

The Freethinker

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Editor: F. A. RIDLEY

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AS is common knowledge, the victory of General Franco in Spain has resulted in the creation of a ruthless political dictatorship which has suppressed all forms of opposition and has constituted present-day Spain as the last stronghold of Fascism in Europe. Without the active military support of Hitler and Mussolini, it is actually most unlikely that Franco would have succeeded in "liquidating" the former Spanish Republic.

By what can only be described as a gross betrayal of all the wartime declarations, this satellite regime of the former Nazi Empire has been permitted to survive its original sponsors.

The result is that, as a persecuted Spanish Liberal still living in Spain told a

friend of the present writer, not long ago, the only hope then left to Franco's victims was a future liberation by "the gentleman with the moustache" (viz., the late Mr. J. V. Stalin).

The above facts are, we imagine, known to-day to all except the wilfully blind. Not so well known, however, is the leading role played by Spanish Catholicism in the present Spanish regime. We say "Spanish Catholicism" advisedly, not because the Catholic Church in Franco Spain is a separate Church from that directed by the Vatican, but because local circumstances in Spain have enabled the Church in Spain to retain a medieval outlook and a medieval intolerance which she has been forced to modify, at least superficially, in other more advanced parts of the world.

South of the Pyrenees, along with some of the more backward former Spanish colonies in Latin America, the Catholicism of the High Middle Ages, of Aquinas and of Torquemada, still flourishes vigorously. One may add that in restoring this state of things Franco has not had to go back very far in Spanish history, as readers of Buckle's great work will recall; right down to the middle of the 19th century the Spanish Universities rejected the astronomy of Copernicus and the secular philosophy of Bacon and of Descartes.

In a very informative article which recently appeared in *The Manchester Guardian* (April 21, 1953) the exiled Spanish Liberal publicist, Senor Salvador de Madariaga, draws attention to the incredible obscurantism of present-day Spanish Catholicism. This is indicated in practice by the semi-illegal status of all other forms of Christianity except the Church of Rome and, also, by sporadic outbreaks of violence against Protestants. In theory, it takes the form of the re-issue of obscurantist catechisms, of which that of the Jesuit Fr. Ripalda appears to be the best-known. The contents of this astonishing document may be summarised briefly for the benefit of those of our readers who may, perhaps, imagine that the Middle Ages have ended in Europe.

According to the reverend Jesuit and to his current editors there are no less than fourteen "modern" heresies which are condemned by the Church both generally and

specifically. The list comprises materialism, Darwinism, atheism, pantheism, deism, rationalism, protestantism, socialism, communism, syndicalism, laicism (presumably, secular education), liberalism, "modernism" and freemasonry. In a word, all the distinctive ideas of modern, as distinct from medieval, times.

In order that the faithful may be under no illusions with regard to the full enormity of these pernicious errors, and, also, to elucidate their exact nature, a commentary has been recently (1949) issued to explain the various "errors" condemned in and by Ripalda. Some of these comments may appear a trifle peculiar and not,

indeed, without unconscious humour. Thus, for example, under the heading "Darwinism" we learn about the illustrious author of *The Origin of Species* that "this so-called scientist was born in Schrewsbury (sic) in England. Endowed by God with a considerable gift of observation, but with very little intelligence." (Incidentally, we may add, in fairness to our Jesuit author, that the examiners of the University of Cambridge who "ploughed" the great naturalist in his "Honours" examination and awarded him a bare "pass degree" seem to have shared our Spanish author's view about Darwin's intelligence!)

On the subject of Darwinism, Ripalda is explicit and categorical. To the question, "What can you tell me about Darwinism?" Ripalda answers: "That it is a ridiculous and absurd system." "Why?" "Because it is ridiculous and absurd to build up any relationship between man, intelligent and free, and a stupid animal." As if this is not enough, the commentator adds: "Darwinists say that we all come down from the monkey; therefore we lack understanding, therefore liberty, therefore we do not sin, therefore there is no hell." So much for Darwinism. Evidently Franco and his spiritual advisers are proud to trace their descent from the Garden of Eden!

The rest of the catechism is equally explicit: Protestantism and Socialism are both roundly condemned; and a specially virulent attack is made on Freemasonry, that old political rival of the Church in Spain. The Masonic lodges seek "the ruin of society and of the Church . . . through crime, hypocrisy and mystery." In general, there is no ambiguity about Ripalda. Thus, with regard to Liberalism: "What sin does a person commit who votes for a Liberal candidate?" There follow detailed and precise instructions for "smelling out" the "mortal sin" of Liberalism.

The high-water mark of the Catechism is reached in these fundamental propositions:—

"Is it a fact that man may choose any religion he likes?" "No, for he must profess the Roman Apostolic Catholic, which is the only true religion there is." "Must not the State protect the opinions of all its subjects?" "Yes, sir, provided they are not condemned by the

— VIEWS and OPINIONS —

Catholicism in Franco Spain

— By F. A. RIDLEY —

Church." Here, speaking, is the genuine undiluted "totalitarian" Catholicism of the authentic "Ages of Faith."

Such, then, is the creed of Spanish Catholicism. How far is it still the actual doctrine of the world-wide Roman Catholic Church? Certainly there are few, if any, areas in the world of the mid-20th century where the Church dare avow its obscurantist opinions so openly. In most modern lands Rome has had to make some concessions to modern intellectual and political progress. Many modern Catholics, including even members of Fr. Ripalda's own Jesuit order, profess to accept evolution as and when applied to man's physical organs, whilst as for Socialism, the British professedly Socialist Labour Party contains many Catholics. (In the course of the recent municipal elections we know of cases where nuns from a Catholic convent voted solidly for Socialism. Evidently they can-

not read Spanish!) An English or American "Ripalda" hardly seems possible.

But for one significant fact, one might reach the conclusion that the medieval obscurantism so vigorously displayed in our Spanish Catechism represented merely a hang-over in a backward country. However, this fact remains: in a highly centralised organisation like the Church of Rome, a document with an international circulation in the Spanish-speaking world, like "Ripalda," could not possibly appear without the, at least, tacit approval of the Vatican. How far that worldly-wise institution really expects to recover its medieval authority over the modern world, we have no means of knowing; but the contents of our catechism are evidently not unwelcome to it. This fact constitutes a red light for liberal thinkers everywhere: "Forewarned is forearmed."

Logical Positivism

By G. H. TAYLOR

THE editor of *The Freethinker* has recently referred, appositely, I think, to logical positivism as the illegitimate offspring of Russell. It represents, very roughly speaking, a sort of compromise between idealism and materialism.

When the idealists failed to break materialism in the realm of science, they attacked it on epistemological grounds. By this device they could afford to grant the validity of science as a complete system in itself, and at the same time claim that science gives no knowledge of an outside world at all, but only of the subjective world of ideas. The coherence of science is therefore no more than the coherence of the subjective world of Ideas. This line of argument, which, of course, it is impossible to develop fully here, had impetus from Lord Balfour's *Defence of Philosophic Doubt* and Viscount Haldane's *Human Experience*.

If such argument were valid it would clear the way for supernaturalism and religion outside the domain of science, and leave the idealist free to accept any materialistic findings which scientists reported. It would thus give the idealist an advantage over the vitalist, who, by positing an interference principle, burns his boats and is for ever at the mercy of materialistic advances in science. Whereas the vitalist must always be looking for some gap not yet covered by developing science, and must always find those supposed gaps closing in on him, the idealist's withers are unwrung: he sublimely refers each new finding to his subjective scheme of things.

However, the inherent defects of idealism itself were thoroughly exposed by that brilliant trio, G. E. Moore, Broad and Alexander, prompting Ewing to write his *Idealism, a Critical Survey*, "now that its day of dominance is over," as he said.

As a matter of fact, idealism was almost dead with thinking people at the time when Eddington made it popular with the unthinking. Poor Eddington was no philosopher but merely a departmental physicist. He ignored all the charted dangers, and his philosophising was torn to shreds by the realists, and perhaps most devastatingly by the most brilliant woman philosopher of the century, perhaps of any century, the late Prof. Susan Stebbing. With her passing the cause of clear thinking lost a great friend, as Mr. T. M. Mosley remarked in his recent lecture to West London Branch N.S.S.

Sir James Jeans, who (1930) took much the same line as Eddington (1928) subsequently retreated to a large extent from the position, and there was a small following of lesser lights, such as Bragg and Sullivan, similarly departmental in outlook.

The stage was thus set for the appearance of a scheme of philosophy which would preserve the priority of human experience over external phenomena while steering clear of the obvious defects of idealism. Its names are empiricism, logical positivism, and phenomenalism, its protagonists chiefly Wittgenstein and Carnap. Their new scholasticism as barren as that of the schoolmen of the Middle Ages has been effectively dealt with in M. Cornforth's *Science versus Idealism*.

Russell's mentor was G. E. Moore. In 1898 Russell left F. H. Bradley's idealism for Moore's realism. But his philosophy was still greatly influenced by the empiricism of Hume and, contemporaneously, Mach. Through the years Russell's philosophy has undergone changes, and is to-day somewhat nebulous. I doubt if he has arrived anywhere himself but he has been a great junction from which several lines of thought have sprung. The two contemporary theories of truth, coherence theory and correspondence theory, may both claim descent.

For Russell, logic was the essence of philosophy, and deriving from Russell, Wittgenstein arrived at logical analysis. "The world is the totality of facts, not of things" (*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*). "The world consists of atomic facts each of which is independent of every other, their constituents being 'simple objects'." This, derived from formal logic, is logical atomism. Cornforth (*op. cit.*) objects that it is impossible to find any simple atomic facts at all, and this view of knowledge allows no place for the knower of facts and his practical activity. This, the core of Cornforth's criticism, appears to be eminently sound. For Wittgenstein would have us dealing with false isolations all the way, impossible self-existents. He would eventually lead back to solipsism, the hypothesis that the world is only a private dream.

The avowed aim of Wittgenstein's theorising is, according to his preface, to "draw a limit to thinking." His importance now is that of progenitor to Carnap, whose logical positivism seeks to avoid the pitfall of solipsism. He primarily excludes all reference to meanings. Philosophy should confine itself to the logical analysis of language, which, with common ownership, will avoid solipsism.

"Philosophy is to be replaced by the logic of science, by the logical analysis of the concepts and sentences of the sciences, for the logic of science is nothing less than the logical syntax of the language of science" (Carnap, *Logical Syntax*). Cornforth justly describes this as merely a theory about words, "wherein science is deprived of any meaning whatever and is represented as a mere system."

building with words." Science is thus not about the world we live in but only about our coherent sensations. But we do not gain our knowledge by simply accepting given sensations and then analysing and comparing our sensations one with another. On the contrary, we gain our knowledge by doing things, acting on things, changing things, producing things, which involves far more than merely contemplating the sensations which happen to enter into our consciousness." Knowledge is not "the private property of each knowing mind, is not gained by the mere contemplation on the part of each individual of his own private sensations, but is gained by practical activity directed upon surrounding objects; so also knowledge is gained by the co-operative practical activity of many people, and many generations of people and is not separately built up by each person. Knowledge is public, not private; it is the common product and the common property of many people organised in society, and the sum of knowledge gained by their social co-operation could not possibly be gained by any one individual."

This would seem to apply no matter how logical, or how positive, the cleverest logical positivist individuals might be.

The last word here shall be with Engels, who never

heard of Carnap, yet who has some enlightened passages on the matter: "Before there was argument there was action. In the beginning there was the deed. And human action had solved the difficulty (of securing knowledge of external objects) long before human ingenuity had invented it. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. From the moment we turn to our own use of these objects, according to the qualities we perceive in them, we put to an infallible test the correctness or otherwise of our sense perceptions. If these perceptions have been wrong then our estimate of the use to which an object can be turned must also be wrong and our attempt must fail. But if we succeed in accomplishing our aim, if we find that the object does agree with our idea of it, and does answer the purpose we intended for it, then that is positive proof that our perception of it and its qualities, so far, agree with reality outside ourselves" (*Socialism Utopian and Scientific*). And regarding the Unknowable of Kant, "What we can produce we certainly cannot consider unknowable" (ibid). "If we are able to prove the correctness of our conception of a natural process by making it ourselves—and using it for our own purposes, there is an end of the Kantian incomprehensible thing-in-itself." (On Feuerbach).

April in Spain

By CARLOS DE ITALICA

THE mention of Spain immediately brings to our minds pictures of a priest-ridden country which is strongly dominated by the power of the Vatican.

Although this is true, and it must be admitted that the people are duly influenced by Roman Catholic dogma, there is another side to Spanish life that should not be ignored. It is also true that the thinkers among the Spaniards are aware that the influence of the Roman Catholic Church is not exactly healthy.

But breaking away from this we may visit Seville during the April Feria and witness the Spaniards at play in what can be considered as one of the most spectacular festivals held anywhere in the world. Its duration is normally five days. Unusual rain postponed this year's opening from Saturday the 18th to Tuesday the 21st, and during those three days Seville was bulging with visitors, which included the humblest of foreign tourists, and the grandes and aristocracy of Spain. The latter were gathered in Seville's grandest hotel lying behind a frontage of palms, oranges and bougainvillea, and here—on the Sunday afternoon—was the seed of Spain's monetary power, including ministers of state and the wealthy industrialists. One of these was my escort (we will call him Bazan) and that evening in the bar of the hotel we met two intimate friends of his in the film industry. Ava Gardner was with them, and we were quickly thrown together in a huddle over glasses of dry sherry. This lady, whom I saw for the first time as I had never seen her films, impressed me and all others by her personality and good looks.

The crowning day, the opening of the Feria, is something never to be forgotten. A wide area consisting of many acres is allocated partly to a fun fair and partly to the more serious business of *Casetas*—or what we might call stands—which are taken by individual families of Seville where they entertain their friends. Here they gather in their Andalusian costumes, the women in their picturesque and colourful flounced skirts, with tall combs and flowers in their hair; the men in frilled shirts, short jackets and *sombreros*. Together they dance the traditional Sevillanas in a style that is scarcely exacting, but which excels in rhythm and musical execution. We may even hear a

Sevillana played on a piccolo or flute with drum accompaniment, which for countless years has been typical of Triana, the gypsy quarter.

Open horse-drawn carriages (cars are not allowed) and horsemen and women drive round the broad roads of the Feria, in a display of national costumes and colour which are most pleasing to the eye. Here there is all manner of horse-drawn vehicle, from a single horse to five or six. My friend Bazan had a carriage and five, and round we drove with his daughters viewing the hilarity and animation that so distinctly marks the Spanish character. Suddenly there comes the noise of weak clapping, and a carriage drawn by five horses passes in the opposite direction. There sits a smiling Franco, who—even with a certain amount of relaxed discipline and officialdom—has not succeeded in winning wholeheartedly the people of Spain. Finally he returns to the Alcazar Palace to be greeted by Spanish troops who are reinforced at the gate by Moorish guards, who a few centuries ago were their conquerors.

At night you may hear Juanita Reina, who so charmingly sings her native songs of Seville in her own peculiar quality of voice which is so greatly appreciated by her audiences. Or you may go to El Guajiro at Triana where you can see Spanish and Gipsy dancers to thrill you with the speed of their *zapateados*. This is outdoor entertainment, with only the sky above you and the warm dry air of Seville.

Spain is poor! There is great wealth in the hands of a few but millions are struggling daily on wages and salaries that for us would spell starvation. The cost of living is approximately the same as here if taken by our values, but for the Spanish it is a hard grind. We can only admire these people who, in the face of meagre living, are able to face the world with a broad smile and take part in festivals with a refinement and dignity that would befit a king.

Franco may have made some superficial improvements to the country and helped the poor to some extent, which is what one might expect of the leader of any country, but

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This Believing World

"Reading the Bible" was the title of a recent B.B.C. talk by Dr. E. V. Rieu, and a most exhilarating talk it was. The Bible was at last coming back to its old supremacy especially as in its "tussle with science" it has emerged absolutely triumphant. The nineteenth-century attack on God's Word utterly failed and the Bible, for those who do not like the dated diction of the Authorised Version can now, thank God, be read in more modern versions. "Everybody must be induced," said Dr. Rieu blandly, "to make a leap in the dark—that is, faith." Once you have faith the rest is easy. And we agree with him.

The B.B.C. always manages to rope in a number of people like the Rev. gentleman, all of them loudly claiming that science has failed in its silly attack on the Bible—that the Precious Word has emerged "unscathed" in the encounter, and with a little, a very little, "faith," everybody will believe again exactly as those dear, confiding, early Christians did when, in front of so many of them, "our Lord" wafted himself up to Heaven in the most remarkable air voyage ever made—the Ascension. Dr. Rieu is, we fancy, the answer to the protest meeting recently held against the B.B.C.'s religious attitude, and there will be, no doubt, many more of these painful Fundamentalists on the air.

What can we do about it? Very little. We might write and protest, but nobody knows what happens to our protestations. And until we get a Governor or Governors of the B.B.C. entirely on our side, with the guts to say so, the B.B.C. will be exploited by our religionists to the full. "We are the masters now" is a well-known slogan which they appear to have appropriated and they will be difficult to dislodge. Religion has so often been in command and has so often been difficult to dislodge, however, that we must not lose heart. After all, it is Christianity which is afraid—not us.

Apart from the B.B.C., the chief source of the Church's power is money. As an example, the income of the Church of Ireland is nearly half a million pounds every year, while its investments amounts to nearly eleven million pounds. One can do something with such a huge sum of money in reserve for propaganda, and it is easy to see why it is so difficult for Freethought to counteract the teachings of the Church. If only some benefactor would come forth on our side, and endow us with somewhat similar weapons, we might even make the B.B.C. see reason.

The Rev. D. MacDonald of Ardersier in Scotland does not like sex education in schools, and he appears to think also that if the schools in the country are to be closed for the Coronation, that is, for a mere earthly monarch, they ought to have a similar day set aside for the Heavenly Monarch. We think that most schoolchildren will heartily agree with him, but why limit the occasion to just one day? Why not close the schools dozens of times during the year? The boys and girls are always ready to adore the Almighty, especially by spending the time in a cinema or playing some game if the weather permits. What brains these ministers have!

Rather surprisingly, though very intriguingly, we find Mr. Shaw Desmond, who has always believed almost anything in Spiritualism, agreeing quite determinably with the view expressed so often in this column on "faith-healing." At a recent meeting, he must have shocked his all-believing hearers by saying, "All the healing you hear of is done by mind and nothing else. To say that it is done by spirits

is just nonsense, and the spirits themselves would be the first to deny it." We have never denied that "cures" take place: all we claim is that they are *not* done by spooks, medical or Indian. Astonishing cures have been reported in medical works very often without cause or explanation. And only fools believe that any cure has ever been performed by a "spirit." There are no spirits.

A Song of Secularism

In this, the only life we know,
Some few there are that see
Man's noblest purpose is to grow
Informed, humane and free.
A secular, enlightened creed
Inspires their high ambition,
Untouched by envy, malice, greed,
Mistrust or superstition.
Join with the few. Stand for the true.
Cast out the false and hollow.
Freedom your claim! Progress your aim!
Some day the world will follow.

The zealous few of steadfast mind,
In place of heavenly quest,
Endeavour to convert mankind
To faith in human best.
Full liberty of thought have they,
And pride of honest speaking.
Their happiness they find that way,
And wisdom crowns their seeking.
Join with the few. Stand for the true.
Cast out the false and hollow.
Freedom your claim! Progress your aim!
Some day the world will follow.

Despotic custom, creeds and laws
The fearless few abjure.
When hurt by crime, they look for cause,
When faced with wrong, for cure.
Believing that, till understood,
No evils can be righted,
Their gospel is not "Slaves, be good,"
But "Comrades, be clear-sighted."
Join with the few. Stand for the true.
Cast out the false and hollow.
Freedom your claim! Progress your aim!
Some day the world will follow.

By pomp and power the vain pretence
That there's an after-life,
Wherein is offered recompense
For this one's pains and strife,
Is fostered, lest the people turn
From faiths now torn in tatters
To secular ideals, and learn
It's here and now that matters.
Join with the few. Stand for the true.
Cast out the false and hollow.
Freedom your claim! Progress your aim!
Some day the world will follow.

P. V. M.

April in Spain—

(Continued from page 163)

the fact remains that since he came into the power the chances of the people in their struggle for liberation from religious domination have decreased. They know that they cannot find happiness while this state of affairs continues.

NOW READY

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VOL. 72

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To Correspondents

W. Nicholls.—As far as we know, Evan Roberts had a breakdown and never recovered. Why not contact on the subject one of the leading Welsh journals?

We receive periodical letters from would-be correspondents who wish to know why their letters have not appeared. The editor would like to make it clear that he attaches great importance to the ever-popular correspondence columns, and that he publishes as many letters as he can find room for. At times, however, it is quite impossible to publish all the letters received. It would greatly assist if all writers would kindly remember that letters are not articles and would consequently, keep their contributions short.

THE FREETHINKER will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad): One year, £1 4s. (in U.S.A., \$3.50); half-year, 12s.; three months, 6s.

Correspondents are requested to write on one side of the paper only and to make their letters as brief as possible.

Lecture Notices should reach the Secretary of the N.S.S. at this Office by Friday morning.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 41, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1, and not to the Editor.

Lecture Notices, Etc.

OUTDOOR

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Broadway Car Park).—Every Sunday, 7-30 p.m.: H. DAY and A. H. WHARRAD.

Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square).—Sunday, May 24, 7 p.m.: MESSRS. T. W. MOSLEY and A. ELSMERE.

West London Branch N.S.S. (Marble Arch).—Every Sunday from 4 p.m. onwards: MESSRS. O'NEILL, CLEAVER and WOOD.

INDOOR

National Secular Society Annual Conference. Public demonstration at the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. Chairman, F. A. RIDLEY, President, N.S.S. Sunday, May 24, at 7 p.m. Admission free. For details, see advertisement.

NOTES AND NEWS

A party travelling to the N.S.S. Conference at Leicester on Saturday will go by the 2-15 p.m. train from St. Pancras, which is due to arrive at 4-13. Other London readers who may find it more convenient to leave later or go from Marylebone Station can avail themselves of the 3-20 from the latter station, which is due at Leicester at 5-48. Both trains allow for the presence of delegates and friends at the Reception and Social to be held at the Secular Hall at 7-30 p.m. This get-together will follow its usual informal pattern, and a reminder to those who can contribute entertaining items is hereby issued—come prepared.

"Of making many books there is no end." And the same would appear to apply to periodicals! At the office of *The Freethinker* the Editor receives not only Freethinking and critical papers from U.S.A., India, Germany, France, Belgium, Switzerland and other lands, but, in addition, periodicals representing points of view widely remote from our own. Conspicuous amongst these latter are *The Islamic Review*, from the Muslim Mosque at

Woking, which whatever one may think of its Theology, usually adds much to our knowledge of the Middle East; the Maltese *Faith* (R.C.) which pays us the compliment of frequently quoting *The Freethinker*; and several Spiritualist papers, which, no doubt, find food for controversy in our columns. At least, we hope so.

On a more objective plane than the foregoing is our contemporary, *Religions*, "the journal of the Society for the Study of Religions," which studies comparative religion in general, besides specific religions in particular, from a generally modernist angle, under the editorship of Mr. P. Victor Fisher. The editor of *The Freethinker* lectured, by invitation, last year, before this learned society, on the Christian dogma of the Atonement.

We have already alluded, above, to the frequent references in *The Faith*, journal of "St. Paul's Apologetic Circle" (Malta), to our *Freethinker*. In the current (May) issue of *The Faith* there is an article entitled, "Charles Dickens, No Atheist," by a Mr. Frank Falzon. In this article Mr. Falzon queries the assertions, on the subject of Dickens's atheism, made in an article published some time ago in *The Freethinker* by our contributor, "Villeneuve." Mr. Falzon asks our contributor to supply documentary proof that Dickens was, actually, an atheist. We hope that "Villeneuve" can see his way to comply with this request, particularly as we must confess that we, too, have always understood that the great novelist was some kind of a Christian; even though, as his anti-Sabbatarian pamphlet indicated, not a very orthodox one, as and when judged by the rigid Evangelical standards of Victorian days. The word now rests with "Villeneuve."

Spirit Messages

Though a message they bleat from the Summerland sweet,
There's one thing we can't quite explain;
When they answer the roll, it shows they have soul—
But the answers aren't proof they've a brain.

A. E. C.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY, ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Leicester, Whitsun, 1953

Reception and Social

The N.S.S. Executive Committee cordially invites delegates and friends to be present at the above, to be held in The Secular Hall at 7.30 p.m., Saturday, 23rd May.

Public Demonstration

Sunday, 24th May, 7 p.m.

Speeches on Freethought and Secularism by

F. A. RIDLEY and L. EBURY (London)

G. A. KIRK (Leicester)

R. M. HAMILTON (Glasgow) and

C. McCALL (Manchester)

Questions and Discussion

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Robert Taylor

The Devil's Chaplain (1784-1844) By H. CUTNER

(Continued from page 159)

TAYLOR himself examined Collins and did his best to show up the beadle's hopeless ignorance. Lord Tenterden in summing up tried to prove to the jury that this did not matter. He pointed out:—

Much has been said of the illiterate habits of the person on whose testimony this case principally rested, but the jury could not fail to observe that though the witness was certainly not a person with any literary pretensions, yet that he evinced strong common-sense, and they ought not to overlook that the few sentences which the witness gave, were only a small part of a long oration.

The witness's examination must have been one long laugh, as some of the questions put to Collins by the "blasphemer" were deliberately designed to do this. For example:—

Can you undertake to say whether the language I used was that of a quotation, or spoken in my own person?

Certainly.

You are a very learned man. Do you understand the general principles of ratiocinative argumentation? (Here, says the report, the witness displayed all the ludicrous symptoms of the most perfect confusion. At length he said, "I could understand your words.")

Tell me, Thomas Collins, was my argument dogmatical or hypothetical? (A laugh.)

Part of it was very learned and above my comprehension. (A laugh.)

Taylor continued a little longer in this fashion to banter the witness, and eventually made him admit that, though he had sworn on the New Testament, the book told him to "Swear not at all, neither by Heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool."

In answer to the Attorney-General, Collins claimed that "nothing was uttered by Mr. Taylor to qualify the passages which I have taken down. I can say that the scope of the whole discourse was to endeavour to persuade the audience that the New Testament was false"—a plain statement which Taylor would have cheerfully admitted. It was indeed exactly his object and the object to which he was devoting his life.

In his defence, Taylor gave the jury a masterly speech. He was without doubt an accomplished orator, and he took good care to shine on this occasion. It should be read in its entirety, as a precis cannot do justice to his skilful pleading. He reasoned out his case step by step for he had great and grave reason for knowing how deep were the prejudices ingrained by religion. As he pointed out:—

In all other cases an accused person may confidently rely on the impartiality of a British jury; but where religious animosities, the very strongest that can misguide and pervert the judgments of men, have originated the proceedings, and, after what I have learned from the opener, I fear are arrayed in hostile phalanx in the persecution, the chances are fearfully against a defendant, though "his righteousness were clear as light, and his just dealing as the noonday" . . . he trembles on the far more perilous hazard . . . that the interests of religion will forbid the exercise of humanity, and faith stand sentinel over captive reason.

And here is his confession of faith as it was then—however much he may have changed later:—

Dismiss from your minds, I entreat you, all impression of those absurd and cruellanders, which my theological, and, mayhap, my legal enemies, have circulated, to make it be believed that, differing so widely in sentiment from them, I must needs be something which they are not—a monster of iniquity, an Atheist, a sot, a madman, everything which malice could devise, when nothing of the kind could be proved. Gentlemen, I am no such character; I am not an Atheist; I am not a Christian; neither am I a hypocrite. I am in heart and soul a Deist. In the cause of Deism I have suffered what, in any other cause, would be accounted a real martyrdom. For Deism I have incurred the loss of natural relations and friends, of property, of liberty itself, and have held my life and my

life's comfort of inferior consideration to the great duty of inculcating just and worthy notions of the Supreme Being on an insulted and priest-ridden people. . . . I believe that I am bound by the most sacred obligations that can bind a man to conduct myself in life in every respect, just exactly as I have done "constantly to speak the truth, boldly to rebuke vice, and if suffering be inevitable, patiently to suffer for the truth's sake."

Taylor denied that he was out for notoriety, or that he had no fear of an adverse verdict. "Whatever might be its consequences to myself," he added, "I could but regard it as an omen of worse oppressions to mankind—as a fatal blow to that which every good man ought to prize more than life, fatal to the right of free speech and free discussion."

He admitted that in founding the Christian Evidence Society, he did so to expose "the fallacies and sophisms which abound in the writings of Christian divines," and that he had given some hundred lectures without "incurring the menace of intended magisterial interference."

In referring to the witness Collins, it was natural that Taylor should have done so with contempt, and he pointed out that many of the "blasphemous" sentences in the indictment were actually quotations from "our best English divines, or from Mosheim, Michaelis, or Beausobre." Finally, he showed that the prosecution was untenable on Christian, moral, and legal grounds, and begged for a verdict "which would put an end for ever to the reproach which these prosecutions reflect on the character of an enlightened age."

Lord Tenterden seems to have listened with patience to the speech, only interrupting to put Taylor right on legal points; and he was ever ready to allow him time for rest or refreshment. It is good to put on record that he showed none of that vindictiveness and utter lack of humanity which characterised the Roman Catholic Judge North, who, over fifty years later, sentenced George William Foote to a year's imprisonment for a similar "crime." Unfortunately, the Judge felt it his duty to ignore the arguments so ably put forward by the prisoner and to concentrate on the one point of "blasphemy" and, as a Christian as well, he summed up the case against Taylor. In this the jury were bound to concur and a verdict of "guilty" was brought in. The sentence was given on February 7, 1828—one year in Oakham Gaol, and to give recognizance for his good behaviour for five years, himself in five hundred pounds, and two others in two hundred and fifty pounds each. He was hurried off at once, not given the chance even of taking a change of linen with him. There were few prisoners in Oakham Goal, and owing to the distance from London, Taylor saw but few friends during his imprisonment. Richard Carlile immediately set about to make his imprisonment as little rigorous as possible.

(To be continued)

N.S.S. Executive Committee Meetings

Three meetings have been necessary to deal with Conference arrangements, to examine and approve the agenda, annual report and financial statement for that occasion, and to consider current business. These took place on April 29, May 13 and 18. Mr. Ridley was in the chair at the first and third, and Mr. Ebury at the second, when the President was speaking at a public meeting of the League Against Capital Punishment. Present, Mrs. Venton, Messrs. Griffiths, Johnson, Hornibrook, Shaw, Tiley, Gibbins, Cleverly, Corstorphine, Barker, Taylor and the Secretary. In addition to the matters mentioned above, the admission of 30 new members to the Parent, Manchester, Sheffield, West London and Fyzabad Branches was authorised.

P. VICTOR MORRIS, Secretary.

Royal Ramp

By C. H. NORMAN

THE strongly-running current of Royalism in England is some evidence that the newspaper combines can affect public opinion in a way adverse to the public interest. The poor educational system which has taken the place of the home education of the middle classes and better off mechanics in the seventies and eighties has also contributed to the gush and slush of royalism which has been so prevalent in the last two or three years, consequent on the death of George the Sixth, the death of Queen Mary and the Coronation preparations for Elizabeth II. The radicalism of the Nonconformists and the mechanics of the eighties has almost completely disappeared, and with it the republican feeling which was then so widely prevalent. This is also one of the results of bribing the rich men who control the Press with peerages and titles. It is a peculiar thing that Press ownership is one of the easiest steps to the peerage. The journalistic fawning on the royal personages is a natural result of this method of "sweetening" the owners of newspapers. On the subject of the poor education of the masses, the writer was present several years ago at a lecture by the Director of Education for Suffolk on the developments in the British educational system in the last thirty years, in the course of which the Director of Education was very eulogistic on the results of the system. He was asked how he accounted for the fact, if the educational system was so admirable, that in the period he had reviewed, the circulation of the *News of the World* had risen from a million copies to over eight million copies, and *The People's* circulation had risen from seven hundred thousand copies to four million copies? The question bowled him out completely! There can be no doubt that the continual reading of such papers has a softening effect on the mental fibre of the community. Hence, the exhibition in the Press in the last year or so in connection with the obsequies of various royal personages. No doubt it has been encouraged by the great development of the publicity side of the Royal establishments. There is even a certain conflict between them and the more enterprising press and photographic agencies: so much so, that one is a little puzzled at the number of queens there appear to be in Britain at the moment, judging by the variety of photographs which have appeared at various times of the royal appearance and features. Then there has been the writing up of the Consort—the Duke of Edinburgh—and the two children, whose pictures seem also to change more rapidly than one would expect from the ordinary course of natural growth: also the Duchess of Kent and Princess Margaret are kept well in the public eye. It is a curious circumstance that Royalism should be apparently increasing its hold in Britain at a period when Republicanism is spreading so rapidly in the rest of the world. The Crown exercises a good deal of real power in England, as was shown by that excellent book on how Britain is governed, entitled "King, Lords and Gentlemen," which was written by a German correspondent, Abshagen, who had lived in London for some fifteen years between the two world wars. It is a book which is worth all the books on the British Constitution put together. It is interesting that it was first published under the Nazi regime at Strashourg in 1938, an English translation being printed by Heinemann in 1939. The reviews of the book were skillfully designed to mislead the reader entirely on its subject matter.

Another evil feature of royalism is to be seen in the system of land-holding in the country, which is largely derived from the action of past monarchs in giving away

the land of the community (which was not theirs to give) to their favourites and the nobles surrounding them. That is one reason why the Court and the great land owners were so closely united. As one can observe by all the hereditary privileges which are claimed by various members of the landed aristocracy on such occasions as the Coronation.

It is a striking example of how the evil which men and women do can live after them. Every reader of this paper is paying more in rent than he otherwise would do, had the system of land-owning in Britain not mainly derived from the monarchs satisfying the greed and ambitions of their Courtiers. These land-owning rights have been passed on from generation to generation, reaching such a state of avarice that in some parts of the City of London the land costs £1,000 a square foot. That is one of the legacies that the monarchial system has left to the people, and the landed aristocracy are still the main supporters of these royal personages. The whole lot of them are worthless and expensive social lumber.

The true character of some of these monarchs is revealed by Christopher Sykes in his study of Edward the Seventh's conduct towards his friends in a book entitled "Four Studies in Loyalty," the particular one having the curious title of "Behind the Tablet." This book was also reviewed in such a way that its contents could not be guessed at. Two passages will give a hint of its subject matter. "Among the Prince's many practical jokes, this episode appears to be the only one in which *his unflinching cruelty* is redeemed by wit." "His tone reduced the Prince to silence for the moment and to *civilised behaviour for some weeks.*" Henry James is quoted by Sykes as writing on the death of Victoria, "We are to have no more of little mysterious Victoria, but instead fat, vulgar, dreadful Edward." One can leave the matter there!

Down in the Forest

BY BISSET LOVELOCK

YESTERDAY was David's day (David Whiterock, who inspired the song that inspired Tommy Farr's great defeat at the hands of the World Champion that inspired Powell Duffryn to build the world's greatest rolling mills at Llanfair p.g.) and despite fantastic security arrangements news of it leaked to the B.B.C.'s television services.

As a result, Welsh devotionalism entered the life of the pleasure-loving public that look-in on Sundays, broke the Great Catholic Monopoly and even invaded peak-viewing-hours during "What's My Line" where an ill-tempered Druid was allowed to feast upon Welsh victims.

More remarkable still, the simple kindly Roman Catholic priest who is unleashed by the drama department, on average once a fortnight found himself strangely changed; changed in fact into a Non-conformist Minister with a Welsh name and accent. He had brought with him his ordinary standard miracle and it was a relief to the staff, technicians, cameramen, gag-merchants, and producers to find it come off in a Non-conformist setting, especially as it was designed to operate purely in an atmosphere of simple faith among homely, kindly, fat-headed people (I refer to peasant Catholic communities, not to the technicians, cameramen, gag-merchants, and producers of the B.B.C.).

This simple, kindly—no, no, I mean this zealous inspired Methodist does his little miracle upon one Williams, who has been bed ridden and paralysed since time immemorial, off-stage. One tap he gives him and a few magic words and, bingo, he is up and dancing like the very devil (who had nothing at all to do with it!). Now David Rowlands,

like Christ, has the knack of this business and he's doing it all the time on anyone that comes handy. In fact (and here the parallel ends) he's sick to death of it, especially as it's all due to too much love life at college. It is touch and go whether he doesn't give the whole thing up (and go back to his love-life at college?).

The situation is saved by (how did you guess it?) simple faith and you might think that faith and a miracle were enough entertainment for one evening. But not for P. H. Burton, writer of "The Dark Wood," who lightly touches in, with a mattock, a political angle. The political angle depends on the man who doesn't go to church on Sundays and is, therefore, a Communist and therefore goes rampaging all over the country making honest working men strike, when honestly, they would never have thought of it on their own. But as always, a frank talk and a sudden smile and a handshake do the trick, and he sends them all back again, satisfied, and once more the Kremlin rings to a cry of "Foiled."

Even this is not all, for this play has a love interest and the reason for this is that adolescent Love and puerile politics sell at the B.B.C., though not quite as well as religious quackery. David Rowlands falls in love with his host's wife and she with him—though not in a nasty, sexy way like ordinary people. It is spiritual and on a much higher Non-conformist plane. Despite this, the husband shows signs of jealousy, but it all comes out right (except for the audience) in the end, owing to mother-in-law telling the wife she was inveigled into marriage and daughter-in-law saying yes, she knows, she knew it all the time. This, it seems, settles everything with the aid of a little simple faith, though not solely on the part of the husband.

Everything ended happily (except for the audience) and the moral seems to be that "The Appleyards," by the same writer, is good Children's Hour entertainment. And that St. Patrick's Day falls on March 17, glory be!

Correspondence

"HELL"

SIR.—There is an error in the admirable front page article in the current *Freethinker*.

The question decided by the Gorham Judgment related to Baptismal Regeneration, and there is an interesting account of the matter in an excellent book, *Religion in the Victorian Era*, by Dr. L. E. Elliott-Binns.

The issue of belief in Hell arose from the celebrated volume of Anglican heresy entitled *Essays and Reviews* (1860). An account of this will be found in the book just mentioned, as also in *A History of Freedom of Thought*, by Dr. J. B. Bury.—Yours, etc.,

W. KENT.

[We apologise to Mr. Kent—and also to the Devil!—for our inadvertent confusion of these two famous landmarks in theological progress in the Anglican communion. None of us can claim infallibility—neither the Pope nor even the Editor!—EDITOR.]

THE BENTLEY CASE

SIR.—In reply to R. G. Abbott, I certainly was ignorant of the method of dealing with "Reprieves," and I have never met anybody who did know of the method. It now seems that an "Anonymity" in Whitehall makes a momentous decision and passes his decision on to a Home Secretary who in turn passes it on to the reigning Monarch. I should like to ask R. G. Abbott what special unique qualifications does this "Anonymity" possess which enables him to override any jury's recommendation, and what would happen if the reigning Monarch insisted on exercising their own opinion and refused to sign a Reprieve.—Yours, etc.,

E. C. R.

TERROR OVER YUGOSLAVIA

SIR.—Concerning Mr. A. S. Beardsmore's query, in your issue of May 1, whether or not Dr. P. Grisogono wrote the letter quoted in my recent book, *Terror Over Yugoslavia* (pp. 100-104), accusing

the Catholics of the horrible crimes they were then committing in Croatia, I can assure Mr. Beardsmore that the document is authentic. The magazine, *The Commonweal*, and Mr. B. Raditza, who although the contrary, are the bearers of standards representing anything but the truth.

The American *Commonweal* is one of the foremost of the leprosy-carrying instruments in the U.S.A. run by those lovers of truth, freedom and toleration who partially inspired the religious massacres of Croatia—i.e., the Jesuits. The statements of any individual, such as Mr. Raditza, writing in that paper should, therefore, be taken with an extra pinch of salt. . . .

As for the letter which this Jesuitical guest says he received from Dr. Grisogono himself, dated February 19, 1953, in which the writer states, "I refuse to have my name used in connection with an apocryphal (fake) letter," I am not in a position to say whether it is authentic or not. One must remember that the individual asserting that it is, like his Jesuit friends, believes only in one truth, Catholic truth, and in whatever helps Catholic truth, including twists, distortions, half-truths, falsifications, and even pure fabrications. Dr. Grisogono might have written the denial. He is a Catholic, and after ten years the pressure of his Church on him to hold "Catholic truth" might have had its effect.

Whether or not Dr. Grisogono wrote his denial quoted in the religious and political pestilence-carrier, *The Commonweal*, the fact remains that Dr. Grisogono's original letter, protesting against the massacres perpetrated by his Church, was written in February, 1943. It was published in English in the Spring of 1943 by the Serbian Eastern Orthodox Diocese of the U.S.A., with other authentic "documents and reports of the trustworthy United Nations and eyewitnesses" in a book, *Martyrdom of the Serbs*. Other official documents have all vouched for its authenticity.

I have seen a photo-stat of the original document myself, and a member of Dr. Grisogono's family has also personally vouched for the authenticity of the letter.

Catholics are consummate masters of deceit, the Jesuits are consummate masters of Catholics. To them, truth is anathema. Yours, etc.,

AVRO MANIATTAS

FATIMA

SIR.—I would like to question a few of Mr. Ridley's statements on Fatima in *The Freethinker* of October 12, 1952. I quote from the book, *There was a Lady Brighter than the Sun*, by the Italian Priest, Padre Marchi, a well-known authority on Fatima and now head of the Italian Seminary in Fatima. I have also spoken with Senor and Senora Mario, the parents of Jacinta and Francisco.

The two children died of tuberculosis aggravated by the flu. The Martos had nine children, seven of whom died of T.B.; three and two a few months after Jacinta. In Padre Marchi's book, the illness of the children is referred to as "a fever, a fire," as it was called a decline in my young days. "From the time she was a little child, Jacinta often sat for hours in a most profound ecstasy, with her head in her hands, but it was not the fever which was consuming the child but the fire of love for God, the thirst for reparation to God for the Atheists who were insulting the Pope. In May, 1919, Our Lady, through Lucy, ordered Jacinta to be taken to the Hospital of Ourem. She was treated there for two months but had to leave as the parents couldn't pay the 2s. per day demanded by the hospital. A Dr. Formigao while on a pilgrimage to Fatima saw the child and stated: "The T.B. aggravated by an attack of bronchial pneumonia and purulent pleurisy is gradually undermining the child's weak organism; the bacilli of Koch are devouring her." He reprehended the parents for not having recourse to the aids of science to effect a cure. Our Lady was again consulted and said that Jacinta was to be taken to a hospital in Lisbon, where she would be cured, but to suffer more for the Atheists who were insulting the faith. While awaiting a bed in the Lisbon hospital, Jacinta was placed in the Orphanage of Our Lady of Martyrs in Lisbon. A vacancy occurred in the Hospital of Dona Estafania and the Rev. Mother took the child there. She was reproved by the doctor for having kept a child infected with T.B. for some weeks sleeping and eating with other children. Rev. Mother replied that Our Lady would never permit other children to be infected by such a disease. She remarked that the doctor was an unbeliever. Jacinta occupied bed No. 38 in the hospital. Dr. Friere, who took charge of her, diagnosed her case as "pleurisy purulenta da grande cavidade esquerda, fistulizada; osteite das 7a and 8a costelas do mesmo lado (Purulent pleurisy of the great left cavity, fistulated; inflammation of the bones of the 7th and 8th ribs of the same side.)" She was operated on with a local anaesthetic as she was so weak. She screamed during the operation, not with fear, but with shame at the thought of lying naked before the doctor. Two ribs were removed. She died in the hospital a few days later.—Yours, etc.,

[All the statements re Fatima made in our article were taken from the pamphlet by the eminent French Freethinker, Prof. P. Alfaro. EDITOR.]