

The Freethinker

Vol. LXXVI—No. 33

Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

Price Fivepence

THE Roman Catholic world has recently celebrated a notable historic centenary, that of the founder of what is, four centuries later, still a world-famous and influential body, the Company of Jesus, or Jesuits. Ignatius of Loyola died on July 31st, 1556, in Rome, too busy attending to the Spanish business of his Order even to prepare for his death. The man whom so unbiased a judge as Lord Macaulay held to have been the saviour of the Catholic Church actually died without the last sacraments. Ignatius cuts quite a figure in Church, and world, history, and the fourth centenary was widely commemorated, including a short talk on the BBC. Whatever one may think of his historical role, and liberal thinkers will consider it was predominantly evil, yet he was a notable figure whether viewed as an ecclesiastical organiser or exploiter of religious psychology.

A Spiritual Don Quixote

His career reads like an ecclesiastical version of the startling adventures of his fictitious countryman Don Quixote, but Ignatius, unlike the immortal knight, did not tilt his lance against windmills but against the more solid opposition provided by the enemies of his Church. Actually the comparison between Ignatius and Don Quixote is not as farcical as it may sound, for Loyola, too, was a soldier who belonged to the minor nobility, and but for the French cannon ball which shattered his leg in a Pyrenean fort in one of the interminable wars between France and Spain, he would have spent his life among a thousand other now forgotten Castilian knights in the service of the "Most Catholic" Spanish kings and his bones would probably have bleached the battlefield fighting against Turks or heretics in some foreign strand. The cannon ball, fired by an also Catholic French gunner, which, so to speak, propelled Loyola out of the army into the Church, was a lucky shot for the latter. It scored a bull's eye! The retired soldier gone religious represents a recurring figure in religious sub-species. Loyola is historically the most individually remarkable and socially significant.

The Last of the Crusades

Ignatius is often misunderstood by historians, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, who tend to judge him as a typical Jesuit, which he was not. Founders rarely are typical of their organisations. St. Francis of Assisi was not at all a typical Franciscan. Nor was Lenin, whose combination of doctrinal fanaticism and sober realism was rather similar to that of Loyola, a typical Communist. Loyola was primarily a soldier who had exchanged the service of the King of Spain for that of the King of Heaven, but whose essential military outlook remained. It has often been pointed out that the title given by Loyola to his creation was a military one, the "Company" of Jesus. In the original

Spanish *compania* has a definitely military significance. The Jesuits were intended by their Founder to be, first and foremost, soldiers—the "shock troops" of their Church. Nor was there any ambiguity about the nature, or whereabouts, of the enemy. The Company was not founded to fight the Reformation, though this did later become its chief task. When Loyola, freshly returned from his adventurous pilgrimage to Palestine, first mooted the idea of a new religious order, Luther had barely raised the standard of revolt at Wittenburg and Calvin was still unknown. (Loyola actually studied at the University of Paris at the same time as Calvin, but there is no evidence that these two

famous religious antagonists ever met; such a meeting would make a fine theme for an historical novelist.) Ignatius began his ecclesiastical career as a crusader, and the enemy was the religion of the Koran, that of the Muslim Turks, and the objective of Loyola's crusade, as of that of his medieval predecessors, Peter the Hermit, Godfrey de Bouillon *et al*, was to rescue the Holy Sepulchre and the Holy City from the infidel conquerors. In the initial draft of the Jesuit oath every recruit undertook to go to Palestine whenever the Pope, or his own superior, directed him. It was in the Holy Land that the final Armageddon between Christ and Mohammed was eventually to be fought, and the newly formed Company was to lead the crusading hosts from the Christian West; it was history, and not Loyola, that ultimately directed the energies of the Jesuits into other channels.

Ignatius and the R.C. Church

In an Irish Catholic paper recently was the assertion that Loyola has had a greater personal influence on modern Catholicism than has anyone else. I am of the same opinion. To say, as did the Protestant Macaulay, that the Jesuits actually saved the R.C. Church from destruction during the storms of the Reformation era, is probably an over-simplification. There were other factors, notably the naked terrorism of the Inquisition and the military potency of Spain. But certainly the discipline and demagoguery of the Jesuits did play an important part in the unexpected revival of the moribund Church of the Borgias. In any case the Jesuit influence of the Church expressed itself in many directions. Without Loyola the Church of Rome would probably have survived but would have been different in many ways. Modern Catholicism is in fact far from being identical with its medieval precursor; the difference is largely due to the Jesuits who adapted the Church to the modern age, not always in a reactionary direction. The modern Church showed a fitting sense of gratitude in canonising Loyola!

Loyola in World History

Religion, including Catholics, has not been rich in really outstanding figures. But Ignatius was a great organiser of

VIEWS and OPINIONS

Ignatius of Loyola (c 1490 - 1556)

By F. A. RIDLEY

astounding will power. In Jesuit psychology Will has always taken priority over Reason! At their zenith in the 17th century the Jesuits represented a sovereign power in Paraguay; the power behind the throne in the vast Chinese Empire, where their worldly wisdom, even more than their scientific attainments, won them a dominant position at the court of Peking; and in practice the Jesuits almost constituted one of the Great Powers of their contemporary Europe. In more subtle, but not less influential, ways they affected many fields—education, theology and even science. Even today a Jesuit, at Roman headquarters, interviewed by the Italian correspondent of the BBC on the occasion of the fourth centenary, could detail a formidable field of contemporary activities, ranging from fighting Communism to measuring earthquakes. The man

who started all this can hardly be denied *some* historical status.

An Accurate Prophecy

Every Jesuit still studies Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* as the foundation of his religious psychology. However, others have also had their effect in making up that complex which we call "Jesuitical"; the modern Jesuit is perhaps more subtle and less militant than the Founder would have wished. In the main, however, the celebrated Company has fulfilled the intention of its Founder; the shock troops of the Church have waxed in face of resistance and waned when it was absent! Thus they have fulfilled the apt prophecy of the Founder: "No tempest is so deadly as a perfect calm; no enemy is so fatal as the absence of all enemies."

Convert and Atheist Debate

[We think our readers will be interested in this impartial report of Mr. McCall's debate at Gloucester on July 27th. It is reprinted entire from the Gloucester *Citizen* (28/7/56) with kind permission of the Editor.—ED.]

"DR. BILLY GRAHAM is a performer in a gigantic show—a circus you might say if you were irreverent enough." So declared Mr. Colin McCall, Secretary of the National Secular Society, when he took part in a debate in the Raikes Memorial Hall, Gloucester, last night.

He was speaking for a motion "That the Billy Graham crusade was a failure as a producer of converts."

Mr. McCall was opposed by Mr. Charles Potter, a former Communist who says he was converted at a Billy Graham meeting and who is now travelling secretary of the Workers' Christian Fellowship.

Mr. McCall said that in his beliefs, Billy Graham was behind the times. But in his use of modern publicity he was in accord with them.

He admitted that Billy Graham offered something. The question was: What was it and was it enough?

In his show Billy Graham was an artiste, a star performer. And he had the most gigantic advance publicity that any performer of his kind had ever had.

PREFERRED MARILYN

Mr. McCall compared the advance publicity accorded Billy Graham to that given Miss Marilyn Monroe when she arrived in this country. He preferred Miss Monroe, but, he conceded, it was simply a question of taste.

"An emotional spirit is aroused by the singing of hymns," went on Mr. McCall. "The timing is near perfect. There is a spotlight and Billy Graham appears at just the right moment."

But was the emotional part of the crusade satisfying in the 20th century? He suggested that it was not.

He contended that the crusade had not converted one genuine atheist to Christianity. He said he would require Mr. Potter to give a reasoned case for atheism and a reasoned case for its rejection before he would accept that Mr. Potter was in fact a converted atheist. He added that the Communist party was by no means composed of atheists.

THE "FOLLOW-UP"

Mr. Potter, opposing the motion, outlined the system used to "follow up" converts.

When he was converted the managers at the factory at which he worked had a conference about him—because it

was so widely publicised in this country—and the general manager said that he would get over it.

But when he left the factory the general manager shook his hand and said he wished that he had the courage to do the same.

Speaking of converts, Mr. Potter said that at Harringay 36,431 people "took the decision for Christ"; at Glasgow 52,523, and at Wembley 25,000.

TV CONVERSIONS

Many thousands of others had been converted when the crusade was broadcast on radio and TV.

One of Jack Spot's men went to Harringay by accident, was converted, later beaten up and slashed but was now earning an honest living and the money he earned he was using to put right some of the wrongs he had done.

So far as hard intellectual thinking was concerned he had fought a tremendous personal battle before becoming a Christian.

During question time when he was being interrupted Mr. McCall told those present that atheists could teach them good manners.

When the two men summed up Mr. McCall commented that he had no case to answer. Mr. Potter had relied on emotionalism and had not produced a reasoned argument. He said that Mr. Potter had not in fact been an atheist.

The chairman was Mr. William Norman.

QUIZ

1. To which masonic lodge did Bradlaugh belong?
2. What is the literal meaning of Brahma?
3. Who was the first child to be named Florence and how did she get her name?
4. In 1852 a mysterious "West End Lady" called repeatedly at London's best known Freethought bookshop, that of Edward Truelove, the "Fortress of Prohibited Books," as it was called. Who was she?
5. In which play does Noel Coward wring comedy out of Spiritualism?
6. What is Solipsism and who are its advocates?
7. In which periodical does the R.C. Church aim to keep a hold on the Trade Unions?
8. Which ecclesiastic made a notable contribution to biological science?
9. A most distinguished 20th century anthropologist and his wife died within a few hours of each other. Who was he?

(Answers on page 268)

Krishnamurti

By THE REV. JOHN L. BROOM, M.A.

THE STEEP DECLINE in belief in the traditional Christian dogmas, coupled with the highly complex and uncertain nature of 20th century life, has resulted in a universal quest of mental and "spiritual" security. Alleged providers of this desirable state have not been slow to emerge. From the crudities of the Jehovah's Witnesses and Billy Grahamites to the sophistications of Rudolf Steiner and P. D. Ouspensky, from the frankly materialist (in the non-philosophical sense of course!) get-rich-quick philosophy of Dale Carnegie to the detachment of the Vedanta popularised by Messrs. Huxley and Isherwood, the saviours have advocated their varied and often contradictory nostrums; perhaps the most interesting of all is Jiddu Krishnamurti.

Krishnamurti was born in Southern India in 1897, the son of a minor civil servant. In 1909, the Rev. Charles Leadbeater, who was, with Mrs. Annie Besant, one of the leaders of the Theosophical Society, met the 12-year boy and made the startling discovery that Krishnamurti was none other than the incarnation of the "New World Teacher", the Lord Maitreya, who had last appeared on earth in the person of Jesus Christ. Mr. Leadbeater convinced Mrs. Besant of the truth of his version, and thereafter the young boy was prepared by the Theosophists for his "divine" mission. From 1912-22 he was given a good education in England, and in India the "Order of the Star in the East" was founded "to proclaim the coming of a World Teacher and to prepare the world for that event". This, however, proved too much for some leading Theosophists to swallow, notably those in Germany under the leadership of Rudolf Steiner, and they forthwith seceded from the parent body in protest against the Krishnamurti legend. Strangely enough, in spite of the absurd claims made on his behalf, Krishnamurti developed into a youth of considerable charm and intelligence. After 1922 he travelled widely, wrote strange poems and articles for the Order of the Star and made friends with many famous people in the world of art and politics, notably with Bourdelle, the French sculptor, and George Lansbury. During the Jubilee celebrations of the Theosophical Society in 1925, Krishnamurti was officially recognised as the "New World Teacher" and apparently accepted quite happily the majestic rôle assigned him. The Order of the Star thereafter purchased land in California, Holland and India for the establishment of camps, at each of which Krishnamurti would deliver addresses every year to his disciples. For the next four years all went well. Mrs. Besant went from country to country, proclaiming the 20th century incarnation of Krishna, the Buddha and the Christ. But, suddenly, without warning in 1929 the blow fell. On August 3rd at the annual camp in Holland, Krishnamurti repudiated all his pretensions to messiahship and dramatically in a few words dissolved the Order of the Star. "I maintain," he said, "that truth is a pathless land and you cannot approach it by any path whatsoever, by any religion, by any sect. A belief cannot and must not be organised. . . . You have been preparing for 18 years for the coming of the World Teacher who would set you free. But in what way are you freer, greater? . . . You can form other organisations and expect someone else. With that I am not concerned, nor with creating new cages. . . . My only concern is to set men absolutely, unconditionally free."

Krishnamurti's action was a far-reaching one. It meant giving up the support of a huge organisation with many wealthy patrons and opportunities of widespread publicity

through the theosophical periodicals. Since then Krishnamurti has ploughed a lonely furrow, refusing to be recognised as a prophet or even a teacher and disdaining disciples. It is true he lectures all over the world and there is a body (Krishnamurti Writings Inc.) which arranges for the publication of his talks. But there is no Krishnamurti sect with distinctive creeds. Why this is so will become apparent in our discussion of Krishnamurti's outlook.

The essence of Krishnamurti's doctrine (if such it can be called) lies in his denial of the truth of all organised systems of belief and the consequent reliance on what he calls "individual awareness". Belief in any creed or party, whether it be Christianity, Buddhism or Communism separates us from our fellows and creates intolerance. This, of course, includes belief in God, which must be abandoned like the rest. "You like to believe in a God who is carefully looking after your petty little affairs, telling you what you should do and how you should do it. This is childish and immature thinking. You think the God Father is watching everyone of us. That is a mere projection of your own personal liking. It is obviously not true. . . . The men who dropped the atom bomb on Hiroshima said that God was with them, and those who flew from England to destroy Germany said that God was their co-pilot. The people who say they believe in God have destroyed half the world. . . . Through lack of intelligence we accept the idea of a super-intelligence we call God. But this God is not going to give us a better life. What leads to a better life is intelligence, and there cannot be intelligence if there is belief, if there are class divisions, if the means of production are in the hands of a few, if there are isolated nationalities and sovereign governments." Reliance on any saviour, Krishnamurti insists, means that we have failed to realise that happiness which is freedom can only be known individually from moment to moment. "There is hope in men, not in society, not in systems, but in you and me. When you quote the Bhagavad Gita or the Bible, or some Chinese Sacred Book, you are merely repeating vain words. What you are repeating is not the truth, it is a lie; for truth cannot be repeated. . . . what is important is to find out truth for ourselves and not according to a particular saint or to a person who comes from India or from some other place, the more exotic the better."

We all crave security, says Krishnamurti, whether it be material or what is vaguely called "spiritual". But the latter is as fatal to happiness as the former.

(To be concluded)

THE BIBLE BUSINESS

In its obituary notice of Mr. C. O. Wake, formerly general manager of Eyre and Spottiswoode, publishers, *The Bookseller* (21/7/56) said: "A few years before the war, when a price-cutting campaign in the Bible trade was fast developing, he was prime mover in getting the Bible publishers round a table to discuss the position and finally to agree to a scale of prices for all type sizes, binding styles and embellishments applicable to Authorised Version Bibles and New Testaments and also to Prayer and Hymn Books." This arrangement is, *The Bookseller* suggests, "a monopoly nobody minds."—Another case of the moral influence of Christianity, we assume.

—NEXT WEEK—

APARTHEID FOR WOMEN

By C. G. L. DU CANN

This Believing World

Fervent believers in the Walls of Jericho must have looked forward with the most pious hopes to the TV representation of "Buried Treasure" with the site of Jericho as the focus and such distinguished archæologists as Sir Mortimer Wheeler, Lady Wheeler, Dr. Glyn Daniel, and Miss Kathleen Kenyon, the Director of the British School of Archæology at Jerusalem, as its sponsors. Alas, they could tell us *nothing* about the Jericho though, at the outset, Dr. Daniel read the story from God's Precious Word in very reverent tones. It is true that he only told us about the spies being sent to Jericho; but all the speakers carefully avoided telling us how, when the priests blew with their trumpets, "the wall fell down flat."

★

Of course, in Hebrews this is flatly contradicted, for there it says that the walls fell down "by faith." But what is a little contradiction in these holy matters? In any case, all the archæologists hastily passed over the great event by assuring us that there are *no* traces of the "Biblical" Jericho for they have all been "washed away" — as were, of course, the hopes of all TV believers to get some confirmation of the Truth with which the Holy Bible is packed. We had a very interesting film and lots of finds, but *nothing whatever* about the Walls of Jericho. Is anyone surprised?

★

The way either Spiritualist "healers" and "Spiritual" healers are multiplying is quite astonishing. One healer, a Mrs. Sheppard, has had extraordinary success through spooks — though she herself, as she is suffering from diabetes, is obliged to go to a doctor. Another healer, Padre Pio, an Italian Capuchin, gets whole page boosts in *Picture Post*, and we are told that "he is revered as a Saint by millions of Catholics and countless non-Catholics." It is true that all this is against the "Holy Office" which has forbidden the circulation of books about him. The sick, the halt, the lame, crowd to see him from all parts of Europe — or that is what we are told — and "it is difficult to discredit all the first-hand claims to his supernatural gifts."

★

Of course, he always cures the blind, the halt, and the lame, especially as, like so many other Saints before him, he is never without pain through bearing (with fortitude) the "stigmata" on his hands. But even he is equalled by a Mrs. Salmon who has had wonderful miracles of healing, far surpassing those of Mr. Harry Edwards, merely because, as far as we can see, she is a Methodist. Cancer, T.B., spasticism, goitres, grotesque physical disabilities, vanish through the healing power of Mrs. Salmon. As a Swansea surgeon admits, "This is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes." In the face of all these miracles, we cannot help wondering why our *medical* Welfare State still functions? Why not hand over our hospitals to these marvellous healers?

★

We confess to never having heard of the "Gideon" Bible but, after reading all about it from a gentleman with the double Holy Name of Godel in a Jersey paper, we find it is just our own Authorised Version. It is described as "a mine of wealth, a storehouse of food, a paradise of glory, a rose of rare fragrance, a river of joy, a life-giving fountain, a wheel with 66 spokes (books), each leading to Christ, its centre and hub." Mr. Godel should read our *Bible Handbook* for some newer and truer descriptions of the Grand Old Book — but of that we have no hope.

But it is Cornwall which is ever the land of the Holy Bible. In one of its newspapers a few weeks ago, a Mr. Cochran even outshone Mr. Godel. He described how he was "nourished" on the arguments of "Tom" Paine and Bradlaugh, and THE FREETHINKER was his "week-end fare." If this is true (and we strongly doubt it) he appears to have found some remarkable facts in the nourishment. The "evils" of the Middle Ages — that is, the Inquisition, religious wars, etc. — were all due to the "hierarchy" refusing to allow the "people" to read the Bible in the common tongue! Some of the Agnostics and Rationalists dug up by the BBC would take some beating; but Mr. Cochran goes far beyond them. As a converted Atheist, he should be a Godsend to the Corporation.

Recollections of Colonel Ingersoll

UNDER THIS TITLE the *Inter-Ocean*, a magazine published in Chicago, U.S.A., gives some interesting reminiscences of the great American Freethinker. The story of his meeting with Henry Ward Beecher has been often told, but it will bear repeating:

In October 1880, during the Garfield campaign, Colonel Ingersoll spoke in Brooklyn, and was introduced to one of the largest political audiences ever assembled in the City of Churches by the greatest preacher of the nineteenth century — Henry Ward Beecher. Mr. Beecher's introduction was in substance as follows: "I am not accustomed to preside at meetings like this; only the exigency of the times could induce me to do it. I am not here, either, to make a speech, but more especially to introduce the eminent orator of the evening. I stand not as a minister, but as a man among men, pleading the cause of fellowship and equal rights. We are not here as mechanics, as artists, merchants or professional men, but as fellow-citizens. The gentleman who will speak tonight is in no conventicle or church. He is to speak to a great body of citizens, and I take the liberty of saying that I respect him as the man that for a full score and more of years has worked for the right in the great, broad field of humanity, and for the cause of human rights. I consider it an honour to extend to him, as I do now, the warm, earnest, right-hand of fellowship." (As Mr. Beecher said this he turned to Mr. Ingersoll and extended his hand. The palms of the two men met with a clasp that was heard all over the house, and was the signal for tumultuous cheering and applause, which continued for several minutes.)

"I now introduce to you," continued Mr. Beecher, leading Mr. Ingersoll forward, "a man who — and I say it not flatteringly — is the most brilliant speaker of the English tongue of all men on this globe. But as under the brilliancy of the blaze of light we find the living coals of fire, so under the lambent flow of his wit and magnificent anti-thesis we find the glorious flame of genius and honest thought. Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Ingersoll."

An amusing incident is told by Andrew Carnegie, who accompanied a party of friends, which included Miss Ingersoll, to Mr. Beecher's church one Sunday. After the service the members of the party were introduced to the great preacher, and when Mr. Carnegie introduced Miss Ingersoll he said: "Mr. Beecher, this is Miss Ingersoll. She has heard her first sermon today, and been in a church for the first time." Mr. Beecher grasped her hand cordially, and, looking into her face, remarked: "You are the most beautiful heathen I ever saw. How is your father? He and I spoke from the same platform once, and wasn't it a lucky thing for me that we were both talking in the same cause? Remember me to him."

THE FREETHINKER

41 Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1.

Telephone: Holborn 2601.

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

TO CORRESPONDENTS

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

J. W. T. ANDERSON.—All your points have been dealt with during the two years you have been a reader, but we may, when convenient return to them.

Lecture Notices, Etc.

OUTDOOR

- Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Broadway Car Park).—Sunday, 7.30 p.m.: Messrs. DAY, NEWTON and SHEPPARD.
- Bristol (The Downs).—Every Sunday, 7.30 p.m.: D. SHIPPER.
- Kingston Branch N.S.S. (Castle Street, Kingston-on-Thames).—Every Sunday, 8 p.m.: J. W. BARKER and E. MILLS.
- Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Deansgate Blitzed Site).—Every weekday, 1 p.m.: Messrs. WOODCOCK, SMITH and FINKEL. Sundays, 7.45 p.m.: Messrs. MILLS, WOODCOCK, SMITH and FINKEL.
- Platt Fields, 3 p.m.: Messrs. WOODCOCK, MILLS and others.
- Merseyside Branch N.S.S. (Pierhead).—Meetings most evenings of the week (often afternoons): Messrs. THOMPSON, SALISBURY, HOGAN, PARRY, HENRY and others.
- North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY and A. ARTHUR.
- Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square).—Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY and R. POWE. Sunday, 11 a.m.: R. MORRELL and R. POWE.
- West London Branch N.S.S.—Every Sunday at the Marble Arch from 4 p.m.: Messrs. ARTHUR, EBURY and others.
- West Ham Branch N.S.S. (Victoria Park).—Every Sunday, 7 p.m.: J. L. SHEPHERD and others.

Notes and News

AMIDST the clouds of obscurantism usually to be found in the Gold Coast *Sunday Mirror* and its companion paper, the Gold Coast *Daily Graphic*, there was recently a fine extract from Thomas Paine entitled "The Rational World is my Friend." In common with their English namesakes both papers are owned in Fleet Street, and one cannot imagine the home papers publishing anything of Paine's. Can it be that an enlightened African sub-editor is at work?

★

At the Royal Festival Hall in London may be seen what is described as "the greatest photographic exhibition of all time." It is assuredly superb. It presents "The Family of Man" in all its diversified similitude: at birth, at death, in joy, in sorrow; in wealth and poverty; loving, learning, working, playing, and — occasionally — praying. It sets out to show "that mankind is essentially one, that in spite of race and creed and colour, there are many more things that unite us than separate us." It succeeds magnificently. There is grandeur in the theme and there is grandeur in its presentation: individually the photographs are works of art, collectively they form an epic.

★

The five hundred pictures were selected by Edward Steichen, of the New York Museum of Modern Art; they come from 68 countries, and form a record — in the words of American author Carl Sandburg — of "one big family hugging close to the ball of Earth for its life and being."

A delightful study of a boy piper hopefully recurs from time to time throughout the exhibition, which ends with photographs of "ring-a-roses" played by children in many different lands. This is an exhibition that everyone should see: it is man seen with deep humanity; it is moving and inspiring; one cannot see it without increased understanding of oneself and others.

Chapman Cohen on Moral Precepts

I DO NOT REGARD the mouthing of moral maxims as at any time of value. I think when the whole question is handled in a thoroughly scientific manner this chanting of moral maxims will be found to undermine, rather than elevate character. Certain it is that, as Buckle pointed out, moral maxims are as old as civilised man, and the panorama of human conduct strongly points to their inutility.

In this matter New Testament morals move on a lower theoretical level than that of Greek and Roman culture. Both the Greek and Roman moralists based their moral philosophy upon the social character of morality. Take up such writers as Epicurus, Plato, Socrates, or Aristotle, and you will find that in all their discussions morality is treated as a social fact, to be modified as social requirements demanded. That is an entirely sound point of view from which to treat all questions of ethics. It does not, of course, prevent error, but it does something far more important — it paves the way for correction and improvement. It is a point of view that only reasserted its strength with the development of modern science, and it is responsible for many improvements of recent years.

In direct opposition to this there is no hint in the New Testament that morality is a natural fact, and that the test of the rightness or wrongness of actions is to be found in their effect on the well-being of society. Moral "laws" to the Greek thinkers were generalisations born of human experience to be tested by experience, and modified as human wisdom should demand. To the Christian, to the New Testament, moral rules are imposed by a supernatural power, to be enforced by supernatural threats of punishment.

(An Atheist's Approach to Christianity.)

An Angry Editor

LET ME ASSURE Mr. Archer and his *Psychic News* that I have no intention of engaging in a slanging ("what you says I is, you am") match with him. In the number for July 28th, he lets himself go against me so incoherently that he confuses psychical research with Spiritualism. We on this journal welcome psychical research, but his psychic "news" in favour of spooks (especially when he can get a report of a hall full of them which nobody sees) is often too much even for him. In this number will be found a review of a book by Shaw Desmond who, though a believer, knows the humbug associated with Spiritualism inside out. "Spiritualism," declares Mr. Desmond, "is a bundle of inconsistencies, engaged in endless personal jealousies and squabbles. . . Philosophical teaching at many, if not all, Spiritualist churches, is often conspicuous by its absence. Of the 'vision' which they are always claiming they often have none." Even I have not attacked Mr. Archer's fond beliefs more drastically than that. I recommend him another quotation from Mr. Desmond — "Show me the man or woman who is credulous and easy of conviction, and you show me the human being whose judgment is valueless." No wonder most Spiritualists can't stand Mr. Desmond.

H.C.

The Imposture of Lourdes—2

By H. CUTNER

THE BOOK I referred to in my last article is *Lourdes et L'Illusion* by Drs. Thérèse and Guy Valot (published by Librairie Maloine S. E., 27 rue de l'École de Médecine, Paris); and it is to be hoped that some enterprising publisher will get it translated at once into English. It is a devastating exposure of the humbug surrounding the famous shrine.

No doubt other exposures have been made in France but the only one I know in English is Joseph McCabe's *The Lourdes Miracles*, and our booksellers were, no doubt, too frightened of what would happen to them from Catholics if they displayed such an heretical work. It appears to have gone its way unblest and unsung.

But of course, there was always the damning indictment of Emile Zola in the first of his famous trilogy—*Lourdes*. Zola, a great novelist and certainly a great romantic poet in prose, was also one of the greatest of reporters, and his remarkable pen-pictures of the scenes in his own day in Lourdes earned him the undying hatred of all good Catholics—a hatred fanned into something far worse when he championed Dreyfus against the infamous Catholic generals responsible in the *cause célèbre* of that name. But Lourdes appeared in 1893 and it was time for a much more up-to-date account, especially one from medical doctors. And the two doctors responsible for this new book have done a splendid job of work.

On Lourdes itself, it is Dr. Thérèse Valot who undertook the case from the "therapeutic" angle, Dr. Guy Valot later providing an invaluable "commentary". And first let us see how she deals with the number of cures admitted by the Catholic authorities at the shrine.

Here are a few figures: In 1872 (the first national pilgrimage) there were 50,000 pilgrims; in 1876, 100,000; in 1912, 246,972; in 1930, 500,000; in 1948, 2,000,000, of whom 15,800 were sick; in 1949, 3,000,000, of whom 20,253 were sick; and in 1950, 1,500,000, of whom 27,756 were sick. Dr. Valot thinks these numbers are underestimates, but it is extremely difficult to get exact figures.

What about the actual cures? In 1882, the Medical Bureau was established, but the doctor still found it extremely difficult to get really reliable figures. The great medical authority is Professor Bertrin, a devout Catholic, and he claims 4,624 cures from 1858 to 1913—though other authorities give different ones, some more, some fewer. From 1894 to 1908 the figures vary from 236 in 1898, to 101 in 1907; and only about 200 cases between 1921 and 1947. From 1947 to 1950, 23 cases were reported by the Lourdes Medical Bureau to the National Medical Commission but only six of these were admitted by the N.M.C.—that is, hardly two cures a year.

It is particularly interesting to read the opinions given by Dr. Valot from various Catholic doctors on all these cures—for example, Dr. Carrel who, writing in *La Priere* in 1944, said, "At Lourdes the miracles are now less frequent than they used to be 40 or 50 years ago. The sick do not find the same meditation which formerly reigned there. Pilgrims have in fact become just tourists, and their prayers ineffectual."

A study of the cures brought Dr. Valot the conclusion that in 1858 there was one cure for every 200 pilgrims; in 1900, one for 2,000 pilgrims; in 1930, one for 5,000 pilgrims; while in 1949, one for 1,000,000 pilgrims. Laymen as well as doctors will find Dr. Valot's detailed descriptions of the "cures" of cancer, tuberculosis, and other grave

diseases, of exceptional interest; and she is obliged to affirm that none of them, as recorded at Lourdes, had any scientific control. Like McCabe, she deals with the classic cases, the ones Catholic doctors have no doubt whatever about, and she shows (as he did) the absence of almost any real medical history. Her analysis is much more detailed than McCabe's but the conclusions are the same. There is a chapter dealing with the visit of the two authors to Lourdes which, if it were not so tragic, would be very amusing. Lourdes is surrounded by lies and trickery. And here is a quotation from the celebrated psychologist, Dr. P. Janet, worth repeating:

You have no idea of the time and trouble it takes to avoid the frauds, to calm susceptibilities, to control witnesses, and to face hatred and spite, if you wish to find out the motives behind the pretended certificates: an enormous amount of work giving very little result. We can understand why so many conscientious observers give up in disgust. In these pilgrimages there is a mental state not far from Tarascon. You find it sickening with superstition.

It must not be forgotten that in France, though Voltaire and Diderot still reign in literature, the great majority of the people receive a thoroughly Catholic education; and even medical men find it hard to dispense with some belief in Jesus and his therapeutic cures. If I may interject a personal note, I never found any journalist, doctor, or lawyer, whom I met in France, who agreed that Jesus was a myth. He may not have been God himself, but he was a very great man, always going about doing good and, in some cases, healing the sick. As for Dupuis and Volney, they had never heard of these famous writers. They had, on the other hand, all heard of Renan; and I was always confidently sent to him if I persisted in agreeing with the Mythicists. Or I was asked, with an air of triumph, did not François Coppée turn from unbelief to belief? That remarkable event was always supposed to shut me up. It did not.

Now, bearing this kind of thing in mind, it is not surprising that even among doctors, who ought to know better, the "cures" of incurable people never prevented them from swallowing a little religious faith. I mentioned in my first article the miracle of the cure of a man called Gargam. He was exploited by Lourdes for over 40 years and no doubt genuinely believed that the Virgin or Jesus or both worked a special miracle on his behalf. It is one of the few classic cases utterly incomprehensible in the Catholic medical world save as a Miracle and, as such, one of the clearest proofs that Lourdes is actually under the Holy Patronage of Mary herself. But—as Dr. Valot points out—it is rather extraordinary that so many of the Catholic doctors who are Lourdes' greatest apologists should never have studied his case. Neither Dr. Le Bec nor Dr. Vallet nor Dr. Leuret nor Dr. Bon or Mlle. Boissarie, all of whom are stout defenders of Lourdes, have bothered about Gargam—which surely proves that they all suspect something fishy about it.

"Why," asks Dr. Valot, "this silence from these doctors on Gargam when in all the books and pamphlets written on Lourdes by priests his case is put forward as of the greatest importance? The truth is that if one is a doctor it is quite impossible to admit that he ever suffered from the diseases he is credited with. In admitting the diagnosis of Dr. D., the medical tribunal erred, especially on the ques-

tion of his neurosis, about which, in any case, not so much was known in his day as now."

This and many other cases are dealt with in detail by Dr. Valot from the point of view of a modern practising doctor; and, in her hands, the wonderful "miracles" of healing dwindle to a pitiful recital of fraud, and particularly of completely uncritical diagnoses from Catholic doctors more concerned with miracle than with valid cures.

Some important conclusions remain to be made and will form the subject of the next article.

Welsh Nonconformity in Decay

By HESGIN

FIFTY YEARS AGO it could have been reasonably claimed that Wales was a "Nonconformist country". The "Welsh Revival" under the leadership of Evan Roberts had swept over the hills and valleys of South Wales like fire in the heather. It did not affect North Wales to the same extent. They were (and are) more hard-headed and tough there! The effect of the "Revival" soon began to wear off. The promise of "pie in the sky" did not satisfy a large number of the "converts"; they gravitated towards the I.L.P. and the Labour Party and the churches lost them.

Then the First World War came. At the beginning of it a number of Nonconformist ministers addressed recruiting meetings and acted as unofficial recruiting agents. That did not make them very popular. When conscription came in 1916 "Othello's" occupation was gone. Then some ministers were seen giving evidence in favour of "conscientious objectors". The cynics, remembering the attitude of ministers towards the war some 12 months previously, smiled. When the war was drawing to a close the Churches, all of one accord, prophesied that we were going to have another "Revival". It didn't come. But we did get the "Church of England in Wales" disestablished and disendowed, after an agitation lasting about forty years. No sooner was the Act passed than the "Church in Wales" and the Nonconformists began to get more friendly. When Butler's Education Bill was before Parliament it could have been said of them that "the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together". They agreed that religious instruction in schools should be made compulsory! The drift from the Churches had then begun, and "adversity makes strange bedfellows".

What is the position now? News of decline in the number of members, etc., is heard from all directions. Here are some examples:

(1) The Annual Association of "The Presbyterian Church of Wales" (Calvinistic Methodists) was held at Ystradynlais last June. It was reported to that gathering that the denomination's membership in 1935 was 182,000; but now it had decreased to 150,000. This decline in membership had also affected the income. The Rev. Tom Jenkins, of Penarth, in presenting his report, stated that one church "had asked its minister to accept a reduction in his salary because the cost of living had gone up"! The number of ministers is also on the down-grade. The denomination had 687 parishes in 1934; 543 in 1954; but in April this year the number was down to 522. And this year only three were to be ordained to the ministry — the smallest number in its history.

(2) In 1932 the different Wesleyan Methodist denominations in Great Britain agreed to join in one body. The Wesleyans were never a strong denomination in Wales. A Commission which inquired into its condition reported recently. It found 10,000 fewer members in Wales now than in 1932. Further, although there has been an increase of 333 in the membership in the rest of Britain since 1950,

there has been a decrease of 2,336 in Wales during the same period. Sunday schools have also been affected: 32,921 fewer children are attending them, and the number of teachers has dropped by 1,170. The Commission is afraid that if this decrease continues Methodism will, in the next generation, disappear from many parts of Wales.

(3) There are fewer students preparing to enter the ministry at theological colleges in Wales. This phase was emphasised by speakers at the annual distribution of prizes to students at the Presbyterian College, Carmarthen, recently. One speaker described the position as "most serious", adding: "A young man must look to the future and live under reasonable conditions, and he needed a lot of courage of conviction before going into the ministry."

* * *

In conversation religious people — both ministers and members — agree that a "depression" has occurred in the religious life of Wales. They ascribe it to indifference; they will not admit that is unbelief.

"But facts are chieils that winna ding,
An' downa be disputed."

The Passing Show

By DAVID SHIPPER

A METHODIST MINISTER of Dagenham, aged 41, recently put on his forbidden Scout uniform and from his pulpit called on all senior Rovers throughout the country to do the same. He had been deeply moved, apparently, by a new rule that Rover Scouts over the age of 24 should cease to be Rovers. "Don't take down your epaulettes! Don't stop your association with your crews. . . Do conduct a regular agitation! . ." — these were among his fierce battle cries. We congratulate this bold spirit, bravely leading the nation-wide rebellion against the totalitarian armed might of the Boy Scouts, Wolf Cubs, Girl Guides, Brownies, and no doubt their allies in the Church Lads' Brigade (with whom they have a non-aggression pact).

Personally I have always treasured my Wolf Cub jersey ever since I was thrown out merely because I started shaving. After 15 years learning to tie knots, too! All Scouts, Guides, Cubs and Brownies under the age of 90, arise! Rovers of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your brains.

* * *

At Sheepscombe Women's Institute recently the Rev. H. Cheales described his experiences in a haunted rectory. He very kindly charged nothing for his talk and I understand it was well worth it. His favourite ghost is, of course, the holy one. He is obviously a realist who has both feet planted firmly in the air.

* * *

The rector of Quedgeley (Glos.), the Rev. F. Lanham, has a hard-hitting virile article in his parish magazine, calculated to put you Sabbath-breakers to shame. He says it is "a humbling thought to compare the number of people who come to church . . . with the total number of inhabitants". Having thus put us into a suitable chastened and humble mood, he becomes inquisitive: "Where is the power of the Gospel of Christ that it leaves so many people indifferent to it? . . . During the next few months the cars and coaches on the Bristol road will turn Sunday into a day of pleasure and money-making instead of a day for the worship of God."

Can there really be people so depraved that they wish to

turn their day of rest into a day of pleasure? It shocks me. And as for money-making, this is sheer desecration of the Sabbath — unless, of course, half the proceeds could go to the Church, in which case it might be possible to ward off Mr. Lanham's God's thunderbolts.

Still conducting his own quiz, he proceeds, "What is it that will bring people to a sense of need for God? . . . What does the witness of Christ's Church count for among (those) to whom the welfare of their souls means so little that they never come to church?"

Holy sir, we grieve with you. I vote we all cry ourselves to sleep.

* * *

The Rev. J. Bickersteth is a man of novel ideas, the type we need in the Church today. Faced with the need to raise £275 to redecorate St. John's, Hurst Green, near Oxted, Surrey, he hit upon the brilliant notion (possibly under Divine inspiration) of borrowing a barrel organ and playing "old favourites" outside a dance hall.

If any Freethinkers have a pet monkey, preferably with experience as collector-salesman, would they send it along, please? Failing this, possibly a swarthy curate in fur coat and Davy Crockett hat would fill the bill.

I do hope this ecclesiastical innovation will not lead to warfare between rival gangs of Gods. The goddess Terpsichore, reputedly a Grecian good-time girl, has a large family to call on, being one of nine daughters, and with the addition of father Zeus and mother Mnemosyne, the weight of numbers will, I fear, overwhelm our Holy Trinity.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. The Grand Orient of France. 2. "That art Thou." 3. Florence Nightingale, born in Florence, 1820. 4. Florence Nightingale. This began a 20 years' friendship with the Trueloves. 5. *Blythe Spirit*. 6. The belief that the world is all my dream. Obviously it has no advocates, for there would be no one to advocate it to. 7. *Catholic Worker*. 8. The Abbé Mende. 9. Sir James Frazer (1854-1941), author of *The Golden Bough*.

G.H.T.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE BBC AND ATHEISM

Mr. Morris is entitled to his opinion as to what course of action should have been taken by Mr. McCall and THE FREETHINKER in connection with the BBC ban, but I consider his suggestion ill-conceived and irresponsible.

No one has the right to expect any member to break any contractual agreement into which he has freely entered, no matter how badly he may consider the BBC to have acted.

Any deliberate infringement of the Copyright Act could quite possibly have incurred the Society and THE FREETHINKER in considerable legal costs and damages with fatal results.

The propaganda value of breaking a contract is highly problematical. It has to be remembered that the great propaganda vehicles in this country are in the hands of the enemies of truth and the resulting propaganda is likely to be very one-sided.

Our objective is to break the BBC ban, not to score transient and hypothetical propaganda advantages. What attitude we adopt is determined by what code of morality governs our conduct. If we "break faith" when it suits us how can we ask to be considered as responsible people?

Any individual or periodical can take what action it feels to be necessary. They are responsible to none but themselves. THE FREETHINKER, however, has a responsibility to the Movement and its continued good name and publication is of concern to all of us.

JAMES L. SHEPHERD.

OBITUARY

We regret to record the death of our 96-year-old reader and stalwart supporter, Mr. William Diggins, who died at Ontario on July 24th. An N.S.S. member, he was enthusiastic to the end.

Facts for Freethinkers

FREETHOUGHT IN AUSTRIA

OUR CONTRIBUTOR Mr. D. Shipper has succeeded in making contact with the struggling Freethinkers in Austria, using the Swiss *Freidenker* as the first medium. Mr. Shipper's fraternal letter was read at a Vienna committee meeting on July 7th, and he was then favoured with a reply from the Chairman of the Austrian Freethought Organisation, Herr Franz Ronzal, who, at 83, is still campaigning vigorously for the cause.

We reproduce Mr. Shipper's translation of part of Herr Ronzal's informative and cordial letter, written from Eichgraben on July 12th:

"The Freethinkers of Austria were quite powerful prior to 1933, when they were suppressed. We were organised in nine sections, comprising 333 branches with 54,000 members, besides supporters (unorganised). Our journal *Der Freidenker* was published monthly and had a circulation of 60,000.

"After 1933 [i.e., the year of Hitler's rise to power and the weak policy of Dollfuss—Ed.] we were compelled to work underground and our numbers dwindled.

"After the war we suffered persecution for a further two years, and in fact it was not until April 2nd, 1948, that I was able to re-establish contact (with permission) with 25 reliable members, and even today we have only 300 organised members. We cannot yet issue a paper, but every two months we deliver a circular to our members. Henceforth you will be receiving our circular. There is no Freethought organisation in either Hungary or Czecho-Slovakia, but this might become possible as governmental pressure weakens. In Hungary there are not even signs of a beginning. We are in continuous contact with German and Swiss Freethinkers. I go to every meeting in Vienna together with my fellow members, and am in constant touch with all the members of our organisation . . ."

We are sure all freethinking readers will join us in sending fraternal greetings to our less fortunate comrades in Austria. May better fortune soon attend their endeavours.

AN ATHEIST'S APPROACH TO CHRISTIANITY.

A survey of positions by Chapman Cohen.

Price 1/6; postage 3d.

CHALLENGE TO RELIGION.

A re-issue of four lectures by Chapman Cohen.

Price 1/6; postage 3d.

MARRIAGE SACERDOTAL OR SECULAR?

By C. G. L. Du Cann.

Price 1/-; postage 3d.

MATERIALISM RESTATED

(Third edition). By Chapman Cohen.

Price 5/6; postage 6d.

PAMPHLETS FOR THE PEOPLE.

18 of Chapman Cohen's celebrated pamphlets bound in one volume. Indispensable for the Freethinker.

Price 5/6; postage 6d.

Or at 2d. each, postage 2d. Comprising: Did Jesus

Christ Exist? Morality without God. What is

the use of Prayer? Woman and Christianity. Must

we have a Religion? The Devil. What is Free-

thought? Gods and their Makers. Giving 'em

Hell. The Church's Fight for the Child. Deity and

Design. What is the use of a future Life? Thou

shalt not suffer a Witch to Live. Freethought and

the Child. Agnosticism or . . .? Atheism. Chris-

tianity and Slavery. Christianity and Ethics.

WILL YOU RISE FROM THE DEAD?

By C. G. L.

Du Cann. Price 1/-; postage 2d.

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