

The Freethinker

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Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

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IN the first article on the Jesuits we sought to describe the origins and the fundamental characteristics of the Order founded by Loyola. Here we propose to trace some of its leading activities; activities which have given the society a world-wide fame in its own right, quite distinct from the Catholic Church itself, of which the Jesuits have so often been the militant vanguard, but to which they have so often manifested distinctive and independent characteristics: naturally, to describe, even summarily, the multifarious activities in which the Jesuits have engaged over a period of four centuries, would be an inherently impossible task. Here, only their more important activities will be outlined. There are, actually, few parts of the world or, for that matter, few human activities, in which the great Spanish Order has not, at some time or another, been involved!

The Jesuits and the Catholic Counter-Reformation

The "Company of Jesus" was, as we have already seen, originally founded with a specific objective, the recovery for Christianity of the Holy City, Jerusalem, then in Muslim (Turkish) hands. Circumstances, however, prevented the newly-founded Order from working in Palestine. For, just then, Rome was much too busy fighting the recent Protestant Reformation in Europe, besides, conquering "The New World" of America, to start a new crusade against the Turks. The Jesuits, willy-nilly, soon had to transfer their activities to these other and more pressing fields. They actually did so, with such conspicuous success, that their name and fame have become popularly associated with their largely successful struggle against the Reformation. Even a Protestant historian, like Lord Macaulay, has asserted that, without the Jesuits, the Church of Rome would have succumbed in the course of her war against the Reformation during the 16th and 17th centuries. Be that as it may, they certainly led the Catholic Church in its "counter-reformation," which afforded such remarkable proofs of the vitality and political *flair* inherent in the Roman Catholic Church, "the masterpiece of human polity," as it has been aptly termed. As writers and preachers, but, in particular, as teachers and missionaries, the Jesuits were in the front ranks of the Catholic army. As an English Jesuit, Fr. Gerard, S.J., complacently recorded: "the (Jesuit) Order was the most feared of all by the enemies of God!" In the field of education, in particular, the Jesuits rendered conspicuous service to the Church; so efficiently did they superimpose the newly-discovered classical culture of the Renaissance on to the hitherto exclusively theological education provided by the mediæval Church, that a German historian (Karl Kautsky) has actually defined Jesuitism as "Humanism pressed into the service of the Church." Nor were the Jesuits backward in purely political activities; they were largely responsible for "the wars of religion," which culminated in the terrible "Thirty Years War"—1618-48. In the self-same year that their pupil, Guy Fawkes, attempted to blow up the

English Houses of Parliament—a conspiracy for which several Jesuits were executed—the Jesuits were instrumental in placing a Polish Catholic Pretender, the celebrated "False Demetrius" in the Kremlin as Tsar of Russia (1605-6)!

Nor did the Jesuit Order confine itself to "missions" amongst "heretics." It also proselytised amongst the bona fide heathen who "bowed down to wood and stone." In India, Japan and China, in particular, the Jesuits soon acquired an influential position, by skillfully "adapting" the Catholic religion to the native customs. One Jesuit disguised himself as a Brahmin "in order to bring

wandering souls to their Maker!" In China, the Jesuits were learned men who reformed the Chinese Calendar and erected astronomical observatories, thereby gaining the confidence of the emperor and his government. As the worldly-wise Jesuits soon perceived the folly of combating such deeply-rooted native customs as ancestor-worship, they declared these pagan customs to be "civic rites," and, as such, "lawful" for Christian converts! In Japan, for the same reason, they declared that state-worship of the emperor to be "lawful" for Christians. However, in the Japanese Empire a terrible persecution eventually wiped out the Christian missions in Japan. The Japanese government went so far as to place a price on the head of Jesus Christ—it does not seem to have been earned! Meanwhile, in China, the loose practices of the Jesuits eventually led to their missions being closed down by Rome.

Utopia in Paraguay

The most famous enterprise of the Jesuits lay, however, in South America, in (the modern) Paraguay, where the Jesuits set up an independent State, with its own government and army, which they ran on strictly socialistic lines for about a century and a-half—1610-1760. The Jesuit reservations in Paraguay became world famous. No money was permitted in the colony, and all means of production, and all the wealth produced, were owned collectively by the State—that is, by the Jesuits! No Europeans were admitted to this Jesuit Utopia; a fact which produced much critical comment! Voltaire, for example, who had himself been a pupil of the Order, put on record the famous *bon mot*, that "in Paraguay perfect communism existed; the Indians shared all the *work*, the Jesuits all the *wealth*." The Paraguayan Jesuits, whatever their motives may have been, were evidently brilliant organisers. Modern non-Catholic travellers in Paraguay, like Mr. R. B. Cunninghame Graham and Mr. Julian Duguid, have testified to the impressive Jesuit ruins which still confront the primeval forest.

The Paraguayan State, whether a Utopia or a slave-camp, as its secular critics alleged, was the show-piece of the Jesuits, and a quite unique experiment in sociology. As far as can be seen, it could have lasted indefinitely but for the commercial rivalries of the secular South Americans,

—VIEWS and OPINIONS—

"The Power and Secret of the Jesuits"

2.—The Jesuit Counter-Revolution

By F. A. RIDLEY

who eventually got an order from an anti-clerical Spanish government suppressing the Jesuit "Republic."

"As they are, or not at all"

The historic evolution of the Jesuit Order can be divided into two separated periods; of these, the first, which dated from 1540 up to 1773, was ended by the temporary suppression of the Jesuit Order by the Papacy in 1773. Their success, coupled with their often unscrupulous methods, had made the Jesuits unpopular even in the Catholic Church. Their ruthless suppression of rival schools of thought in the Church brought on their head the terrific attack of the Jansenist, Pascal, who attacked them fiercely in his celebrated *Provincial Letters*—1657-8. It is pre-eminently to Pascal that the Jesuits owe the unsavoury reputation for double-dealing which has clung to them ever since. At a later date, the equally caustic attack of Voltaire did them much harm. However, whilst the Vatican had a war on its hands, it could not do without its Jesuit shock-troops. In this respect, the 18th century was a relatively quiet period; and the Popes, yielding to secular pressure, declared the "Company of Jesuits" to be "abolished, abrogated, and extinguished for ever." In their misfortunes, their best friend was King Frederick of Prussia—an atheist and a disciple of Voltaire. A last suggestion of the Pope that the Jesuits might consent to accept reforms as an alternative to suppression was greeted by the famous ultimatum of their then general: "Let them be as they are, or not at all!" There spoke the authentic Jesuit!

Second Spring

The evergreen "Company" did not, however, remain "extinguished" for ever—only until 1814, when the Papacy officially restored them. Meanwhile, the French Revolution had occurred, and the Church had, again, to fight for its life. For the past century and a-half the Jesuits have been enjoying their second spring. In the field of ecclesiastical politics, their greatest triumph during this

Freethought Broadcasting in U.S.

JUST picture what would happen to her (Mrs. Knight) in the U.S. Of course this is purely a hypothetical question because in our country she would never, never have been permitted within 100 yards of a live microphone, after the censors had read her "script." This she would have had to submit previous to the broadcast. But, let's assume that she had gotten onto the air with her talk, and that she held a lectureship at the state university at Aberdeen, Washington, instead of Scotland.

Before her half-hour talk was half completed the self-appointed censors of the American people would have swung into action. The race to the telephone would have begun. The hosts that are constantly on watch guarding the spiritual, moral and physical welfare of the people would keep the wires hot with demands that the station management immediately pull the plugs and end the horrible blasphemies. Organisations, political, religious, fraternal, patriotic—priests, preachers, rabbis, would rear up on their hind legs and threaten hell-fire and damnation to all and sundry.

Next day would begin with all but a few newspapers carrying featured articles by their best penmen and ponderous, platitudinous editorials demanding the revocation of the station's licence and an immediate Congressional investigation of not only the speaker, but of each and every employee who handled her broadcast. The Governor of

period was in 1870, when they "wangled"—the word is accurate—the Infallibility of the Pope at the Vatican Council in that year. During the 19th century, the political activities of the Jesuits got them expelled from most European lands. A modern field of activity into which the modern Jesuits have gate-crashed is that of science, where several Jesuits have achieved distinction, in particular, in the field of astronomy. The learned Fathers evidently do not intend to make another *faux pas*, like their blunder in the famous case of Galileo; actually it has been largely due to the Jesuits that the Catholic Church has never condemned Darwinian evolution as it condemned, earlier on, the Copernician astronomy. The Jesuits are not the "brains-trust" of the Church for nothing!

"The Most Dangerous of all Tempests"

Ignatius Loyola once remarked: "The most dangerous of all tempests is a perfect calm; the most dangerous of enemies is the absence of all enemies"! This saying of the Founder is prophetic of the actual evolution of the institution founded by him; where the enemies of the Church are abroad, the Jesuits are in their element. In periods of quiet they tend to stagnate. To-day, in our stormy era, they are "on their toes." The Jesuits have been the "backroom boys" behind the modern Papacy; as one of their historians (Hermann Muller) has aptly commented:

"The 'Company of Jesus' did not desire a Jesuit to become Pope. For they naturally assumed that every Pope would become a Jesuit"!

An epitome, perhaps, of the evolution of modern Catholicism?

[FOOTNOTE.—It was in the course of the Jesuit *versus* Jansenist controversy that there occurred the celebrated incident when, after miracles were wrought at the graveside of a particularly holy Jansenist, the Jesuits got the French police to close down the cemetery, whereupon a local wit chalked up the historic instruction:

"By order of the King!

"God is forbidden to work miracles here."]

the State would issue an urgent call to the Board of Regents of the University and within minutes they would have met and fired her and everyone of the faculty that had at any time said anything more than hello to her.

The Federal Communications Commission, which in 1948 issued a splendid bravely worded statement that freedom of speech should prevail, has now as its chairman a gentleman whose religious views are 180 degrees to the Right of Mrs. Knight's. More than likely his monitors would have "jammed" the station off the air before the broadcast had concluded, if they didn't they too would have to undergo a loyalty examination by the well-known and well-named "UnAmerican Activities" Committee. Senator McCarthy would probably injure another elbow, and might even demand that the entire armed forces of the nation be alerted immediately to repel boarders.

Mrs. Knight is fortunate that she lives in Britain. She may even do another broadcast.

[Extracted from *The Liberal*, U.S.A.]

THE HOLY BIBLE

Is anything to be learned from Hosea and his wife? Is there anything of use in Joel, in Amos, in Obadiah? Can we get any good from Jonah and his gourd? Is it possible that God is the real author of Micah and Nahum, of Habakkuk and Zephaniah, of Haggai and Malachi and Zechariah?—INGERSOLL.

—NEXT WEEK—

SECULARISM AND THE GENERAL ELECTION

By F. A. RIDLEY

Religious Life in the Soviet Union

By GEORGES ORY

(Translated from the French by Valentina Manouso)

(Concluded from page 123)

THE Patriarchate of Moscow was re-established during the second world war by the authority, even by the encouragement of the government; the Patriarchate follows, on the secular ground of the foreign policy, an activity not only in conformity with the views of the Soviet Government, but desired by the Patriarchate itself.

The importance of this action, often ignored in the West, is very great; it shows itself in different ways.

The Orthodox religion, which extends to the frontiers of the zone of Soviet influence, is the predominant religion of this part of the world. The Russian Church works in complete loyalty with the Government, of which she is a valuable and efficient auxiliary. Her prelates fill the Orthodox missions beyond the frontiers, and witness in some way to the continuity of Russian policy, which ensures the traditional protection of the orthodox Slavs against the influence of the German and the Latin world.

The Moscow Patriarchate aims always at the closer grouping under its shield of the Orthodox autonomous Churches of the popular democratic countries. In the countries of the Middle East, the Patriarchate of Moscow is presented as the protector of the Orthodox Church against Islam and Catholicism.

If the Patriarch has been re-established by the Soviet Government it is because the highly patriotic attitude of the Church was recognised, and the State desired to contribute to the awakening of the age-old traditions of Russia. An honoured principle was to say that the Church must "go with the people."

On the occasion of a vacancy for the Patriarchal See of Moscow, a Local Council was called in 1945. It reunited not only the episcopacy but also the representatives of the lower clergy and the faithful with a view to the election of a new Patriarch. The Church of Russia, composed of 89 dioceses, was represented by the whole of her episcopal corps (46 bishops) and by 84 priests, three deacons and 38 laymen.

A large number of foreign Orthodox prelates were present and took part in the work of the Council in the role of guests of honour. There were the representatives of the Sees of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, and others from the Churches of Georgia, Serbia and Rumania.

The Russian Government was itself represented at the opening ceremony in the person of G. G. Karpov, president of the Council for Orthodox Church affairs.

This Assembly of Prelates was in reality a manifestation of the unity of the Orthodox Church, and it had a marked effect in the re-awakening of religion in Russia.

In 1948 a new inter-orthodox conference was summoned in Moscow. It had as its ostensible aim the celebration of the fifth centenary of the autocephalic Church of Russia. After considerable reserve the Patriarch of Constantinople, who had at first feared, and not without reason, that the Patriarch of Moscow would aspire to direct the Christian Slavs and Greeks, he accepted the invitation and was represented at the celebration. The other delegations were about the same as at the 1945 conference.

During the Conference of Churches violent and sharp criticism were directed against the Vatican and its present policy.

The principal affirmations of the Conference can be summed up as follows:—

The Papacy had a great responsibility in the preparations

in the World War; she was bound to the régimes of Mussolini and Hitler. . . . Recent Popes are only following the same policy as their predecessors since the fourth century. . . . The Vatican is hostile to all nationalism and seeks to dominate the world. . . .

The Papacy it also alleged, is aligned against the democratic principles of the Gospels. . . . The Pope has become both an ecclesiastic and a political monarch; he has changed the true doctrines of the Gospels. . . . The Roman bishops have violated the purity of the doctrine of the old and universal Orthodoxy by the introduction of new dogmas on the emanation of the Holy Ghost (filioque), the immaculate conception and the assumption of the Mother of God, the authority of the Pope in the Church, and his infallibility. . . .

These dogmas are purely human inventions which are not founded on Holy Scripture, nor on sound traditions, nor on Patristic literature, nor on the history of the Church. . . .

During the long centuries till our day, declare further the Orthodox bishops, the Papacy sought to convert the Orthodox worshippers to Catholicism by wars and violence. This was the case with the Rumanians in Transylvania in 1700, of Bulgarians in Turkey in 1859-60, and during the last war the 340,000 Serbians, Albanians and Croats, as well as the Orthodox of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Ukraine and White Russia.

This is why, in their appeal to the entire world, the Orthodox bishops exclaimed: "Let contemporary Rome become humble in repentance before the Rome of those Princes of the Apostles, Peter and Paul, before the Rome which exhaled the perfume of love and peace of the worshippers in the catacombs. . . ."

Whatever be the value of this polemic, it cannot be denied that the prestige and the authority of the Patriarchate of Moscow were increased after the great ecclesiastical manifestations of 1945 and 1948.

Besides this, the Patriarchate has renewed its relations with different foreign Churches, those in the East, of course, and also the Churches in Greece, Rumania, Bulgaria, Albania, Finland, Serbia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, as well as with the Orthodox Churches of the Far East.

The Patriarchate has not hesitated to interest itself in the emigration of Russians and to try to bring under its authority Russian Orthodox Churches abroad. This has seldom been achieved.

Finally, the Patriarchate of Moscow has given and is still giving an unconditional support to "The International Movement of the Partisans of Peace."

For some time now the Soviet Press has been remarking on the persistence of the religious sentiments in the U.S.S.R. It recalls the need to fight, by scientific-atheistic propaganda, the religious survivals of the former, now passing, middle-classes.

The manner in which this fight has been conducted appears not to satisfy entirely the leaders of the Party, for on November 11 last, *Pravda* published an official resolution recalling that if the Soviet constitution proclaims the right to struggle against the confessional tendencies, it equally recognises the freedom of conscience and of faith ("cult"); therefore it enjoins atheistic propagandists to convince believers by scientific and social education but to take great care not to wound their feelings.

In an article of December 12, 1954, the weekly London

(Continued on page 133)

This Believing World

Millions of people who would never have the chance of seeing the renowned evangelist in the flesh were divinely lucky to see Billy Graham at his best on Good Friday on TV. It was a remarkable performance. Everything was staged with meticulous care, and never had he been in better voice. For nearly an hour, he poured forth his conception of the Grand Old Story, pointing out at first that everybody there and, in fact, everybody in the world, were Sinners, were deeply enmeshed in Pure Original Sin, and only through Billy Graham and Jesus Christ could they be "saved." It was not put exactly like that, but that is what he meant. And think what it was to feel purified of all Sin—with his help—in the bosom of Christ Jesus!

For the redoubtable Billy, Sin was a far greater Horror than the H-Bomb, and only washing in the Blood of the Lamb or, what was equally as effective, coming to the platform graced by his presence, could anybody get rid of the Awful Burden of Sin. Delivered with all the power of evangelistic fervour he was capable of, his Message of the most primitive Oriental Fundamentalism we have ever heard—most of it incredible nonsense, of course—brought hundreds of Christians to the platform to be converted; and a thousand voices of deeply pious singers reverently welcomed the crowd to Jesus.

We cannot help wondering what the parsons listening to Graham's silly rigmarole must have been thinking. Most of them are educated men with some knowledge of history and science, and in this young American they found the product of—well, could it be *their* Christianity? Could Roman Catholic and Protestant scholars really have listened to this Good Friday "service" without shuddering? We doubt it. At the moment, perhaps, we have not Churchmen of the calibre of Dean Inge or Bishop Barnes—but can any of them with a claim to scholarship be anything but dumb-founded that thousands of people in an age of universal education could ever listen to the Rev. B. Graham and his confreres without *laughing*?

And this goes for the two talks on the religious education of children given over the air by Professor Jeffries of Birmingham University, and the Rev. R. Goodchild of Horsham, recently. Believing a little less than Billy Graham's staggering ignorance, the net result was about the same. Both were precious and solemn Fundamentalists of the deepest dye; while the reverend gentleman insisted that four years of age was too old for a child to begin his religious training. It should commence at the latest at one year. Both talks, as a marvellous antidote to Mrs. Knight's damnable heresy—a heresy which is not likely to be repeated—will have been received with intense joy by all good Christians. They must feel that they are winning all along the line.

Here is another example. Some readers will remember that we dealt with a little pamphlet on the famous Turin Shroud by Group-Captain Cheshire, V.C., who, as a good convert to Roman Catholicism, is no doubt anxious to do his bit for the Faith. Such a pamphlet could only appeal, however, to but few readers; so a wider audience had to be searched. And this was found in a recent number of *Picture Post* which filled some pages not only with Group-Captain Cheshire's claim that the Turin Shroud proved the Crucifixion to be historically true, but also with many photographs and diagrams in support. It was all *visible* proof of the Crucifixion.

All good Christians, however, do not need such proof. They already believe on faith or should do. And it is obvious that Group-Captain Cheshire has been disturbed by at least *some* heresy, or he would not have been so very, very anxious to have produced one of the biggest fakes and forgeries in Christian history to back up his supernatural beliefs. The Turin Shroud is as big a fraud as are the thousands of pieces of the Original Cross which flooded Europe during the Middle Ages, and which caused Calvin to treat Roman Catholicism with such contempt.

Review

The Soul, Here and Hereafter, by Walter W. Jewell. The Catholic Truth Society. Price 3d.

IT is quite a mistake to imagine that the very numerous pamphlets produced by the Catholic Truth Society are worthless productions. Granting their premises, they are nearly all very well written and, in many cases, scholarly and sincere attempts written in answer to Protestant and Freethought objections. Their job is to put Roman Catholicism on the map, and if they make few converts, no doubt they do strengthen the faith of those in the fold who are worried about "difficulties."

This pamphlet on the "soul" is exactly what one expects. Unless Catholics are convinced that there is a soul and that it functions both "here and hereafter," there is very little point in their religion at all. So Mr. Jewell gives us nearly 30 pages of disquisition, quite sure that he knows all about the soul, or, at least, enough to convince his fellow believers, even if he fails entirely to do so in the case of hard-headed Materialists.

He rightly points out how very difficult it is to define "life," though we all know what we mean when we say someone or something is "alive." The scholastic definition he gives is, "that activity by which a being moves itself," but he admits that it "in no sense explains the mystery of life." Calling some fruit an orange does not explain the mystery of an orange either, and giving name to "life" really explains nothing. So, in exactly the same way, it is difficult to define the word "soul."

And, in spite of many laboured pages, Mr. Jewell "explains" nothing about the "soul," merely affirming that it exists because the Catholic Church says it exists. In truth he admits that "Materialists have often pointed out, in fact, that a careful analysis of the body fails to reveal any trace of the soul." It should really be ". . . of 'a soul' or 'any soul'." Of course, "we must reject utterly any idea of the brain acting as a thought-container"—though Mr. Jewell "utterly" fails to tell us what happens to "thought" when one is knocked on the head and made "unconscious." He uses words and words in abundance, and so has no difficulty in persuading himself—and nobody else who thinks—that when "a Catholic talks of the spirit world, he has in mind far more than a gathering of the souls of departed men. He also believes in untold numbers of *pure spirits* . . ." and though the existence of Angels "cannot be demonstrated," it must be believed that Angels do exist. And if Mr. Jewell had had more space he would have added Hell and Heaven and Devils and Miracles—the dear old paraphernalia which must always go with true Christianity and for which there is not a scrap of evidence. Faith—yes, plenty of it. Believe in the Church of Rome first, and you can swallow everything else. All the same, there is no "soul," in spite of Mr. Jewell and his very wordy exposition.

H. C.

CAN MATERIALISM EXPLAIN MIND? By G. H. Taylor.
Price 4s.; postage 3d.

THE FREETHINKER

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

THE FREETHINKER will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad): One year, £1 4s. (in U.S.A., \$3.50); half-year, 12s.; three months, 6s. Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 41, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1.

To Correspondents

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

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

W. A. SEYMOUR and H. V. DEAN.—Good. Many such protests were made against the programme.

A. MCC. MACLAREN.—Shall be pleased to receive eye-witness accounts of the Glasgow revivalist meetings.

BRIAN MONAGHAN.—It was Thomas Hobbes who analysed laughter as the sudden realisation of superiority.

W.N.Y.—Thanks for information, but of course *The Freethinker* does not make capital out of clergymen thus convicted; we leave that sort of crowing to Christians.

G. E. PIROUET (Jersey).—See this week's "This Believing World." We dealt in detail with the Turin Shroud last year—in the number for December 31, 1954.

STANLEY HULME.—We note your appreciation of "Leicester Log." It is supplied by Mr. C. H. Hammersley, of the Leicester Secular Society.

Lecture Notices, Etc.

OUTDOOR

Blackburn Branch N.S.S. (Market Place).—Every Sunday, 7 p.m.: F. ROTHWELL.

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Deansgate Blitzed Site).—Every weekday, 1 p.m.: G. A. WOODCOCK.

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead Heath).—Sunday, May 1, noon: L. EBURY and H. ARTHUR.

Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square).—Every Wednesday at 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

West London Branch N.S.S.—Every Sunday at the Marble Arch from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. RIDLEY, EBURY and WOOD. *The Freethinker* on sale outside Hyde Park.

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch N.S.S. (Satis Café, 40, Cannon St., off New St.).—Sunday, May 1, 7 p.m.: L. EBURY, "Science, Progress and Religion."

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Mechanics Institute).—Sunday, April 24, 6-6.45 p.m.: H. NEWTON, "Communism and its Critics."

Junior Discussion Group (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Friday, April 29: R. HIGGINS, "Man's Place in Evolution."

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, May 1, 11 a.m.: Dr. W. E. SWINTON, "'Darwin Revalued' by Sir Arthur Keith."

Notes and News

Arrangements have now been made for the N.S.S. Annual Conference Reception and Social to take place at 7-30 p.m., Saturday, May 28, at The Royal Hotel, Woburn Place, London, W.C.1. The Conference will be held there also the next day, Whit Sunday, May 29, in the morning and afternoon. An outdoor Demonstration will be held in the evening at Speakers' Corner, Marble Arch.

Will all N.S.S. members intending to be present please write and inform the Secretary. Early reservation of rooms for the Saturday and Sunday nights is imperative. Bed and breakfast terms are 18s. 6d. single and 35s. double per night. There will be a special Conference Lunch on the Sunday, price 5s. The Secretary will appreciate information in advance of the numbers likely to attend the Reception and the Lunch.

The Chapman Cohen Memorial Fund

Previously acknowledged, £828 5s. 10d.; Miss Casey, £1 1s.; G. I. Bennett (third donation), 15s.; Mrs. M. Watson, 16s.; A.E.K., 10s.; A. Hancock, £1; W.H.D., 2s. 6d.; H. V. D. Clark, 5s.; K. E. H. Clark, 5s. Total: £832 1s. 4d.

Will subscribers please indicate "second contribution," "third," "weekly," etc., and it will then be acknowledged as such. The purpose of the Fund is to keep "The Freethinker" in existence.

Donations should be sent to "The Chapman Cohen Memorial Fund" and cheques made out accordingly.

In this issue will be found a letter advocating that the various sections of the freethought movement (Secularism, Humanism and Rationalism) should join forces. Incidentally, the writer is a daughter of the late Lady Maud Simon, an occasional contributor to *The Freethinker* during the editorship of Chapman Cohen, and whose book, *Speaking for Myself*, was published by the Pioneer Press. The question as to the advisability of such a Freethought union is one which has been promulgated from time to time in the past, and may well recur from time to time in the future, and nothing is lost by this periodical airing. At present, however, it would seem that just as there are more ways than one of catching fish, so the various bodies may each succeed, with their different types of propaganda, in reaching people not susceptible to the other two—always assuming, of course, that it is the *intention* to win converts.

Billy Graham, in his "My Answer" newspaper column, advises a questioner who complained that, although she says her prayers every morning, the traffic on her way to work makes her feel hectic. This is what he told her: "When you come to a red light, relax. There you have an extra minute for prayer. . . . You will be surprised at how it will help to keep the peace of God in your heart."

Officers of President Peron's Argentine government halted a church ceremony recently which was being held as a tribute to Archbishop Lafitte. The prelate is one of the 27 church dignitaries whom Peron regards as hostile to the government and who have been charged with attempts to undermine the government and to infiltrate the General Confederation of Labor.

The B.B.C. broadcast the other day that Peron ordered the suspension of all Roman Catholic religious teaching in all the schools in Argentina. Does this forecast genuine Secular Education?

Until recently, Easter rugby was prohibited in Falmouth. However, thanks to local agitation and the work done by our colleague, Mr. E. J. Hughes, this particular piece of Christian intolerance has been successfully combated.

Religious Life in the Soviet Union

(Concluded from page 131)

Conservative journal, *The Sunday Times*, sums the matter up as follows: "It is clear that Communists have not destroyed the Church, although they may have been able to change her nature. . . . The Soviet State is always realistic: if it cannot destroy the Church, the State would use it, and perhaps to a certain measure reform it. . . . The State will abandon little by little its differences with the Church till the time when it will feel that she has become a loyal member of the State, and that the State can without fear use her to make peace with the West. . . ."

Robert Burns

By COLIN McCALL

The blood of his heathen manhood rolled
Full-billowed through his veins.

—JAMES THOMSON ("B.V.")

BURNS is not only Scotland's national poet: he is, more significantly, the poet of the Scottish people and, to some extent, the poet of all English-speaking peoples. He has had to pay for his popularity by being adapted to suit everybody's needs, but he has stood up to this process remarkably well, which is a tribute to his universality. He was able to express the deepest human feelings in a simple, yet eloquent, way and he has touched our hearts. If the main function of the poet is to heighten our sensitivity then Burns has performed it admirably. But to Freethinkers he has the added attraction of a rebellious and sceptical nature. As James Thomson ("B.V.") wrote:—

He felt scant need
Of church or creed,
He took small share
In saintly prayer,
His eyes found food for his love;

There can be no doubt of this. Burns despised the Calvinism of his native land and his finest satirical works were directed at the Kirk and its teachings. *Holy Willie's Prayer* reveals his contempt for the idea of intercession and has this exquisite opening stanza:—

O Thou that in the Heavens does dwell,
Wha, as it pleases best Thysel,
Sends ane to Heaven an' ten to Hell
A' for Thy glory,
And no for onie guid or ill
They've done before Thee!

In the *Dedication to Gavin Hamilton* (who was prosecuted for neglect of public ordinances and violation of the Sabbath—probably at the instigation of "Holy Willie" Fisher) he lists the Kirk's demands of its devotees:—

Learn three-mile pray'rs, an' half-mile graces,
Wi' weel-spread looves,* and lang, wry faces;
Grunt up a solemn, lengthen'd groan,
And damn a' parties but your own;
I'll warrant then, ye're nae deceiver,
A steady, sturdy, staunch believer.

And in rollicking, irreverent style, he describes the tent-preaching of Alexander Moodie at *The Holy Fair*:—

Hear how he clears the points o' Faith
Wi' rattlin and thumpin!
Now meekly calm, now wild in wrath,
He's stampin, an' he's jumpin!
His lengthen'd chin, his turn'd-up snout,
His eldritch† squeel an' gestures,
O, how they fire the heart devout—
Like cantharidian plaisters
On sic a day.

Burns knew that the Kirk was the stronghold of ignorance and superstition. If it had its way,

Then Orthodoxy yet may prance,
An' Learning in a woody dance,
An' that fell cur ca'd Common-sense,
That bites sae sair,
Be banish'd o'er the sea to France—
Let him bark there!

But that would not happen if he could help it. He scourged "Calvin's sons" without mercy, appalled by the hellfire notions with which they continually threatened their congregations.

I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,
Ev'n to a deil,
To skelp an' scaud poor dogs like me
An' hear us squeel,

he remarks in his witty *Address to the Deil*.

Burns's world was essentially this one: the world of loves

and hates, of happiness and sorrow. And how tenderly and beautifully he wrote about these human experiences! Take those lovely lines from *Ae Fond Kiss*:—

Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
Had we never lov'd sae blindly,
Never met—or never parted—
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

Or that superb lyric *A Red, Red Rose*, borrowed it is true, but perfected in the process. Francis Jeffrey was surely not alone in thinking that some of the songs "are enchantingly beautiful and affect one more than any species of poetry whatsoever." Burns, in fact, preserved many of his country's songs that would otherwise have been lost. Not only did he preserve them, but he turned the typically Scottish folk-songs into songs for us all. It is from the Scottish tradition that they spring—a tradition in which Burns was immersed—but it is true to say that they are now part of a wider culture. We only have to think of *Auld Lang Syne* to appreciate this. Here, as in many other cases, he worked upon traditional material and produced a song with universal appeal.

Burns, of course, was not the unlettered peasant that some people still imagine him to have been, but his country upbringing gave him an affinity with nature that was free from the sentimentality of a Wordsworth. The melancholy beauty of his lines *To a Mountain Daisy* and *To a Mouse* give the impression of having been written at the time and not in a study afterwards. This genuine quality is what is lacking in *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, which appeals to the pious. Here sentimentalism got the better of him, and the poem does not compare with the others I have mentioned or with *Tam o' Shanter* and *The Jolly Beggars*. The latter's final chorus is justly famous:—

A fig for those by law protected!
Liberty's a glorious feast,
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest!

No Church could have contained Robert Burns: he was far too independent of mind. And his attitude towards the belief in God and a future life was not consistent. In one of his letters, he has "every reason to believe" that his "Creator" will one day be his "Judge"; in another he asks: "Ye venerable sages and holy flamens, is there probability in your many conjectures, any truth in your many stories, of another world beyond death; or are they all alike baseless visions and fabricated fables?" and exclaims: "what a flattering idea, then, is a world to come! Would to God I as firmly believed it, as I ardently wish it!" In two letters to Mrs. Dunlop, separated by only six months, he refers to Jesus Christ first as "from God" and then as "thou amiablest of characters! I trust thou art no impostor and that thy revelation of blissful scenes of existence beyond death and the grave is not one of the many impositions which time after time have been palmed on credulous mankind." Perhaps the letter to Robert Muir on March 7, 1788, most nearly states his reasoned views. An honest man, he thinks, has nothing to fear from death. "If we lie down in the grave, the whole man a piece of broken machinery, to moulder with the clods of the valley—be it so; at least there is an end of pain, care, woes and wants: if that part of us called Mind does survive the apparent destruction of the man—away with the old-wife prejudices and tales!"

In lighter vein he declared that "of all nonsense, religious nonsense is the most nonsensical" echoing the opening stanza of *The Kirk's Alarm* and reminding us again that, whatever his precise deistic beliefs may have

* palms.

† unearthly.

been, he was the open enemy of the prevailing Christianity of his time and country. Sir Walter Scott and others have regretted Burns's profanity whilst admiring the brilliance of his satire. But the two are essentially bound up together. It was because he felt so strongly opposed to Calvinism that it called forth the great satiric powers in him. His satires were the revolt of his humanity against the inhumanity of religion.

Burns, indeed, was a very great humanising force. His effect on Scottish life in particular and on human life in general has been considerable. He has influenced our lives as few other poets have done, and he has influenced them for the better. It is not surprising that Freethinkers should honour the memory of the poet whose themes so often were liberty and love.

The General Election

Freethinkers throughout the country will, during the next month, have the opportunity of bringing some aspects of the freethought case before the general public at election meetings. Well devised questions are an important means of propaganda. Such questions, in fact, are more important than the replies they will get. Elections are the time for making promises, and not too much reliance can be placed on apparently favourable replies by candidates. Politicians are notoriously adept in making "cagey" answers calculated not to offend the greatest number of voters. It is the *questions*, therefore, which are significant, not the replies. And there will always be a number of listeners on whose ears they will fall with good effect.

Local conditions and circumstances will no doubt determine the nature, and priority, of such a questioning campaign, but our forthcoming issues will contain material. Questioners will be at an advantage where branches of the N.S.S. exist, enabling members to "team up" for an attack beyond the scope of an isolated individual.

Meanwhile, the following lines of attack might well be under consideration:—

1. Freedom of the air for minority opinions. This, of course, is the Open Sesame to the advocacy of *all* secularist reforms.
2. Disendowment and Disestablishment of the Church.
3. Rates and taxes on Church buildings.
4. Secular Education, and the question of grants to R.C. schools.
5. Divorce Law reform.
6. Abolition of blood sports.

We shall be pleased to receive reports from branches and individuals.

G. H. T.

BRADFORD BRANCH A.G.M.

The annual general meeting of the Bradford Branch N.S.S., with a good attendance of members, was held towards the close of a very successful indoor lecture session. A healthy position was shown in the financial accounts, in membership increases, and in sales of *The Freethinker* and other literature. The officials were re-elected, with Mr. H. Day, president and Mr. W. Baldie, secretary, the former being appointed delegate to the N.S.S. Conference. Future activities discussed included arrangements for the open air season in Broadway Car Park, and a summer outing.

CHRISTIANITY—WHAT IS IT? By Chapman Cohen. A criticism of Christianity from a not common point of view. Price 2s. 6d.; postage 2d.

THE HISTORICAL JESUS AND THE MYTHICAL CHRIST. By Gerald Massey. What Christianity owes to Ancient Egypt. Price 1s.; postage 2d.

The Sure and Certain Hope!

By E. H. GROUT

CLINGING to the idea of survival after death, a friend writes, "I can't imagine your intelligence being so silly as to bury itself in a dark hole or to allow itself to be burned up in an incinerator." This treats of the intelligence as if it were an entity, something separate from the body: but *intelligence* is simply a term of convenience for concentrating attention upon the psychical aspects of an animal. *Will* is another such abstract term convenient for directing attention to the conative aspects of a person. Neither *mind* nor *will* has any existence apart from a body that sustains them. When the physical bases of mind are destroyed, there is no mind left: the functions of mind are the functions of living matter. Consciousness depends upon the physical fact of a continuous supply of blood to the brain: the elaboration and circulation of blood depend upon such material things as food, warmth, air, exercise, and rest.

The dependance of the mind on bodily functions has been known for centuries. One way in which this was expressed was by the doctrine of humours, wherein the character of a person was said to reflect the proportions in which the humours (=liquids), blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile were mixed in him. We still talk of a person's temperament being sanguine, phlegmatic, melancholic, or choleric.

No one likes the waste involved in the death of a person of fine intelligence and character. The *mneme* of a thinker like Newton, Bradlaugh, or John M. Robertson consists of a complex organisation of associations, aptitudes, and judgments built up by a lifetime of industrious effort. It is hateful to think that all this should be lost through the paralysing hand of death. (Very often such powers disappear before death intervenes.) But such waste is quite in accord with the hit-or-miss ways of *Nature*—another dangerous and much-abused term. A cod is said to spawn eight or nine million eggs, of which only a few individuals come to maturity. "The common house-fly is computed to produce twenty-one millions in a season; while so enormous is the laying power of the aphid, or plant-louse, that the tenth brood of one parent, without adding the products of all the generations which precede the tenth, would contain more ponderable matter than all the human population of China, estimating this at five hundred millions!" (Edward Clodd: *The Story of Creation*, p.169). The mortality is terrific: the waste is stupendous.

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

Tennyson reflects the deepening influence of scientific thought—

"Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life."

But he denies even this, a few verses farther on—

"So careful of the type? 'but no,
From scarp'd cliff and quarried stone
She cries, 'A thousand types are gone:
I care for nothing all shall go.'"

The argument from the economic interpretation of Nature lends no support to the doctrine of immortality of individuals.

Canon R. H. Charles, in his *Religious Development Between the Old and the New Testament* (p.22) gives the doctrine a more scientific guise:

"For if we believe the teaching of science as to the conservation of energy—even of the lowest forms of it—then

still more must we believe in the conservation of the highest forms of energy that have appeared on earth, the personalities of saints and heroes, yea, and of the nameless and numberless multitudes, in whom have been realised the divine energies of courage and truth, of faith and of unflinching hope, of love and boundless self-sacrifice."

I can appreciate the satisfaction he felt in writing that. ("That's paying back those scientific Johnnies in their own coin," said the man in the dog-collar, chuckling canonically.) It may not be surprising to find his science is shaky, but it is appalling to find words being used with such lack of precision. *Truth* and *faith*, for instance, are not energies at all. *Divine* energies belong to the gods, not to mankind. Although Canon Charles was a so-called "divine"—a blasphemous appellation, I consider—he knew nothing whatever of an omnipotent divinity lacking body, parts, or passions. Notice how he passes on from "forms of energy" to "personalities." Personality involves a physical form, something that we can recognise. The energy that we associate with it is deduced from its results; nobody has ever seen it. Canon Charles makes no claim that the physical body lives on after death, as an entity. The materials comprised in it are disintegrated, and although they remain in the world they become quite unidentifiable as the human being that we used to know.

One of the many ills that religion has inflicted upon the world is the encouragement given to people to indulge in "hope of a blessed immortality." Some religions have even had the effrontery and fraudulency to take money from worshippers for allegedly helping them to secure this chimerical boon. I like the story of the pagan chief who was being regaled with promises of the fine heaven that would be his if he died as a Christian convert. He asked whether his dog would be there. On being answered "No," he refused Christianity, preferring to share whatever fate his dog had to undergo. There is no reason for shutting out the animals from any such immortality, or to suppose that immortality is a reward given to those people who believe that Almighty God—who is immortal—underwent death on a cross (or tree) in the form of a man.

Watch the people going in to a meeting of old-age pensioners: see the shaking hands and heads, the doddering footsteps, the "second childishness and mere oblivion, sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything." You see the spark of life dying out, and when the end comes feel that it is a "happy release." The spark goes out, just as the light of an electric torch fades out when the materials of the battery are exhausted.

"Oh, come with old Khayyâm, and leave the wise
To talk; one thing is certain, that Life flies;
One thing is certain, and the rest is lies;
The Flower that once has blown for ever dies."

LECTURE REPORT

Mr. F. A. Ridley was the speaker at Manchester on March 20, his subject "The Power and Secrets of the Jesuits"—a subject upon which he has written much but apparently never before lectured; he intends to delve more deeply into these powers and secrets on a future occasion. The "Company of Jesus," said Mr. Ridley, might well be regarded as the "Brains Trust" of the Catholic Church. Its members were chosen for good health and intellect and underwent a rigorous 17 years of training. Scientists and scholars had emerged from the Company, which was partly a political body and partly a secret society, as well as an order with a distinctly military basis. In fact, it had originally been founded by Ignatius Loyola as a military force to fight the Turks and recover Palestine, not, as was often thought, with the object of fighting the Protestant Reformation. Yet, whilst formed to fight Moslems, it learnt much from Mohammedan methods, possibly even the practice of assassination. Mr. Ridley dealt briefly with a number of aspects of the Company's chequered history and changing fortunes: its treatment of heretics, its attempt to blow up the English Parliament, its Paraguayan "communist" regime and, by no means least, its missionary work

in all parts of the world. But it was essentially a "crisis organisation," continued the speaker, coming into its own during periods of anxiety for the Catholic Church and fading during periods of tranquility. At times it had sunk into a state of decay and, indeed, might well have disappeared altogether at the end of the eighteenth century but for the outbreak of the French Revolution. It was kept busy fighting Communism and Atheism today, and was using all its shrewd political knowledge gained over four centuries in adapting the old to meet the threat of the new—the threat of freethought and social progress.

(Manchester Branch Bulletin No. 7).

Correspondence

FREETHOUGHT UNITY

I feel, as do many others, that the only way to ensure the survival of those societies that work for truth and freedom of thought (on the air and in every other way), is for them to *Unite*. A new society comprising the R.P.A., the N.S.S., and the two Ethical groups, might be called "The Humanist Society." They should publish one monthly magazine, "The Humanist Review." To bring this new society into existence, let this be the main subject to be debated at the R.P.A. Conference at Oxford on July 30. If Lord Russell were to preside and encourage us, success should ensue. I suggest representatives from the N.S.S. and the Ethical Societies should be invited as guests of the R.P.A. The subject actually chosen, "Arts in Society," will do nothing at all to sustain the cause of humanism, but the establishment of ONE Society, in place of four, involving great saving of money, personnel, premises, etc., might mean the beginning of a great advance of the power and influence of freethought and humanism.

SYLVIA WINKWORTH.

ARE CHRISTIAN MYTHS NEEDED?

It appears to me that those "militant" Freethinkers who regard religious myths and fables as nothing but targets for ridicule have somewhat misconceived the essential function of the popular religions.

For the greater part of mankind, to whom abstract reasoning and logical deduction mean little or nothing, picturesque and imaginative stories, presenting ideas and principles in familiar anthropomorphic imagery, are a necessity.

To attempt to assess the value of religious myths on the basis of their conformity to literal truth is to shut one's eyes to their real nature and purpose. The appeal of the philosopher or logician is to the reason; he is concerned with the truth and consistency of his theories. The appeal of the religious teacher or leader is to the emotions through the imagination; he is concerned more with the effect his words will produce than with their relation to literal fact.

Reason and Faith are not deadly rivals for the same position, but separate and distinct methods of instruction intended for separate and distinct groups of people. The man whose temperament fits him for disciplined logical investigation will turn to science and philosophy for answers to his questions. The man who is repelled by cold logic will seek answers to his questions in the legends and traditions that seek to present concepts and abstractions in a familiar and homely guise.

Intellectual discipline is for the comparative few, and will never become popular. The idea of a jealous personal God sitting above the clouds and acting as moral umpire and prizegiver in human affairs appears futile and ridiculous to the philosophically inclined. But it is an idea that can be grasped by the man in the street, to whom "scientific humanism" is as remote as the constellation of Orion.

S. W. BROOKS.

OBITUARY

It is with profound regret that we have to record the death of the eminent French freethinker, Professor Prosper Alfaric, at the age of 78. M. Alfaric was a leading authority on Christian origins, besides being the author of an important work on *The Intellectual Evolution of St. Augustine*. In recent years he has been the president, and moving spirit, of the *Cercle Ernest Renan*, a study group devoted to the study of the evolution of religion and, in particular, of Christianity. Professor Alfaric was an honorary vice-president of last year's World Congress at Luxembourg. He was unable to be there in person, but his paper on *The True Spiritual Values* was read there.

Professor Alfaric was one of the most eminent Freethinking scholars of his time. We mourn his passing along with our French comrades.

F.A.R.

SOCIALISM AND RELIGION. By F. A. Ridley. Price 1s.; postage 1½d.