

THE LIBERAL CHURCH, INCORPORATED

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MISSOURI VALLEY DIOCESE

MODERN RELIGIOUS CULTS

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THE ILIFF SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

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THE LIBERAL CHURCH, INC.

1515 Larimer St.,

Denver, Colorado, U.S.A.

One of the strangest bodies ever to operate under the name of religion is The Liberal Church, Inc. In its alleviation of the needs of mankind it outdoes the most ardent social gospelist. In its beliefs, although it is supposedly creedless, and although it professes not to be atheistic, it attacks the forms, titles, dignitaries, hierarchies and institutions of the church as ruthlessly as the most rabid of the so-called infidels. In its methods of attack it has discovered legal means, and with only the Constitution of the United States as its Scriptures, and obedience to the constitution as its requirement for membership, it goes on its way, showing up, as Bishop Frank H. Rice, its president and Supreme Pontiff, says, the idiosyncrasies of the churches, and at the same time putting forth the utmost of humanitarianism by the almost single-handed efforts of its leader.

I. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

I first met the founder and center of the Liberal Church, Bishop Rice, when he was attending a meeting of the Sunday Night Club of the Seventeenth Avenue Community Church while I was its assistant pastor. Bishop Rice was very much pleased with Dr. J. T. Carlyon's review of G. T. E. Patrick's What Is the Mind?, but he could not understand how a man with such views as Dr. Carlyon's could pray at the close of the meeting as he did. In fact Bishop Rice himself carried on a very audible conversation with a friend during the prayer. After the meeting Bishop Rice explained

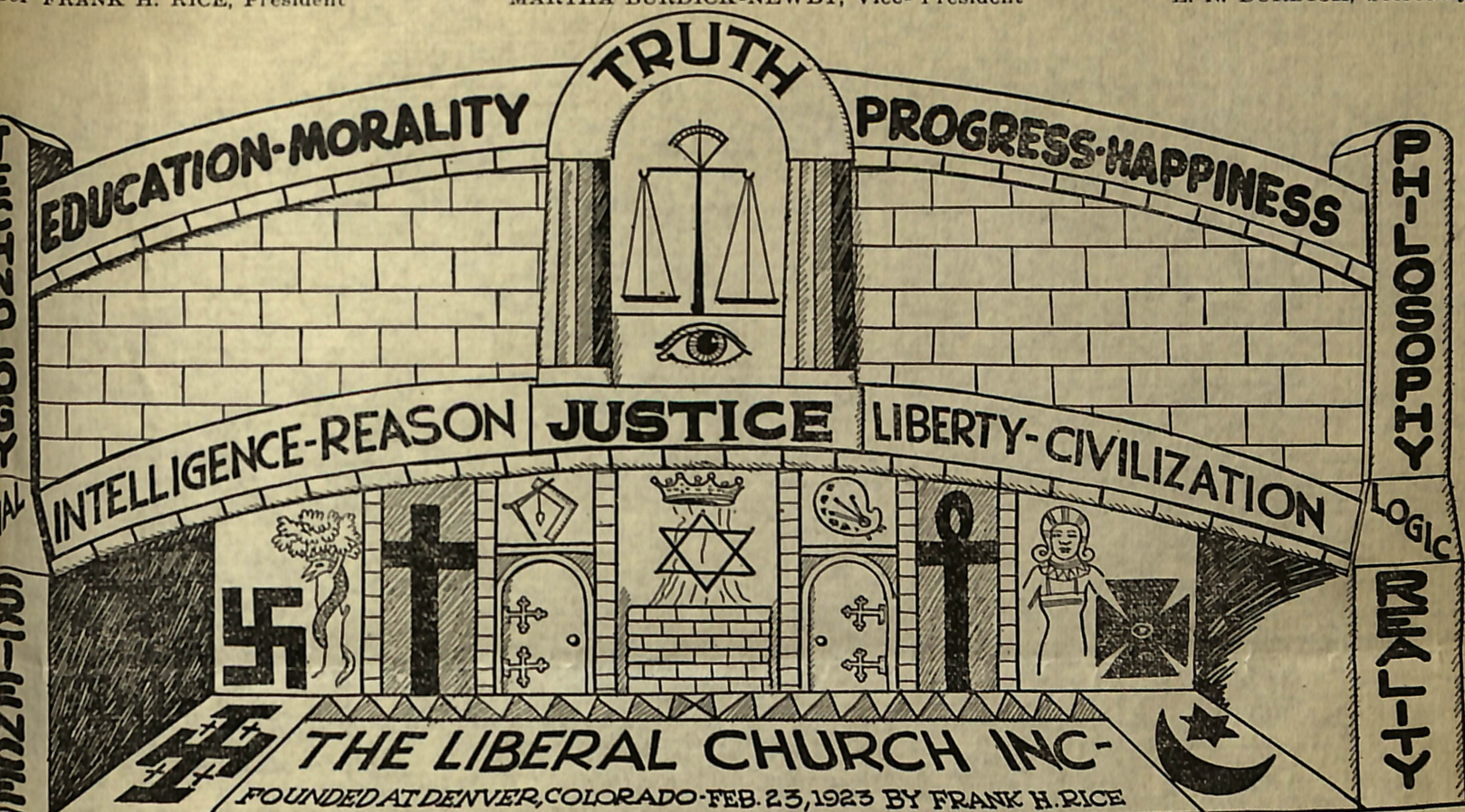
to me something of the purpose of his movement , and told me that he would be glad to confer upon me a Doctor of Divinity degree free of charge.

Sometime later a friend of mine expressed the wish to see Bishop Rice for the purpose of securing such a degree. Although I was not interested in receiving a degree, since I had already had contact with the Bishop, I consented to accompany the candidate in search for the dignitary. The Supreme Pontiff, however, was not easy to locate. The telephone at his home had been disconnected. None of his adherents whom I knew could inform me as to his place of residence or his whereabouts. We did find that his principal haunt was the room of a Single Tax proponent, Barney Haughey, at 1605 Larimer St., second floor. I think that it was on a second attempt that we finally located the bishop on another day.

A third time that I made contact with The Liberal Church was when I attended a service of the church in the room of the same Barney Haughey about a year ago.

I later saw Bishop Rice a time or two on the street car. He invited me to visit his free flophouse. But I never found it possible to take advantage of the invitation.

Since receiving the assignment for this paper I visited Bishop Rice three times in his office. On the first occasion I found two reporters of the Denver Post, one of the bodies of sacred literature of the Liberal Church, being addressed by the Bishop. After they had left with a present of a bottle of wine tonic in their hands, and some from another bottle in their stomachs, Bishop Rice consented with some hesitancy to make me Archbishop of the Missouri Valley diocese. A copy of my ordination paper follows.



Our Principles Are:

WE BELIEVE IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA-OUR RELIGION IS TO DO GOOD

Because of many astonishingly new religious angles and scientific characteristics of the Liberal Church, Inc., those desiring more detail and righteous detail are respectively cited to (A) Four Divine and Legal Documents—the Articles of Incorporation of the Liberal Church, office of the Secretary of State of Colorado, U. S. A. (B) Book 3929, Pages 367, 368, 369, 370, Records of the City and County of Denver, State of Colorado. (C) Any Law Library "Corpus Juris" under the departments dealing with "Religious Societies," "Religious Society," "Churches," "Denominations," Temples, Synagogues, Priests, Rabbis, Clergymen, Bishops, Cardinals, Popes, etc. Amen!

A L V I N G A R R E T T R O W E

By virtue of my Legal and Divine authority, cited and shown hereon, I hereby duly ordain, license, anoint, commission, and empower Alvin Garrett Rowe as ARCHBISHOP of the archdiocese of the Missouri Valley, U. S. A. in and for THE LIBERAL CHURCH, INC. Amen.

Bishop Frank H. Rice, S. P.

President, The Liberal Church, Inc.

SEAL

STATE OF COLORADO, }
COUNTY OF DENVER. } ss:

I accept the above degree and ordination and agree to be governed by the Civil Law regulating Churches, Denominations and Religious Societies, in all my religious work.

Signed Alvin Garrett Rowe

Subscribed and affirmed to before me this 27th day, the month of July, 1932, A. D.

Seal

John Macker

Notary Public.

My commission expires September 4, 1934

I also met in the Bishop's office at different times an automobile dealer and a showman. The Rev. Mr. Wolfram of the Life Mission, Inc., also the caretaker of the Liberal Church flophouse, shares the Bishop's office, and uses it for sleeping quarters. On one of my visits four members of the Iliff School of Theology student body accompanied me. Although they had not declared their intention of doing so before we started, they all petitioned to be made bishops in and for the Liberal Church. They were ordained to the office, were given degrees of Doctors of Divinity, had their acceptance witnessed before a notary, and made a money order to the recorder of Arapahoe County, Colorado, to cover the fee of recording their degrees and ordinations.

I also visited the library of the Denver Post to secure a list of the articles in the Post in which The Liberal Church or Bishop Rice were featured.

Moreover, I interviewed Archbishop E. N. Burdick of The Methodist Church, Inc., also Secretary of the Liberal Church, an attorney with offices in the Charles Building, to learn of his present connection with and his estimate of the work of the Liberal Church. I furthermore conversed with other dignitaries in The Liberal Church, ^{with} and others who know of it.

My crowning achievement was to accompany Bishop Rice on an errand of mercy in which we delivered some baby clothes to a prospective mother, and on two begging tours. As a result of our begging we received five gallons of gasoline from the Jewish ^amanger of the Diamond Oil Co., a number of items of groceries, and eight dollars in cash, including a five dollar donation from a prominent official in a wholesale paper company.

We also visited some of the missions which Bishop Rice has incorporated for different individuals under other corporate names. Thus he takes the responsibility for the action of these persons from his own shoulders. At least one these missions, The Church of Sane Civilization, Inc., and its Helping Hand mission, seems to be better ^{organized} for its work than The Liberal Church.

And then I was invited to the home of Bishop Rice at 378 South Pearl Street, where I met his wife and daughter, Mary Frances, and some neighbors, and looked with the Bishop through his scrapbook. Later I had a private conversation with Mrs. Rice, from whom I learned some rather tragic phases of the movement.

I have also incorporated in this paper the results of an appearance of Bishop Rice before the class in Modern Religious Cults and Movements at The Iliff School of Theology, at the invitation of Professor William Henry Bernhardt, conveyed through me.

II. THE FOUNDER AND LEADER

The Liberal Church, although it has thousands of ministers among the hoboes who have passed through Denver, and a hierarchy of Bishops and Cardinals, the latter comprising radical educators, publishers, and others of the intelligentsia of the country, yet can hardly be called more than Bishop Rice. Rice himself is the indefatigable source of energy and money for his church.

Frank Hamilton Rice was born fifty-two years ago, the son of a Presbyterian minister who labored for forty-five years in the Middle West, especially in Kansas and Illinois. Frank Rice had some education at Epworth University, Oklahoma City. Some of

college friends were convinced that he would be a Methodist minister. It was while there that he met the present Mrs. Rice. After a long period of being sweethearts off and on they were married. They have one daughter, Mary Frances, who will be a senior at South High School next year, if she is permitted by the family finances to go. While in Oklahoma City, following his college work, Mr. Rice was not in the ministry, but in the building and loan and insurance business. Even before his marriage he was devoting all his money to others, to his mother and members of the family, as well as to the poor in general. A little later he became a parole officer at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary. For eighteen months he gave his efforts unsparingly for the release of worthy prisoners on parole. He claims that his recommendations were always accepted. As the result of being "a man's man", when a prison outbreak occurred in which seven guards were killed, he was spared, remarkably, too, from even an accidental shot. An account of this outbreak was written for him by another Rice, a tubercular patient living at Idaho Springs, Colorado, and published under Frank Rice's name in True Detective Story magazine some time ago.

In 1915 Frank Rice and his family came to Denver. For awhile he was with the prison association. Later he was editor of The Colorado Manufacturer and Consumer. But this outlet for his creative powers was not enough. In 1916 he perpetrated a rather amusing, if questionable hoax on the Denver Post. He wrote a letter purporting to be from a high school girl, telling how she was saved from a terrible life of sin by a "Warning Hand" cartoon. The picture showed a young man dragging a young woman by the hand, while over the two hands was a third that would

stay them. The Post reprinted the cartoon along with the girl's (i.e. Rice's) letter, and a lengthy comment.

Rice's activities during the period leading finally to the establishment of the Liberal Church have been well-described by Dr. Hubert Hodgens in his report three years ago. But perhaps we can classify the factors in the establishment of the church, and add a few facts.

III. HISTORY

The establishment and the history of The Liberal Church, Inc. has involved three factors, each of which has apart all the way through, but also comes to the fore in the different stages of development of the church. These factors are publicity-hunting, anti-ecclesiasticism, and humanitarianism.

1. Publicity-seeking

Rice, according to his own words, has for years been "newspaper-minded". His publicity-seeking included two or three stunts that eventuated in his expulsion from the Methodist Episcopal church. One of these stunts, which may have included a sincere belief in its advisability, was the advocacy of dancing for young people in the churches. Another stunt was to advocate in Go-to-Church, of which he was editor, the better enforcement of the Eighteenth Amendment by permitting the use of light wines and beer, with the church, if Rice could have his way, supporting such a modification. In connection with his dance issue, Rice urged the Rev. D. H. Fouse and The Rev. Mr. Thomas to settle their differences in the ring of a boxing match. Furthermore, he attacked the pastor of the First Baptist Church on the grounds that he was inefficinet. All these things contrived to arouse the hostility

of many Denver ministers. Rice claims, however, that Thomas wished to take up his proposal, and that Thomas made the front-page for the first time because of the publicity Rice had given him.

A list of the articles in which Rice or the Liberal Church was publicized, as found in the Denver Post library is as follows:

- Feb. 1, 1922-- Suggests dancing in the churches
- Feb. 23, 1922 - Injunction to stop dance, edition printing of
Go-to-Church asked by clergymen. 4-3 (1)
- March 3, 1922 - Accuses H. I. Kerr of ulterior motives 9-1
- March 7, 1922 - Sues Denver Commercial for \$1003 damages 15-4
- March 17, 1922- Ousted as secretary of Denver Civic Association 2-3
- March 29, 1922- Sues Denver Civic association for \$1000 damages 2-3
- April 20, 1922- Denver Religious Paper favors wine and beer to
defeat bootleggers 2-1
- May 21, 1922 -- Organizes the Big Church, Inc.
- Oct. 31, 1922-- Loses damage suit against Denver Commercial Assn.
- Dec. 22, 1922 - Says he talked with spirit of dead magician in his
dreams
- Jan. 4, 1923 - Fires lawyer in suit against Civic Assn. 11-2
- Feb. 23, 1923- Incorporation of the Liberal Church 17-2
- Feb. 25, 1923 - To become first bishop 14-5
- Feb. 26, 1923 - Denver man offers \$100,000 to church 10-6
- Mar. 25, 1923 - Praises Post for school graft exposure 13-4
- Oct. 3, 1923 - Abe Lincoln Church to be dedicated 18-2
- Mar. 17, 1924- Refused permit for two gallons of wine 6-3
- Mar. 29, 1924 - To use buttermilk 11-8
- Apr. 23, 1924 - To resign on account of no wine 6-1
- Sept. 26, 1924- Prays for tax payment 5-1

- Sept. 30, 1924 - Prays in court for Attorneys Bert Martin and
E. N. Burdick 8-3
- Oct. 7, 1924 -- To run for Governor on the A. Gump ticket 9-4
- Oct. 9, 1924 -- Attorney-General rules ticket out 26-1
- Oct. 10, 1924 -- Says to beat Satan at the polls 11-1
- Nov. 9, 1924 --- Says to eat apples and drink cider 13-1
- Jan. 12, 1927 -- Asks permit to make wine
- Feb. 2, 1927 --- Put off train enroute to plead for Ed. Sayre's
life 3-1
- Feb. 3, 1927 --- Story of train ride 17-1
- Jan. 6, 1928 --- Wants personal tax abolished 8-8
- Jan. 28, 1928 -- To fire three cardinals
- Feb. 20, 1928 ---Suggests humane execution of C. E. Bedard, age 3 1-2
- Mar. 28, 1928 -- Pleads for ~~walker~~ and Osborn killers 2-5
- Mar. 30, 1928 -- Leads bums into council 3-5
- Apr. 9, 1928 --- Easter services 4-3
- Apr. 21, 1928 -- Opens Market st. souphouse 23-3
- Apr. 9, 1929 --- Thrown out of Queen Marie's temple ²
- Feb. 12, 1929 -- Asks wine permit 18-6
- Feb. 20, 1929 -- Denied 20-6
- Jan. 22, 1931 -- F. Risken
- Jan. 24, 1931 -- Communism causes disturbances 21-4
- May 26, 1932 --- Pictures and account of a funeral

During the period before the depression Rice spent much money in advertising. In turn he and his church received the above publicity. But it is apparent that it was this desire for publicity that lead him to those acts that caused his expulsion from the Methodist Episcopal church in 1922.

² cf. next page for copy of this article. Also an interesting letter from the warden of the county jail

QUEEN OF YHVH GIVES BISHOP THE BUM'S RUSH

Stranger in the Gates Is Forcibly Ejected From Kingdom.

Bishop Frank H. Rice of the Liberal church, and Queen Marie Yvh of Yvh's temple, both of whom are highly respected by their particular followers, have so little else in common that recently the bishop was given the bum's rush by the queen.

It was last Saturday night, according to reports, that Rice decided to visit the Temple of Yvh. That decision was occasioned by the recent death of the King of Heaven and Earth—one Joshua Sykes, head of the temple, who had so influenced his followers that, even now, they refuse to believe he is dead.

"Welcome," said one sign on a door of the temple on Lawrence street. "Walk in," said another sign. "Strangers stay out," said a third. Rice saw the first two signs and

Bishop Gets 'Bounced' When Bishop Frank H. Rice of the Liberal church, a likeness of whom you see on the right, went into the Temple of Yvh, shown in the center, last Saturday night, Queen Marie Yvh, whom you see in the picture, gave the bishop what is commonly known as "the bum's rush." Two of the queen's followers escorted the bishop to the door.



R.W. HERSHEY
Manager of safety and excise
and ex-officio sheriff, city
and county of Denver, Colo.

All letters and communications
must be written in the english
language, address all letters
in care of T.H., Clennan, warden.

Demver, Colo., April 10, 1930

Bishop Frank H. Rice
President, Liberal Church Inc.
1605 Larimer St.
Room 6
Denver, Colorado

Dear Bishop and President:

I am in receipt of your letter of April 9, 1930 re-
garding religious services which you purpose to conduct in the
County Jail for the benefit of William Moya. I wish to assure
you that the jail is open at all times to services of a religious
nature by any and all organizations, providing arrangements are
made with me in advance. I can see no objection and have none
to your conducting services for Mr. Moya.

There is, however, a rule which is strictly enforced,
prohibiting any animals, other than human beings, brought into
the jail. As for the adding machine,--which you mention, I think
I can save you considerable trouble and work by assuring you that
we have such a machine here in the office. Whether it would serve
your holy purpose, I do not know as it is a Burroughs. (I do not
mean burro.) As I said before, animals are not permitted in the
jail.

We do not examine into the fundamentals or ecclesiasti-
cal convictions of either the prisoners or the parties officiating
at these religious services, so it will not be necessary for you
to furnish me any further details along that line.

I am delighted to learn that the Liberal Church is duly
incorporated, organized and functioning as a religious society,
as this is the first time I have heard officially of your organ-
ization.

If you will communicate with the City Chaplain, who is
in charge of the services conducted in our jail, I am sure that
arrangements can be made for the service which you suggest, with
the proviso however, that no animals be brought into my institution.

Trusting this is the information you desire, I beg to
remain,

Your obedient servant,

CM/J.

Warden, County Jail.

2. Anti-Ecclesiasticism

Although Rice was no doubt sincerely radical in his views, his expulsion made him definitely anti-ecclesiastical. He found that any one could charter a church, and, in fact, could make it so legal that nothing on earth could shake it. Therefore, with his legal-religious methods he proceeded to form his mock church, through which he could ridicule the regular churches with all their accoutrements of officials and rites. Until about a year ago he rented a hall for his services. At these meetings someone whom he secured usually spoke. There followed an open forum. Those who spoke ranged from the extremes of fundamentalism to atheism in their views. They could speak their minds. However, Rice claims to have had unique ways of stopping them after a reasonable length of speech. He would give the speaker a flower, or place a screen in front of him, or if necessary have him thrown out, giving him a glass of buttermilk to assuage his feelings. The meetings were held for a long time in The Howe Liberal Hall at 1548 California Street. Later for a short time they were held in the Charles Building.

Meanwhile cardinals, ministers, and bishops galore were created. Thus Rice's anti-ecclesiasticism progressed, with lectures on a desupernaturalized religion, science, and sex.

3. Humanitarianism

But with 1929 came the economic depression, and a change in the church. As was indicated in the survey of the Bishop's life, he has always been interested in helping people, especially the down-and-outer. Therefore, the depression, according to Rice, increased his work along these lines for two reasons: (1) It has increased the activity of the church from the standpoint of

helping the paupers; (2) on the other hand, it has decreased the help of those who have become paupers. No longer is a hall rented for meetings. About a year ago the meetings were being held in the room of Barney Haughey, with the attendants sitting, on the bed, chairs, or elsewhere. When Haughey left this room on the second floor of 1605 Larimer street, Bishop Rice secured an office on the fourth floor of the Railroad building at 1515 Larimer street. In this building, built by John Evans, and at one time the finest office structure in the city, Rice also housed on the vacant sixth and seventh floors his hoboës. The American Bible Society has its offices and salesroom for this district on the fifth floor. The rest of the building, such as is occupied, houses Jewish printing establishments, a wholesale suspender distributor, and a tailor or two. Meetings during this summer period on being held on the corner of 22nd and Lawrence streets.

The educational side of the Liberal church, however, has waned. Nearly all of Bishop Rice's efforts are being spent in helping the lowest strata of the poor. His flophouse, established about three years ago, and which was operated from last October 24 to June 24, served an average of 135 men, with as high as 170 some nights. He also fed these men; the food was, says Bishop Rice, bread, soup, and pigs' feet, but mostly pigs' feet. During ^{the winter} the needy besieged his home, as well as his office. Many of them had the idea that he was indepently wealthy. He has tried to help all. But how he managed to help them will be discussed later.

So Rice has worked day and night, until the respite of the summer months came. Whereas he used to spend much time with his wife and daughter, during the winter he would be with the men at the flophouse until midnight. His meals have been eaten around the slave market on Market street. Each morning it was with difficulty that he would stumble down the stairs from his apartment to spend another day at his work. He has borne with shabby clothes for himself. When he had given the dime he had saved for street car fare for himself to some one else, he would walk home.

The effect upon him has been of great concern to Mrs. Rice. He has been nervous, irritable, and more radical in his views. He has been out of touch with the better class of people who used to frequent his meetings on California street. The psychology of the hobo has affected him. And yet, in spite of the fact that he has helped more people, Mrs. Rice believes, than any other man in Denver, not a one whom he has helped would be interested enough to help him in return. Together with the fact that he is worrying about his eyes, the winter's experiences have left him on the verge of a nervous breakdown.

Thus has the man Rice and his church come to the present day. It presents plenty of paradoxes as does its leader. Alone he works, too domineering, perhaps, to have associates, yet in his peculiar way giving his all. He refuses to be told, however, what to do. If some one leaves word for Rice to meet him at a certain time, to show his independence, the bishop will make it a day later. Although scorned by many conservative religious leaders, yet he is held in high esteem by many with whom he has come in contact. The bishop, moreover, smokes, swears, and will at least drink such intoxicants as wine tonic.

IV. THE FUNCTION OF THE LIBERAL CHURCH

The Liberal Church functions, as has been indicated in the discussion of its history, negatively in the exposure of the shams of ecclesiasticism. As a boy, Rice states, he was tortured by pious frauds. He was filled with formulas to get him into heaven. Over these he cried, prayed and cursed until he was seventeen years of age. Meanwhile he tried to impart them to the boys with whom he fought and fished, converting them with his stories of the hotness of hell and the rewards of heaven. Occasionally, however, their questions would open his eyes a bit. Now, having divested himself of these delusions, he feels it his mission to "dehypnotize" the world of its rationalizations, hallucinations, and fabrications concerning religion. Having rid himself of fear, he must impart to others a feeling of safety and security, the important need of mankind.

Therefore, he would rid men of false ideas by showing them the ridiculousness of their beliefs. For example, the necessity of a Catholic facing east and crossing himself when he passes a Catholic church, is not only ludicrous, but dangerous to traffic. If one could make this Catholic believe it necessary to circumambulate the church building forty times, or even for forty days and forty nights, he would see very soon the inconsistency of such actions.

Rice has thus ridiculed the inanities of the church. Likewise he has created a hierarchy composed of nuts and freaks. It includes Charles W. Smith, president of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism. On the other hand, its only high priest is a harmlessly insane member of the House of

David, who believes that he is not a Christian because he cannot perform such Pauline feats as allowing his hand to pass through fire or to be bitten by a poisonous reptile. Not only has the title Bishop been given important figures with dioceses in various states of the union, but such figures as a Bishop of Atheism, a bishop of Righteous Hell, a bishop of Teeth and Health, a Bishop of Say-It-With-Flowers have been created.

After Rice discovered that he could charter any church for three dollars and fifty cents, one dollar of which was for a wall certificate, he encouraged the formation of other churches, missions, societies, ad infinitum. Some of the organizations are active, useful missions, such as the Church of Sane Civilization, with its subsidiary Helping Hand mission, under the efficient direction of Bishop H. E. Kring, with twenty-three assistants, cars that make a systematic canvas of the city for old clothes, a store to dispose of them at barely cost, facilities for seating and feeding thirty people at a time until upwards to two hundred or more have been fed each moon and night. This mission is at 2117-2119 Larimer street. Bishop Kring is apparently an agnostic. "If I help humanity in this way, God, if there is any, will certainly be pleased," Bishop Kring believes. This organization is only a year old. Another mission farther down the street is operated by a former Cardinal in the Liberal church, an intellectual gone to seed, H. L. Walters. He married late in life and at least is serving humanity by supporting a wife and five children. Another church, The Methodist Church, Inc., was formed in order to enable E. N. Burdick, secretary of the Liberal church, to become an archbishop, an office which for some reason Supreme Pontiff Rice did not wish Burdick to have in the Liberal church. Archbishop Burdick, an attorney for thirty-

two years in the same office in the Charles Building, will at any time staunchly defend his title and his right to it. He holds meetings in the parks during the summer. Other institutions that have been chartered are nothing more than names. One or two others will be mentioned in other connections.

Not only has the Liberal church indefinitely increased its ministry, but it has also multiplied degrees. "Why", says Bishop Rice, "should a man spend three or four years at Iliff, when I can give him a degree". He does not, however, offer Ph. D. degrees as easily as some suspect. An atheistic Russian, Schatz, a Denver jeweler, was required to submit twelve papers and a book that he had written and published. But the usual requirement for the degree of doctor of divinity is to have read the articles of incorporation of the Liberal church, and to affirm that a conviction of felony has never occurred. My experience in securing a degree was as follows.

On the occasion mentioned in the beginning of the paper, in which my friend and I finally found Bishop Rice, he received us gladly. He said that since he had met me and knew my connection with the Seventeenth avenue church, that my recommendation would be sufficient to enable my friend to receive a degree. He sent us forth, however, to read the articles of incorporation in the office of the Clerk and Recorder of the City and County of Denver, and to secure some legal cap. On this, when we returned to the Bishop, I wrote what he dictated, after pasting at the head one of his extremely decorative letterheads. He then took us to the second floor of the building in which he then had his office, 1605 Larimer street, to have Barney Haughey witness our acceptance as a notary. My friend received both a

D. D. and an LL.D. degree; I a D. D. and an Litt. D. The next step was to take our documents to the clerk and recorder of Arapahoe county at Littleton, Colorado. The clerk and recorder of the City and County of Denver, apparently for religious reasons had adopted the policy of refusing to record the legal and divine instruments of Bishop Rice. But at Littleton our papers were accepted for seventy-five cents each, put on file until a photostatic copy was made on the regular recording day, and later returned to us by mail. I was not especially proud of my degree. My friend, however, used his degree, the LL.D., I think, of which he was especially proud, on his church bulletin board, stationery, and calling cards. He, also, he claims, informed some of the members of his conference, a former district superintendent among others, of his degrees, and of the place where he secured them. Their comment was: "Your degrees are just as good as ours."

Among others who have accepted degrees was David Starr Jordan. But few degrees have been given during the past three years. One was given through the Bishop of Chicago with which Bishop Rice had a strange experience. The Supreme Pontiff was calling at the office of Denver Jewish dentist. The dentist called Rice aside, to give him a donation, Rice hoped. But instead the dentist showed Rice an article in a Jewish paper telling about the degree which Dr. Seaman, prominent Jewish head of the Seaman Institute in Chicago, had received. Dr. Seaman had spread the fact of his degree through the Jewish papers of the country. The dentist accused Bishop Rice of deceiving Dr. Seaman as to the nature of the institution that gave the degree. Bishop Rice disclaimed such deceit. His part,

he avers, was merely to return the document which the Bishop of Chicago had sent him, properly stamped with the seal of the church, and signed. He went without his supper one evening to prepare the document and rush it back by air mail.

Both under his articles of incorporation as a church and as a foundation Rice is enabled to give any degree, although he will not, for obvious reasons, grant an M. D.

Membership in the Liberal Church does not seem so important in the light of the multiplicity of degraded dignitaries and ministers it creates. At one time, a membership card was used. Rice claims to have burned forty-five hundred of these at one time. Now, however, anyone who considers himself a member of the Liberal church is a member. In this connection, an interesting map hangs in the office of Bishop Rice. It has marked on each state the quota of societies and members for that state. The figures are based on the number of people not members of any church in the 1926 religious census. All the unchurched are included in the quota of the Liberal church. For the United States the quota is 8,975 societies with a total of 89,750,000 members. Kansas has a quota of 150 societies; Colorado, 80.

Not only the living, but the dead also are honored by the Liberal church. Notable figures are canonized, memorialized, and any stigma that religion might have attached to their names is removed. Baruch Spinoza, the philosopher, was reinstated in the Jewish church by Bishop Rice, and made a saint. A memorial service was held for Charles P. Steinmetz, advertised on a half page in the Denver Post, and attended in the City Auditorium by a few score people.

Lately the Liberal church has honored another notable by changing the dating of the calendar to begin with the birth of Edison instead of with the birth of Jesus. Cardinal Richard Potts, publisher of "The Common Herd" at Dallas, Texas, prepared this notable document.

In the Liberal church, moreover, the lowly as well as the famous ^{In the} are honored. On last Memorial Day, the National Memorial Society for the known and unknown pauper dead was formed. Rice's sympathies carry him so far, it seems, as to honor those whom life has cheated of a place, such as he himself perhaps would like. On this occasion, thirty-seven people and twelve ministers gathered to decorate the graves of twelve paupers, whose identity had been carefully ascertained. Buttermilk was served between addresses.

Rice has also delighted in honoring some unfortunate person with a pretentious funeral. On November 8, 1931 a prostitute was killed by her husband on Thirteenth street between Welton and California. Two friends of the woman went to the Angel of the Underworld (she died recently), who directed them to the three wickedest men in the city. One man, however, was in Europe; another out-of-town. But they found Bishop Rice. The procedure that Rice then followed was this: A dozen florists who had furnished him flowers on other occasions were called and told Bishop Rice was dead and that flowers were desired for his funeral. More flowers came than the hearse could hold. Similarly a casket was obtained from the Globe Casket company, a grave from the cemetery, and a limousine from a taxicab company. Hoffman's mortuary furnished its services. Thus was a wonderful funeral service held with three women and seven men ministers present.

Sometime later Rice went to see one of the florists. The man almost fainted at the sight of the Bishop. "Why", he said, "I thought you were dead". After he recovered his poise, he told Rice that he was glad when he heard that he was dead, for he thought that he no longer would have to contribute so many flowers.

Usually Rice's efforts are, however, for the living. "Our religion is to do good" reads a line on the letterhead of the Liberal Church. "My trinity", asserts Bishop Rice, "is that of food, clothing, and shelter". Besides the work of the flophouse over four hundred families were helped during the past year, according to Rice's estimate. Recently he has taken twelve people to the Denver General Hospital, and laid them in. Since ~~four~~ died, all of them must have needed the hospitalization, that was otherwise refused because of red tape. Now when Rice is seen coming the patient is immediately received.

Five who have been helped of late were professional men. For example, Rice went to one professional man hoping to get ten dollars. Instead the man told him that he needed ten dollars. Formerly with an income of five to ten thousand dollars a year, now he was unable to pay his rent, he had discharged his help, and he talked as if he were contemplating suicide. Rice, therefore, went to another man of the same profession, and told him of the plight of his fellow. The man gave Rice ten dollars. Although he said that Rice might be deceiving him, he gave him the money to be used as he saw fit.

The office of the Bailey Dental Company has a jar 6" by 6" by 8" full of teeth which Bishop Charles L. Bacon of the

diocese of Teeth and Health has extracted free of charge for people whom Bishop Rice has sent to him. Occasionally the Denver Post, especially Frances Wayne, of the staff, calls upon Rice to carry out some mission, such as the delivery of baby clothes to a prospective mother, in which I participated. Rice, on this occasion, made a careful inventory of the contents of the basket which we delivered and had a girl write it down on some of his stationery and had the prospective mother receipt it.

Another incident of his helpfulness was the securing of a home recently, for a baby born on 15th Street. "I made the guy marry the girl," Bishop Rice stated.

When Bishop Rice cannot help people in a material way, sometimes he can help them psychically. A woman who had been excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church because she had divorced her husband, was reinstated by Bishop Rice and given some holy water. He gave another woman, for whom life was meaningless, the task of making sandwiches to be served at his church. "When she saw the old men and women eating them," said Bishop Rice, "she got a real kick out of it." He visited another woman who was being ejected from her home. He took out a sheet of paper and wrote on it, "Anyone molesting this woman will be in danger of hell-fire and damnation." His desire is to help people have a feeling of safety and security, not caring what means he uses to produce it. His desire is to help all kinds of people he says. No red tape is attached to his services. No names need to be given. No money is expected or accepted. Rice is an enemy of the Community Chest. He carries on in his own way and depends on his own resources.

Rice has also entered politics, although not seriously,

it is to be supposed. He has run for mayor of the city of Denver on the platform of "Free streetcar rides". He was a candidate for governor of Colorado on the Andy Gump ticket, and another occasion, on a billion dollar improvement platform. Bishop Frank M. Zern of Glen Rio, New Mexico, is the presidential candidate of the Liberal Church in the present campaign on the ticket of the secular party. Cardinal Richard Potts of Dallas, Texas, is his running mate. A copy of Zern's newspaper is included with this report.

V. THEOLOGY AND ETHICS.

Rice was recently hurt by his wife when she called him an atheist. He averred to me that his church is liberal, not atheistic in its theology. He said further, "After we got organized, we found that the Iliff School of Theology is teaching exactly what we believe." In a speech he said that he was religiously intoxicated when he ~~said this~~ ^{discovered} that here is an institution that teaches in a little different way, how people may be humane. His theology, he says, is an insufficient imitation of that of Iliff. He is taking his gospel to people who would never hear Iliff men -- to the rough-necks. He only wants to give people a God who will serve them. He feels that the supernatural is detrimental because it makes men depend on it for help that human efforts alone can give. He wants a scientific God. He wants a God who is not fixed, but one who can change. In spite of what he says, in practice Rice seems to be an agnostic. Certainly he is not afraid to defy God. He says that when God told him to found the Liberal Church, He instructed him to go to the top of Lookout Mountain. Rice, however, was late in arriving. He then took out his watch and told God that he had two minutes to tell him whatever He wished. God told him to go

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down to Denver and found the Liberal Church. This was God's part in the creation of this church. Rice has also said that everybody is God in the Liberal Church.

As to his code of ethics, Rice says that it is made up of that part of modern science that one may use to enoble, beautify, and prolong life, insofar as it does not violate the District Attorney's Bible. "He would take the lid off. Morality is up to the individual."

VI. TECHNIQUES.

Prayer is made on an adding machine. When our knowledge of mathematical science is perfected, we will know the meaning of such prayers. Recently an adding machine prayer was sent to Aimee Semple McPherson Hutton, because of her work in providing food, clothing, and shelter for the poor of Los Angeles. On the other hand, although the Constitution of the United States is the official Bible of the Liberal Church, Bishop Rice sends out colporteurs of penny gospels, and distributes American Bible Society leaflets. The Rev. Mr. Wolfram of the Life Mission Inc., who was caretaker of the Flop House last winter, by selling gospels, made \$.60 to \$.75 a day, enough for his daily bread. Another of Rice's ministers who is blind, makes his living in a similar way, and blesses Rice profusely for his ordination. Rice, however, wishes to have a Bible written for the Liberal Church. He has assigned the task to several of his Bishops and lately to his Arch-Bishop. This new Bible would be composed of eleven books: Book I, Astronomy; Book II, Geography and Geology; Book III, Physics and Chemistry; Book IV, Life; Book V, Anthropology; Book VI, Language and Literature; Book VII, Psychology; Book VII, Human Career;

Book IX, Motives- Our Motives; Book X, Construction; Book XI, Man's Aspirations about Man and the Gods.

The articles of incorporation of the Liberal Church were amended in 1924 to make sure that sacramental wine could be secured, after Attorney-General Wayne C. Williams had doubted the legal right of the church to get it. However, so much red tape is involved that buttermilk or pop is usually used. Wine tonic such as can be procured at many drug stores has recently found favor with Bishop Rice. He presented two reporters of the Denver Post with drinks from a bottle and with another bottle to take with them, on their recent visit to his office. Bishop Rice makes much ado about the lengthy rulings which have been made by the Prohibition Department that enable churches and ministers to secure wine. Bishop Percy H. Ward of Chicago has actually obtained it. When his wine was delivered by the government two prohibition officers accompanied the delivery man to insure that no hi-jacker would interfere with the delivery.

Bottles of holy water have also been prepared by Bishop Rice. He secured distilled water from a drug store. Some of the bottles were placed in a Jewish pool hall with a sign, "\$.25 a drink. ESPECIALLY BLESSED BY BISHOP RICE. FREE TO THE POOR." One man paid \$.25 for a bottle although Bishop Rice protested the payment of the price. After Rice had put a little salt in the water, the man drank, and was greatly benefited. Another bottle was delivered to the Arch-Bishop of the Missouri Valley when Rice visited the Iliff School. He said, "Place a drop of this water in the Missouri River or any of its tributaries, or on any spot of land drained by them, and all the waters in that region will be made holy."

Baptism is administered to animals as well as human beings. The baptism of William R. Salazer, a Mexican child, was a notable occasion. Bishop Rice telegraphed Bishop William Montgomery Brown, ex-Episcopalian, and now an atheist, C.O.D., requesting his presence, and received Bishop Brown's regrets by prepaid telegraph. According to the ritual used for young Salazer, he could change his church, he would still be baptized if he were a heretic, and he would be baptized for all time for the good of humanity.

For marriage ceremonies, Bishop Rice uses one word, "Married". After the first of these, attended by four attorneys, to assure its legality, over five hundred letters of protest were received from all over the country. Nearly every small city daily had published the story.

As for funeral services, all that is possible is done to remove solemnity, fear, and significance ordinarily attached to death. The Denver Post recently sent a man who was looking for an agnostic to conduct the funeral service of his wife, to Bishop Rice. Secular songs were used, the congregation joining in lustily on the chorus of Springtime in the Rockies. The husband of the deceased woman was so well pleased that on two occasions he brought ten dollars to Bishop Rice although Bishop Rice informed him that no charge was made for funeral services. Another man who called himself George DeLouse, although this was not his real name, had secured a suit of clothes from Bishop Rice and had been de-loused as well. When this unfortunate was discovered dead on the street, a request was found in his pocket for Bishop Rice to conduct his funeral. He also asked that a bottle of Three Star Whiskey and an Ace of Diamonds be buried with him. Bishop Rice however, drank the whiskey

as he did not trust it to the man. He also smoked a five-cent cigar over the casket. Another cigar was placed in the pocket of the dead man. After one of the crowd had suggested that matches would be needed, they too, were placed in the pocket.

Bishop Rice is fond of using printed matter to promote his church. He circulated 2500 copies of the article, "Tobacco, Tombstones, and Profits", by Luther Burbank, and also 5,000 copies of Collier's Colored Page Creed. He also sends out letters, dodgers, cards, etc. One card which commended Mayor Stapleton and condemned the Post, estranged a woman who was one of his largest contributors. Legal documents are the favorite instruments of religion for Bishop Rice. Each ordination and degree is couched in legal and ecclesiastical terms, must be witnessed by a notary, and is not considered valid, if the recipient does not have interest enough to have it recorded by some County Clerk.

As to Rice's technique in getting money and food supplies, he is a good psychologist. He approaches the residence or place of business of his prospect, with head somewhat bowed. Rice naturally has an ecclesiastical air and wears sombre clothes. He approaches the matter of a donation indirectly. For example, when securing gasoline for a car, he told the distributor that he wanted some help in delivering baby clothes. The gasoline dealer said, "You mean you need some gasoline." Rice concurred. Immediately the gasoline was forthcoming from this Jew. On another occasion when Rice secured five dollars, he appealed on one hand to his prospect's agnostic tendencies, but also put on such a show of salesmanship that this high official in a wholesale paper company, even though he had already tried to

postpone the gift until the first of the next month, finally drew out his billfold and gave Rice the bill. Arch-Bishop Burdick says that every year the Liberal Church has a large deficit but in some way that Burdick does not understand, Rice raises the money when needed. This year, however, has seen a greater struggle to secure it. One method besides that of simple religious begging, in securing contributions, is that of selling notes in which it is stipulated that the buyer will not sue when the note is due, and if not paid ^{it} is null and void. During the winter in order to support his Flop House, he asked different individuals to care for the establishment for one night. Instead of giving their personal services, they are usually glad to donate the necessary funds. The money Rice secures is not used selfishly on himself or his family. When he is asking for money for himself he frankly tells the prospect, "This money will be used for no one but Bishop Rice". He does not have an abundance for himself or his family. Mrs. Rice tried caring for the apartment house in which they live, to pay for the rent. However, she found the work too hard. She has had some doubts as to whether their daughter will be able to continue as a senior in high school next year because of the lack of money to buy books and other necessities. Yet the Rices have a comfortable home.

The following pages consist first of a letter which Rice sent out last winter appealing for help and from which he says he received an unexpected response; a other letter is one which was taken personally by one of his followers to grocers who had helped Rice previously, again appealing to them for food for himself.

THE LIBERAL CHURCH, INC.

EMERGENCY RELIEF DEPARTMENT,
1604 Market St., Denver, Colo.,

.....193

.....
..... FOR PERSONAL ATTENTION OF THE BOSS
.....
..... OR AUTHORITY PRO TEMPORE.
.....

Dear Friend of Humanity:

A--M--E--N.

In the Name of just a little Comfort, Encouragement, Consolation, and Bodily Well-Being for some needy and unemployed residents of Denver.

We are in such exceedingly great and urgent need for their relief THAT WE MUST ASK YOU TO HELP US TO HELP THEM.

We pray you, therefore, for the sake of our destitute fellow human beings that you give for them to the utmost of your hearts' feelings.

Could it be.....
.....If not, send anything else that's usable.

Issued by Authority of The Powers that Are: given in behalf of the poor, needy, and unemployed; and, Attested on this the day Aforesaid.

YOURS FOR RELIEF WITHOUT INHUMAN DELAYS FOR INVESTIGATION - - AND WITH MOST SINCERE THANKS FOR ALL PAST FAVORS.

THE LIBERAL CHURCH, INC.,
Bishop Frank Rice, Pres.,

EMERGENCY RELIEF DEPART.
Superintendent.

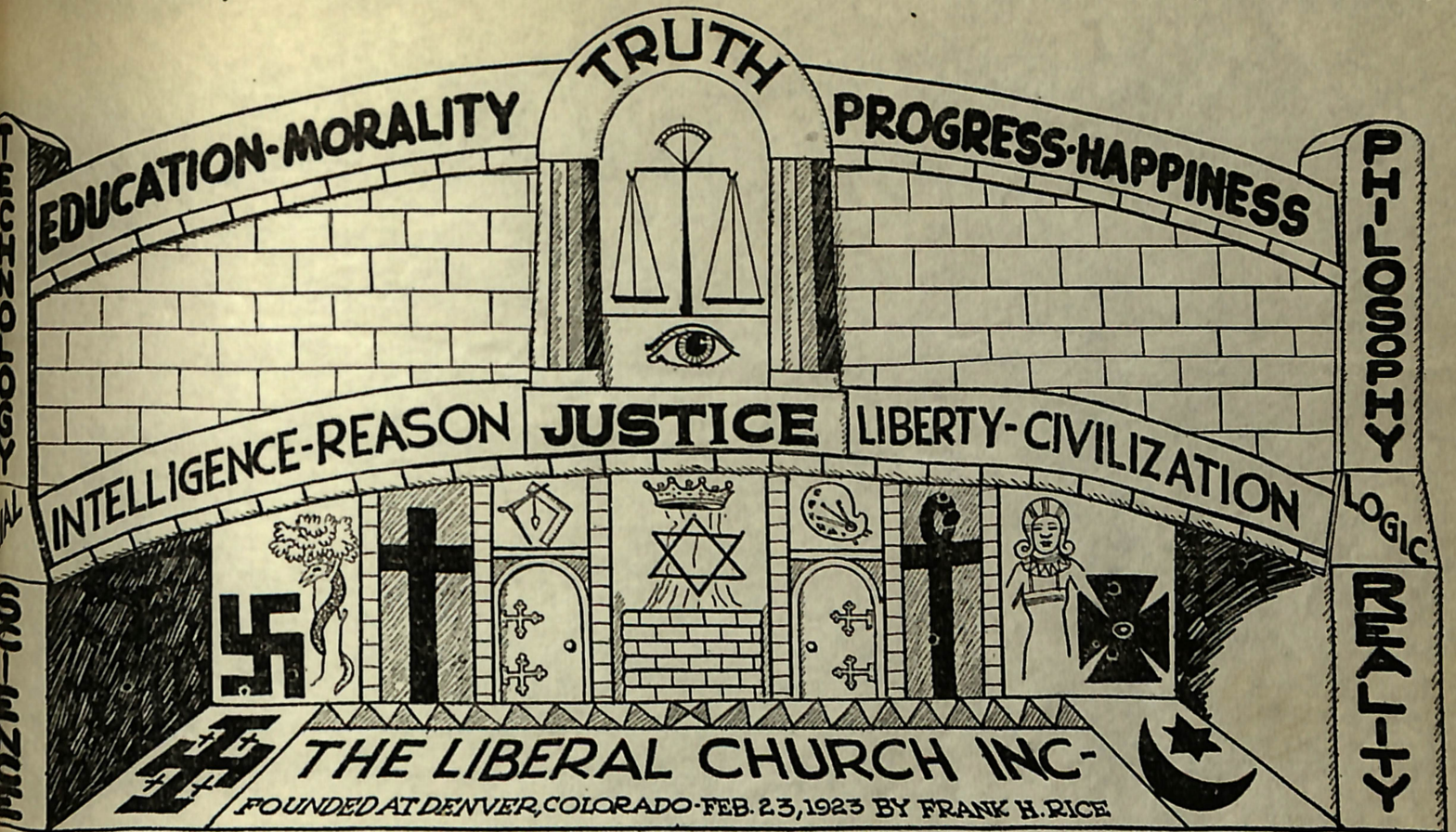
THE LIBERAL CHURCH HAS NEVER
SOLD ANYTHING DONATED TO IT
EVERYTHING RECEIVED IS GIVEN AWAY

.....
..... EDUCATION---PROGRESS---LIBERTY---OPPORTUNITY---JUSTICE

T-R-U-T-H

FRANK H. RICE, President
MATHY BURDICK-NEWBY, M. D., Vice President
M. BURDICK, Secretary

BARNEY HAUGHEY, Treasurer
Room 6, 1605 Larimer Street
CLYDE ROBINSON, Assistant Secretary



Our Principles: We Believe in the United States

Our Religion is to Do Good

For more details read Articles of Incorporation duly recorded with the Secretary of State of Colorado, and Book 3929, Page 367
Clark and Recorder's Office, City and County of Denver, State of Colorado.

Redman and Son
Mr Redman Jr 1804 - So Pearl St
I am sending you this note by a friend.
Please consider the advisability of
sending me some groceries for my
own family use. The need is very great.
Thanks for past favors - Best wishes
and Good Luck Amen!

Bishop Frank H Rice
378 So Pearl St

VII. EVALUATION.

Rice has received much criticism, of course, from conservative religious persons and groups. After his address at Iliff someone said, "Both the Bishop and the Arch-Bishop are crazy." The Assistant City Attorney says, "Rice is a psychopathic nut." Of course the ends to which he goes to deride the church must indicate either that he has a keen sense of humor, or else is insane. His passion for his work does seem to amount to a mania.

The people of Larimer Street and others who know him, feel that he is doing a great good. One Jewish young woman, not knowing the exact status of the Liberal Church episcoacy, remarked, "Rice is certainly a fine fellow, even if he is a Bishop." Many liberal minded people also feel that he is succeeding in two ways. He is showing up the shams of the church and he is doing a worthy piece of social service.

Mrs. Rice appears to be a rather cultured woman and a good wife. She is out of sympathy with his radical anti-eccleciastical methods, but she seems to be more in sympathy with his social work. She feels that he should be free from the care of herself and their daughter so that he could wholly devote himself to his work.

Rice himself seems to feel that he has made a mistake in not securing a more solid financial foundation in property, and in not building a stronger organization.

Rice apparently is not religious, but merely humanitarian. In his methods he is an opportunist. If he thinks he can shock his hearers because of any extreme views or methods he will do his best to shock. On the other hand he seems to have a deep

love for humanity which one might not discover in one interview or on one occasion. The behavior of the man may seem absurd, yet he is determined to make a serious business out of his destruction of sham and in his service to man.