Bradlaugh's electioneering song, of W. E. Henley's *Invictus*, and, finally, of *None Shall Sleep* (in Italian) from *Turandot*, with excellent piano accompaniment from Elizabeth Fraser.

We then heard two Labour MPs. First was Mr Reginald Paget, the present member for Northampton. He spoke to us of Bradlaugh as a lover of the English country, and he thought that Bradlaugh's ideas were too advanced for Gladstone. Last, but by no means least, was Mr Michael Foot, who might be said to stand in roughly the same relationship to Mr Wilson as Bradlaugh did to Gladstone. Mr Foot, in his characteristically eloquent tribute to the Titan from Northampton, declared that Bradlaugh and contemporaries like Gladstone and Lord Randolph Churchill (who called the voters of Northampton "the scum of the earth") were a vanished race of giants. Bradlaugh's achievements and his range of interests, said Mr Foot, were immense: he opposed capital punishment, the use of the lash in the army, the blasphemy laws, and the House of Lords; he supported Women's Suffrage, Republicanism, the Sunday opening of museums, Garibaldi, Irish freedom, the right of self-determination of peoples, the right to affirm, the establishment of free expression by tongue and by pen, and the necessity of birth-control. Bradlaugh managed to split three political parties—an incredible achievement for one man—but he remained one of the greatest Englishmen who ever lived to sustain our freedom, and the epoch of his Parliamentary struggles was probably the greatest epoch in English Parliamentary history.

The meeting was closed with ecstatic applause; but not before we had been reminded of Bradlaugh's debt to the electors of Northampton and of Northampton's undying debt to Bradlaugh. There were indeed moments during this highly successful meeting (marked by enthusiasm, eloquence and candour) when, in our mind's eye, we saw the tumultuous, swirling crowds of artisans and, towering above them, the mighty man with the mighty force, and above him, the sky irradiated with white, green and mauve. It was not only a glorious moment in the great history of British freethought: it was also a moment endowed with historical significance for democrats everywhere.

READ IN FOREIGN PAPERS

OTTO WOLFGANG

La Ragione, Rome

THE October issue of this well-presented Italian freethought magazine reports that the film *Galileo*, recently presented at the International Film Exhibition of Venice, is in danger of being maimed by the censor; especially the scene of Giordano Bruno being burnt on the stake is declared as "too strong" to be shown to teenagers.

Giordano Bruno (1548-1600), a Dominican monk, fell out with his Church, was condemned of heresy and had to flee. In Geneva, Calvinist suspicion of his scepticism drove him to Paris where the orthodox Aristotelians forced him to withdraw to Leipzig. His relatively most undisturbed years he had in London (1583-85). In Paris, he wrote in 1582 the satirical comedy *Il Candelaio* in which he ridicules several classes and professions. In Germany, he was excommunicated by the Lutherans (1587) and eventually accepted a personal invitation to Venice by the Venician nobleman Giovanni Mocenigo who later denounced his guest to the Inquisition. Eight years he was kept in prison and, still refusing to recant, burnt alive on the Campo dei Fiori, February 17, 1600.

He had rejected the doctrines of transubstantiation and of the immaculate conception of Mary but developed the idea of the "Monads" which influenced Spinoza, Descartes and others and was developed, in particular, by the German philosopher Leibniz.

At the time of writing, his play is being staged at the Teatro Quirino in Rome and members of the Italian Free-thought Society have been offered tickets at half price. The Church remains very quiet but the reactionary press is angry. *Giornale d'Italia* thought the play had better been kept hidden in the libraries, and *Momento-Sera* made the pun: "A candlestick (*Candelaio*) which essentially is one single *bugia* (which has the meaning of 'candleholder' and 'big lie')".

The same issue carries *inter alia* a report on a visit to the anti-religious Museum of Leningrad and an interesting Letter to the Editor refuting the notion that by Edict of Milan Constantine in 313 made Christianity the State religion.

It will be remembered that the year before, in the battle of the Pons Mulvius (Ponte Milvio sul Tevere) outside Rome, Constantine routed his opponent Maxentius. Two Christian propagandists, Eusebius and Lactantius, spread the story that prior to the battle the Emperor had the vision of the Cross with the explanation *In hoc signo vinces* (In this sign you shall conquer) and that he then carried a purple banner (labarum) bearing the monogram XP (Greek initials for Christos). The famous Edict of Milan, giving civil rights and toleration to Christians throughout the empire—the writer claims—in fact never existed. Constantine never became a Christian himself and in his Triumphal Arc, erected in 315, there is no trace of a cross nor the Christos monogram but only the traditional Roman deities: Helios, the "Invincible Sun", who gracefully permitted the Emperor to win the day. Eusebius, a courtier who wrote the *Life of Constantine*, does not mention the Edict of Milan, but he put the Emperor on the same footing as the Apostles themselves, despite the fact that Constantine had his eldest son, Crispos, poisoned and his wife, Fausta, strangled in a boiling bath.

Finally, the writer draws attention to the sepulchre of the famous gens Julia where a mosaic from the time in question shows the solar chariot of Helios with Christ as the driver.

The paper also reports that the Polish director Kidawa in a film called *The Righteous* wants to give documentary evidence of assistance rendered to Jews during the Nazi occupation of Poland. This, he declared, became a duty owing to the malicious aspersions spread by 'Zionist' and other Western circles hostile to the People's Republic of Poland.

Neue Welt, Vienna, October

At the end of June the Polish authorities sent several lorries to the Jewish Institute of History to carry off certain files and documents because photocopies of incriminating material had been sent to Israel. Two years ago, General Mieczyslaw Moczar, Chief of Security Police, gave orders to "doctor" files from the time of the German occupation and Polish collaboration in crimes against Jews.

In the middle of July, a widow in Merano (South Tyrol) gave a shopkeeper 50 cakes of soap which, she said, she had found in her cellar. Italian customers noticed the imprint RIF (Reich Fat Industry) and the number 0081 of a certain Polish soap factory where the fat from Jewish corpses was made into household soap. Human skin from their Jewish victims was used for lampshades and female hair for felt boots.

Because of religious stupidity, the Jerusalem University Clinic has to have eight revolving doors installed—one at each floor at a cost of Isr. £ 10,000 a piece—because of the dissecting of corpses in its pathological department. Passages of the Bible (Lev. 21 : 1-4 and Num. 19 : 14) declare that a corpse in a "tent" renders anybody in it unclean, in particular members of the former sacerdotal clan (now bearing names such as Cohn, Collins, Kahn, etc.). The Talmud teaching equals the term tent (*ohèl*) to any dwelling place today! After strenuous deliberations it was decided that revolving doors are open and shut at the same time, so this stragem will resolve an old quarrel how to accommodate ancient superstition with modern requirements.

In Prague the student Milan Kadlec, 21, was killed by Russian soldiers. His parents, devout Catholics, had him brought to the Parish Church for a requiem mass and funeral, attended by his colleagues from the Young Pioneers. Emil Zatopek, the famous sports hero of Czechoslovakia and now a Colonel in the Army, declared: "I remember how eagerly we awaited the liberation by the Red Army during the last War and the jubilant reception when at last they came. However, now we'll hate them for another one hundred years!"

Información Española, July 15, 1968

In Madrid a conference of the International Council of Catholic Young Workers convened to discuss the mounting tension between the Permanent Commission of the Spanish Episcopate and the Spanish section of the Council, JOC (Juventudes Obreras Católicas) caused by the insistence of the Church to force the adoption of certain restrictive rules thus limiting the freedom of policy of the JOC. The urban sections of the movement want to preserve a certain autonomy and freedom to enter into social compromise,

(Continued on page 384)

BOOK REVIEW

DAMIEN DOWNING

THE SOCIOLOGY OF MARX, Andre Lefebvre (Allen Lane, 36s). MARX as an eponymous writer has come to be prostituted in recent years—the term Marxian is assumed for their oligarchic radicalism by rebellious students, employed to explain the USSR by the mass media, regarded ultimately as a political system in the present world context. Anyone's basic precepts in respect of Karl Marx's influence are simply that he failed to predict the sequence of events in world history, and that application of his philosophy in Russia has proved impracticable. All of these are assumptions which fail to appreciate both the true nature of Marxism and its historical significance.

The time, therefore, is ripe for a reappraisal, one which will elicit the relevance of the Marxian dialectic, and simultaneously place it in relation to its antecedents and its consequences.

Within its limitations André Lefebvre's book achieves this well. Its especial validity as a reinterpretation lies in its considering Marxism not as an explanation of the *status quo* at his time, for Marx's approach was far broader, but as a set of dialectical tools for analysis of a society—and the accent, of course is on sociology. In these terms though, the crux of the book is in the last chapter—Political Sociology: Theory of the State—for which the previous stand as little more than preparation, being consideration of the grammar and syntax of Marxian thought, with which, one assumes, the larger section of this book's readers will be already conversant. These chapters, indeed, are written as though by a dogmatic Marxist, and it is not until the final chapter that Lefebvre presumes to criticise. When he does, it is almost entirely Marx's writings in attack on the Hegelian system that are considered—which is to say, political theory rather than sociology. It is apparently the author's hope that a sociological viewpoint is self-evident throughout. (The very assumption of this viewpoint results, of course, in frank lacunae in coverage, though this is to be expected.)

Despite these faults though, the book does succeed in demonstrating that Marxian ideas with respect to the inter-relationships between ideology and state, state and society, and particularly, his concept of praxis, not only were superbly true in their time, but are still thoroughly relevant today.

One's secondary hope, for a valid assessment of Marx's historical position, his relationship to those writers on whose work he drew and to those whose work he influenced, is far less fulfilled. The Hegel-Marx relationship is considered frequently and competently, but this only indirectly, as the author reviews Marx's own theory of state. His debt to Adam Smith, to the French theorists of the time and to others is ignored. Clearly this is not a *sine qua non* for a book with the title and aims of this one, but the historical, contextual approach is invaluable in giving depth to understanding of such concepts as praxis, the commodity, and so on, and its lack is strongly felt. Only cursory reference, moreover, is given to malinterpretation and utilisation of Marxian ideas by his followers—surely an essential to consideration of Marx in a contemporary context.

It is (unexpectedly!) interesting to consider how this book is written. One was startled to observe that the author seems (sub-consciously?) to have adopted in parts the mosaic approach, which is accoladed and employed to the full by Marshall McLuhan in *Gutenberg Galaxy*. This consists in considering, more or less at random, quantumised fractions of the subject matter, without reference to any pattern of development, the overall effect being somewhat as if the author had jotted down notes over a period of time, and expanded them individually. This book *does* have a morphology, but a mosaic structure is tended towards within individual chapters. For this and other reasons it appears as an intellectualist writing; it is not a potential textbook. One cannot but lament that all philosophical writings are not as lucid and superbly planned as Teilhard de Chardin's *Phenomenon of Man*.

But these are trivial points, and much of the book's pure literary style may be attributable to translation. In essence, this is a book which achieves its—albeit circumscribed—aims well, and transfers considerable information in the process, occasionally even surprising us with insight into Marx as a personality. Its limitation, of reference to sociology, is at the same time largely its validity, in that it proposes a single facet of Marx's extensive writings which may be regarded as manifesting the relevance of Marx to contemporary problems. Otherwise, one might be inclined to condemn it out of hand as of academic interest only.

WANTED: one copy *The Man From The Ministry* by M. Bingham. Please write: F. Westwood, 9 Cheviot Close, Chadderton, Lancs.

TIME FOR TRIBUTE TO

JOSEPH McCABE

BOLDER LANDRY

ONE HUNDRED AND ONE years ago on November 11, one of the greatest minds that ever lived was born in England—Joseph McCabe. Once again in Los Angeles a group of Mr McCabe's admirers met to honour one of the greatest brains that ever fought the Church with tongue and pen. Like Tom Paine and Robert Ingersoll, Joseph McCabe was a man without a price on his pen. He spoke the truth and the truth prevailed in spite of religious coercion, lies, intrigues and character assassination.

Joseph McCabe, born November 11, 1867, was the titan of biblical as well as historical scholars. He was master of nearly twenty-two languages and author of some three hundred books, none of which were ever attacked by any scholar living or dead. "Gentleman, just as there exists a statue of Tom Paine in Thetford, so ought there to exist one, some day of Joseph McCabe in Manchester", exclaimed one of his greatest followers in southern California. Much of the dinner talk centred around England's great "peddler of culture" as McCabe liked to call himself.

Priest, monk, professor of philosophy, author, father of four children, traveller, lecturer, scholar, linguist, Mr McCabe, one of the most prolific opponents of the Roman Catholic Church, was a loner in life; but in death he is not alone—his immortality lives on. He fought for intellectual honesty ever keeping under his fiery pen, the hope of freeing the millions of peasants who still linger under the yoke of Christianity. Here is an Englishman whose memory should be honoured as one of England's greatest scholar of scholars.

HELL UPON EARTH (Continued from front page)

The President of the Conservation Society finished by saying, "Hell is a city much like Ecumenopolis. In World City there can be no grace, nor graciousness in living, no beauty except in cosmetics, no birds singing except on tapes from the BBC sound archives, no human relationships except those of the discotheque, no uplift except in the elevator to the fifteenth storey. My concern is to conserve the human spirit not from the Hell hereafter but Hell upon Earth.

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OBITUARY

MR DAVID DAVIES who died recently in hospital was a well-known personality in Llanefydd (Denbigh) district. During the first World War he served a nine-month prison sentence for refusing to join the Army, and this was followed by a further deprivation of liberty, while under Government direction he helped to dig reservoirs in South Wales.

Socialist, humanist and pacifist, Mr Davies was a long-standing member of the National Secular Society and FREETHINKER reader. He was a popular and respected man, and there was a large gathering at Colwyn Bay Crematorium where the committal ceremony was conducted by Mr William Collins, Vice-President of the NSS.

Mr Davies was a bachelor, and is survived by his sister, nephews and nieces, to whom we express our sympathy.

LETTERS

Where not to draw a line

BOB TINDALL'S letter (November 16) is confusing. Having 'thrown off Victorian prudery' he can stomach an occasional saucy joke (and even the word 'bloody'), yet he is still not happy about references to sex.

If 'bloody' is no longer a magic word for him, why is 'fuck' still magic? It is not the existence of the act itself that he objects to; if it is called 'sexual intercourse' he can probably stomach it.

Similarly, Bob is horrified at the idea of a film of sexual intercourse even as 'an instructive documentary'. Why do some people object to factual education? Who has the obsession about sex, those who still want to keep it a secret, or those who talk about it openly as if it were a normal part of human behaviour?

It is sad that Mr R. J. Turner, after 60 years of reading the FREETHINKER, can be so emotional on this subject, and so socially unaware as to call abortion, homosexuality, and the publishing of 'dirty books' (*Ulysses?*) 'every species of delinquency'.

An obsessive anxiety about sex is of course the result of that very secrecy which Bobs seems to half-support. People will harp on sex and giggle at 'bawdy jokes' if they are conditioned to think of it as mysterious, guilty and dirty. It is not.

One of the tasks of the FREETHINKER, surely, is to present the facts factually, hair and all. What is the point of concealing the truth?

MAURICE HILL.

Holy Mess

IN THE 17th century, Pope Paul V declared Galileo a heretic and Urban VIII had him imprisoned because he declared that the earth went round the sun. This was against the law of nature and therefore against the laws of God. Now Pope Paul VI tells us that sexual intercourse for purposes other than producing life is against the laws of nature and therefore against the laws of God. This from an ignorant celibate, only half-human since he has no experience of the part played in life by sexual love. As the 17th century Popes were ignorant of astronomy, so Paul VI is ignorant of the normal experience of the great majority of mankind. He will find he has made a mistake as his predecessors did.

J. W. NIXON.

"isms"

I WISH more consideration was shown in the various "isms" that are set before the readers of the FREETHINKER. Atheists call readers to action without seeming to be aware that a personal belief has become an ideological belief. They step from a personal "ism" to an ideological "ism" as if it was an inevitable and logical step. Surely, it is not being freethoughtful to be unaware of the various ideological assumptions that underlie 'movements' advocating social action.

The basis for a commitment to fight for an "ism" needs to be constantly clarified, and the relative position about who or what is being fought and the method of fighting made plain. The objectives of ideological movements are apt to get distorted in the social struggle. The exercise of freethought may serve as both a prevention and a remedy for the distorted image of "isms".

To be convinced by evidence can be a painful experience. There is a constant test for personal discovery in the process of believing that any particular social reform would in fact be a change for the good and worth fighting for.

It may be that just as belief in the supernatural is surviving despite religious ideology, so disbelief in the supernatural may find itself surviving despite the ideological assumptions of non-religious "isms".

It is evident that the FREETHINKER also has a struggle to be what its title claims it to be.

CHARLES BYASS.

RITUAL SLAUGHTER (Continued from page 378)

turned down appeals to have the hindquarters marked. Thus Gentiles unwittingly finance the Jewish method of slaughter which quite apart from the cruelty involved is more expensive.

The Jewish ritual arises from their being forbidden to eat meat containing blood. However, it is impossible to

drain a carcass of blood completely and figures are given which show that in fact if anything the Jewish method drains less blood from the carcass than the more humane Gentile method. "Therefore if Orthodox Jews were to keep strictly to the Commandment not to eat blood they would not consume meat."

In giving publicity to the need for this reform in the law, the Council is at pains to convey that they are in no way motivated by "any anti-Jewish sentiment". "If we must kill for food we have a duty to ensure that the animal suffers neither in the killing nor in the preparation for slaughter. There is no racial prejudice in that."

Nor is there any racial prejudice in declaring once more that measurable suffering is still caused by faith, itself by definition an irrationality. In the building of a predominantly secular society, the Jewish religion must be made to give way just like all the others.

FREE WILL (Continued from page 380)

The conclusion is that free will, conceived in the traditional religious and moral sense, is meaningless and cannot be invoked to justify punishment. There is no heaven or hell, and if man is to be saved he will be saved on earth. Nor can the punishment of wrongdoers on earth be justified, whether the wrongdoers are Nazi criminals or juvenile delinquents, unless it can be shown that such punishment, although regrettable, will deter the persons concerned and others from further anti-social acts. And such acts and the pain of the punishment inflicted must always be weighed against each other. The onus must always be on the person who would punish, to justify his claim that such an approach will improve society. Pain is the evil, and it is no less evil when it is inflicted righteously.

READ IN FOREIGN PAPERS (Continued from page 382)

and the International Council has threatened to withdraw its recognition of the JOC as a Catholic member organisation.

The Civil Governor of the province of Bilbao has declared such churches out of bounds as dare read Mass for Xavier Etchevarrieta, a youth who on June 7 had been killed by the police. At various instances armed police and Guardia Civil have already blocked the entrances to churches in Bilbao, San Sebastian and Pampelona and fifty persons were arrested. It may be of interest to add that, according to the Spanish National Tourist Office, there was a 24.7 per cent increase in British holiday-makers during the first six months of this year.

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