

The Freethinker

Volume LXXX—No. 33

Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

Price Sixpence

CONSIDERABLE COMMENT has been aroused recently by the frank statement of a Roman Catholic priest of Liverpool, that in that Irish stronghold of the "One True Church", Roman Catholic delinquents considerably exceed the average proportion of criminals of other denominations; a fact which seems to be proved—and not only in Liverpool. Indeed, the fact is so well known as to have already engaged the attention of this paper from time to time. Whilst

however, it is no doubt true that certain religious (and perhaps in particular, Roman Catholic) beliefs do tend to encourage the more facile commission of legal crimes, yet at least in my submission, the equation of criminal conduct with religious belief is always a rather hazardous speculative assumption. For criminal conduct varies from country to country, besides being intimately bound up with non-religious (mostly economic) phenomena: e.g. in a scarcity (pre-affluent society) economy such as has been, and indeed still is, that of most civilised communities, poverty is a far better criterion of criminal conduct than is religion. As the old Radicals used to point out so aptly, the annals of our criminal courts do not apparently reveal a single case of a millionaire who ever became a cat burglar—and that includes Catholic, Protestant and (if there are any) Atheistic millionaires.

Roman Catholicism in Ireland

With regard to the current problem of Roman Catholicism and crime in this country, a brief survey of the peculiar evolution of Roman Catholicism in Britain may be helpful from the standpoint of sociology. For it must be remembered that Catholicism in Great Britain has passed through two quite separate and distinct phases since the Reformation. That revolution, both a religious and a social one, virtually wiped out Catholicism as a mass-movement in this country leaving only a small, chiefly aristocratic fringe. It was not until the mid-19th century that Roman Catholicism again became a mass-movement in Great Britain and this development was (even if often forgotten nowadays) due primarily to the Irish immigration which followed upon the potato famine of the Hungry Forties. English Catholicism actually owes far more to St. Patrick than to her own patron saint, St. George, or even than to Cardinal Godfrey's so recently invoked "Forty Martyrs". Indeed, it owes far more to the peculiar transubstantial changes in the potato in the Irish soil of the 1840s than to more orthodox forms of Transubstantiation! Now again, it was not the Irish millionaires, nor even the landlords who followed the legendary snakes out of Erin in the Hungry Forties; conversely it was the expropriated Irish peasantry who came over here and who are still coming over here in a continuous stream of immigration. Consequently, any really serious criticism of Catholicism as a crime-producing factor, must in the main at least, be a criticism of the still predominantly Irish Catholic population of Great Britain, whether in Liverpool, Glasgow, or elsewhere.

Irish Catholicism and Crime

The vast majority of the Irish immigrants since the Hungry Forties, were, and are, desperately poor even when judged by the not very elevated standards of the Victorian English workers. Criticism of their criminal propensities, real or alleged, must accordingly be directed primarily in connection with their economic status, which—or so I would hold—is much more important than are their religious beliefs. At the same time, I think that one can legitimately hold Catholicism as at least indirectly responsible for any excessive Catholic criminal statistics. This is so not only because certain specifically Catholic doctrines (in

particular, confession) may very likely tend to facilitate crime, but more particularly because the Roman Catholic religion would (and not only in Ireland) appear to have a definite connection with technological backwardness and consequent mass poverty; for this connection appears to be obvious in all Catholic lands only excepting those (like Belgium, or West Germany) with substantial anti-clerical or Protestant minorities. There appears to be an essential connection between technically retarded (and therefore permanently poor) societies and the Roman Catholic Church. A Swiss Freethinker who is a keen motorist, once told me that he always knows when he passes from a Protestant to a Catholic canton by the sudden deterioration of the roads; and the mass poverty of such traditionally Catholic strongholds as Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Ireland herself, is of course, endemic and immemorial. Something in the Catholic view of life seems to cause automatically technical and social stagnation; perhaps its excessive preoccupation with the "soul". I think that, accordingly, one can reasonably establish a causal connection in the vicious circle of Catholicism, poverty and consequential crime in the Catholic population of this (and no doubt, other) lands.

Society and Crime

The problem of crime is a sociological and universal one that far transcends any local religious (or other) connections. How, for instance, are we to explain the present apparently ever-increasing wave of crime in our never had it so good (or with so much overtime) society? Hardly this time by the traditional explanation of poverty. With considerable plausibility the war is often invoked; the juvenile population was simultaneously brutalised by war and deprived of parental guidance. No doubt there is some truth in all this in particular relation to the present alarmingly steep rise in crimes of violence. However, there does at present seem to be a more general (and perhaps more influential) cause at work to explain present social, including criminal, aberrations; this may be defined broadly as the current collapse of any, and of all, moral standards. Outside a fast-diminishing circle, the old moral code, based ultimately on some kind of dogmatic religious sanction, is breaking, or has already broken down. But it would today obviously represent the most absurd opti-

— VIEWS and OPINIONS —

Crime, Religion and Society

By F. A. RIDLEY

mism if we were to maintain that the present spectacular collapse of the old religious-based morality is being promptly and effectively superseded by a purely rational—not to mention rationalist—morality based upon a genuinely scientific moral and social outlook. The fact is that we are living in an indifferent age; one whose indifference extends about equally to religion and to reason. People in general couldn't care less about either. The effects of this fundamental indifference on present standards of conduct are remarkable and alarming. If, for example, one wishes to contrast the attitude of the Victorians, who genuinely believed in their ethical code, and that current in our own day, only consider that ethical *cause célèbre*, of Oscar Wilde. When Wilde was charged, his play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, was playing to capacity, but the street and the theatre were empty the night after.

An Unusual Will, 1825

By COLIN McCALL

A FEW WEEKS AGO I described a historic copy of George Jacob Holyoake's *The Trial of Theism*, lent to me by Mr. Len Ebury. This week, through the kindness of Dr. Henry George Farmer, I am able to tell of a curious sheet, 16½ inches deep by 13 inches wide, printed and published by the indomitable Richard Carlile at 62 Fleet Street, for twopence. It is a copy of "The Last Will and Testament of Thomas Morrison, Surgeon, of Vale End, Chelsea, who died the 10th of February, 1827", and it is "Extracted from the Registry of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury".

"The Church", says Morrison in the preamble, "strongly inculcates the propriety and necessity of the last act of a man's life being an act of religion; I deem the last act of an individual's life, employed in the disposal of his earthly estate, to be an act equally solemn and sacred: in order to do which, with the justice and equity that becomes a rational being, it is necessary, that he should enter upon the task in perfect mind and in perfect charity with all mankind. Deeply impressed with these feelings, in the presence of that almighty incomprehensible Being, which philosophy and religion teach us to believe forms the incomprehensible world, and the still more incomprehensible animal—man; and conscious of being of sound mind, memory, and understanding, according to my most conscientious judgment of moral and religious duty, ripened by the experience of age, I, Thomas Morrison, of Vale Grove, in the parish of Saint Luke, Chelsea, in the county of Middlesex, do, after the most mature and solemn deliberation, declare this to be my last will and testament".

He then lists his ten bequests, including:—

7th. I give and bequeath to Richard Carlile, of Fleet Street, London, Bookseller, his wife and present family, or the survivor of them, the annual sum of Fifty Pounds, by quarterly payments, for the term of their natural lives, as an approving testimony to the character of correct morals given of the said Carlile upon his late trial, holding, as I sincerely do, that such a character is of infinitely more utility to man, and consequently more creditable, than the profession of any creed whatsoever, since all religions have hitherto rather tended to debase than to improve good morals; and also in testimony of my abhorrence of persecution for opinion, so contrary to the tolerant spirit of a free Constitution.

It will be seen already that Thomas Morrison was no ordinary man. But the best is yet to be. Having, as his 9th bequest, left £50 to the Literary Fund, "and would have bequeathed more; but am happy to find that most excellent institution is flourishing", he ends his list with:—

10th. And, finally, *I give and bequeath to the Church, Pagan, Jewish, Christian, and Mahometan, my anathema, for the horrible murders, cruelties, and crimes, committed thereby in all ages, under the colour of religion. And if this anathema against the abuses of religion should raise the spleen of a*

A New Ethic

Had a similar case occurred now, the police would have had to be called out in order to deal with the traffic jam round the theatre. The Victorians *believed* in their moral code: the Elizabethans do not. However, whilst no one need regret the passing of the narrow class-conditioned, sex-obsessed Victorian moral code, some kind of a viable moral code represents a social necessity for any properly functioning social order. It is perhaps the supreme tragedy of today (as well as the major cause of the present crime wave) that no such viable social code exists. The Secular movement has no more urgent duty than to assist in creating such a viable positive Humanist ethic; its creation represents the constructive (and equally necessary) sequel to the destruction of religion and of its outmoded supernatural ethical codes.

selfish Hierarchy, and impel them to refuse my mouldering carcase a cemetery in the usual way, *I will, that my Executors buy the fee-simple of a rod of earth (no matter where) therein to deposit the same, and there may the standard of Infidelity, as it is contemptuously called, that is, the standard of Truth, Benevolence, Virtue, and Philosophy, be raised to the final extirpation of Bigotry and Superstition.*

As his executors, Morrison appointed, "Henry Brougham, Esquire, M.P." (one of the founders of the famous *Edinburgh Review*, and later Lord Brougham) and "James Evans, Esquire, Keeper of the Records of the Admiralty", and "though to the former gentleman I am a perfect stranger to every thing but his public character. I am persuaded, that, as the bequests of the same are chiefly of a public nature, and consistent with his grand object, the amelioration of the condition of man in society, he will not refuse to lend his assistance in the development of my ideas, should there be particularly any thing that appears ambiguous in law or otherwise . . ." But:—

Lest the liberal opinions expressed in this Will should operate in any way to the disadvantage of the said James Evans, in the minds of certain Creedists, I hereby declare, that I have great reason to think this my said Executor to be a firm believer in the Christian faith, and certainly no philosopher. The character of my other Executor stands upon an eminence so much above the pitiable prejudices of bigotry and superstition, and the malevolent and detestable malice of hypocrisy, that any apology for him, should he be kind enough to accept the trust herein reposed, would be superfluous.

The executors were, "at a convenient period after my decease", to dispose of the estate by public auction and to lodge the proceeds in the Bank of England, "or upon other good and sufficient security", and the interest was to be appropriated to the various bequests. Whatever balance remained "unemployed from these uses", and the annuities themselves as they fell into the estate on the death of the parties,

I will that the same be further applied in the grant of other annuities for life, of not less than Twenty Pounds per annum, to decayed housekeepers of this parish and aged and infirm servants of the same, who shall, during their servitude, have remained seven years at least in one situation; and that the creed or faith of such persons be no bar to the claim, provided the moral character be unexceptionable.

Provisions were made for proportional diminution of annuities in case the estate proved insufficient to meet them, and for the executors to surrender the estate into the hands of three trustees, three years after Morrison's death, and:

every three years afterwards, for the same, by a public vestry of the said parish of Chelsea, and to be laymen and men of independent property, gratuitously to apply the proceeds thereof to the uses of this my last Will and Testament.

—Thomas Morrison (L.S.)

(Concluded on page 260)

The Imposition of Belief

By ANDRE LORULOT

(Vice-President, World Union of Freethinkers)

Translated by D. Joseph

BELIEF, FAR FROM BEING a natural instinct (as is so often claimed), is very difficult to impose on children. Indeed, the teaching of dogmas is so stupid that it generates a resistance, frequently quite strong, on the part of the child, and this resistance must be overcome by priestly authority and prestige, and especially by fear (fear of God, of the Devil, etc.).

The parish priest of St. Charles de Serin, France, Fr. Gitenet, writing in his parish magazine for May 1956, complains that in present day society, religious instruction can only be made to penetrate the mind with the greatest difficulty. "All the children who came to my catechism class," he says, "have been accepted for First Communion without a preliminary examination; if they had been examined, not more than 5 of the 33 would have answered satisfactorily. Nevertheless, they were awarded high marks at each recitation. I must admit that they memorised and recited each lesson very competently. They are wide-awake and intelligent. We get on very well together. The catechism is not, it would seem, a fag. And yet their religious instruction is very much below average".

He goes on to describe how he examined these children. One girl did not know what the "Mystery of the Holy Trinity" was, while another was unaware of the significance of Christmas and Easter, and a third did not know that Jesus lived 33 years on earth.

The boys were no better. One confused the seven sacraments and the seven deadly sins, another knew nothing about the baptism of Our Lord, while several others could not recite the Creed. And these were children who would receive no further religious instruction.

"How can we explain this religious ignorance?" asks Fr. Gitenet, and he answers:—

"The chief and only reason is that religion has no contact with the day-to-day lives of the children . . . At home the child never sees anyone praying; no one ever speaks to him of Jesus or of the Blessed Virgin. How many children say their morning and evening prayers? At home, who will explain to them the religious significance of Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, the Assumption, All Saints and Lent? The parents have no religious interests whatever. Just as a fish needs water, so the child needs a Christian [Catholic] atmosphere. Without wishing to be offensive, I invite the parents to examine their consciences honestly, and to reply frankly to the question: Is it not true that the children sent to us at 9 years [for catechism] have never been to Sunday mass, and that very few can make the sign of the Cross? In such circumstances, catechism is merely one more lesson, a lesson often difficult, with strange words. They are going to be told about angels, demons and divine personages whom no one has ever seen. They will be told that a Christian lives by grace, and that the sacraments are its indispensable channels; but around him no one receives these sacraments, and yet all enjoy good health. The situation is ridiculous. They understand nothing, and would be as ready to accept Vishna, Confucius or Muhammed as Christ, the Holy Ghost and the Apostles. They see no difference between St. Peter and St. Medard".

Fr. Gitenet's complaints are truly heart-rending. Here is a man who spends his time stuffing his idiocies into the minds of the unfortunate children whose parents are weak-minded enough to hand them over to him from their

tenderest years. By the terms of the decree of Pius X, on the reception of Communion by young children, a child may be admitted to Communion as soon as he knows the basic tenets of the Faith, and can distinguish between the Eucharistic bread and ordinary bread.

But could the Pope himself tell the difference. Are they not both made with the same flour? There is no way of distinguishing except on the word of the priest who has the power of changing one of them into flesh and blood!

Surely it is natural that a child of 8 years could not understand "the mystery of the Trinity" (this balderdash as the late Edouard Herriot once termed it), that he should confuse the sacraments, the deadly sins, Pentecost and the Virgin Mary, and that he should hasten to forget that farrago when the dreary ordeal of Communion is over. Indeed what could be more natural. If Fr. Gitenet's mind had not been so irreparably deformed by his years in the seminary, he would not be naïve enough to express surprise.

Let us look again at his conclusion. To prevent the religious instruction from evaporating from the mind of the child, the whole family must be impregnated with it, the child must be submerged in an entirely Catholic atmosphere, he must have religion incessantly dinned into him, and must spend half his life in church. This would finally break his mental resistance. He would be brain-washed and reduced to mental slavery.

Fr. Gitenet's article, therefore confirms the following two points:—

1. Religion is not an innate sentiment in the child's mind; it is imposed from without by a dogmatic and authoritarian education.

2. The methods of the Church are contrary to the harmonious development of the child; they are tyrannical and criminal.

Fr. Roffat propounds a similar thesis in *La Croix* (April 14th, 1955):

"The gravest error, as I see it, is to think that children and adolescents can easily function as Christians [Catholics] in dechristianised surroundings and to expect from those at an essentially unstable and impressionable age, a strength of character and firmness of conviction to which only a chosen few adults attain after years of training. The illusion—particularly astonishing in people aware of the effects of environment—is to think that boys of 8 to 15 years can automatically be the leaven of an amorphous and frequently impure dough. But leaven must be prepared. A mass of flour must be set aside for several days of fermentation for the leaven to work. Likewise it takes years of prayer, of struggles against one's weaknesses, and of exercises of charity, to make an apostle. Above all, there must be a climate of Faith. There lies the essential principle, and the basis of the beneficent action of the Christian school. That is why the Church always seeks to open schools in which, in the words of Pius XI, the Faith shall be 'the foundation and the crown of all teaching'".

Here is an avowal of the main purpose of Catholic education, the making of future priests:

"How many priests would have come forward to offer themselves to the service of the Church, wrote the late
(Concluded on next page)

This Believing World

In ITV's Sunday "Forum" (July 23rd), the subject was "Divorce should be made easier", a proposition put extremely well by Mr. B. Magee, and opposed as well as perhaps could be expected by Mr. R. W. Evans. The speakers from the floor of the house did not do as well, and the only reason why we notice the discussion is because none of them appealed to "our Lord", or what he is supposed to have said on the question. This surely is very surprising for, in general, divorce is hardly ever discussed by Christians without dragging in Jesus, and the sacredness of marriage as laid down by his *unchanging* law—no divorce under any circumstances. The truth is somewhat different—Jesus *does* allow divorce; but to hear parsons and priests talk, one would never think so. See Matthew 5, 32 and 19, 9.

★

However, in this Protestant England of ours, a new Roman Catholic Church is to be built at Stevenage New Town to cost about £40,000—what for, we are sure God alone knows. Perhaps Stevenage is full of Romanists whose spiritual life would be endangered were it not for the new church. Far, far, better to spend such a sum on a church than on new houses wanted all over the country for the people. Yet are these people really not to blame?

★

What a splendid chap is the Rev. A. Jones of St. Silas's Church, Nuneaton! With stouthearted Christian courage, he is ready to baptise any child *even* if both its parents "were blackguards". Baptism, he valiantly asserts, "is a gift of God", and "a sacramental grace", and therefore baptism is all the more necessary if the parents are blackguards. As he brilliantly adds, "the subject is the infant not the parents or the god-parents". Being incorrigibly materialistic ourselves, we actually thought baptism didn't make a scrap of difference one way or t'other—except, as in some cases, it made children a little cleaner. But one lives and learns.

★

A very religious German gentleman called Clever, was given three months for *mercilessly* beating his wife (*Daily Mail*, August 5th), particularly after going to church. He is a strict member of the Seventh Day Adventists, and claimed that he had a perfect right to beat her to show she was "not boss in the house". He was so fond of using a stick to her, that he even beat her after proceedings had been taken against him. As a good Christian, he could have claimed Scriptural support, for did not the great Apostle Paul declare that "a wife hath not power of her own body but the husband" (1 Cor. 7, 4)? So a pious husband has the right to beat his wife just as Mr. Clever did *for three years!*

★

Just another little pointer towards the "rise" of Roman Catholicism. The *Daily Express* (August 4th) has an item on Roman Catholics and "unity", and it refers to Dr. J. Heenan as the "Archbishop of Liverpool". We would dearly like to know who made him the Archbishop? Was it the Church of England—or the Vatican? Anyway, it appears that five other Roman Catholic "bishops" and Dr. Heenan are to form "a Christian unity committee"—no doubt to further the idea that if the Churches want "unity", the quicker they join up with the one true Church—the Roman Catholic Church—the quicker they'll get it.

AN UNUSUAL WILL, 1825

(Concluded from page 258)

The document was signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of Henry Early Wyatt and Richard Smith Roach on August 10th, 1825.

A footnote tells us that James Evans died before the testator so, "a few hours before his death, Mr. Morrison appointed Mr. William Norcott, of Lawrence Street, Chelsea, the second Executor of his Will". However, Brougham and Norcott "each renounced the probate and execution of the Will", so Mrs. Morrison undertook the administration.

So much for Thomas Morrison's trust in Henry Brougham, Lord Chancellor to be!

NEXT WEEK: "An unusual Will, 1961."

THE IMPOSITION OF BELIEF

(Concluded from page 259)

Fr. Thellier of Poncheville, if the invitation had not been extended to them in their youth. How many indeed, if the invitation had not been extended to them in their youth! Cardinal Petit of Julleville and the late Archbishop of Algiers, Mgr. Laynaud, willingly admitted the immense effect on their lives, the former at the age of 20, the latter at 7, of the exhortations of an older man encouraging them to give themselves entirely to God. On the other hand, many a Christian irrevocably committed to some other career, has expressed regret that his steps were not directed towards the priesthood. Who was responsible for not speaking to them at the right moment?"

So it is necessary to take advantage of the youth of the child to tame his intelligence. Do not wait! If you allow his mental faculties to develop, his critical faculties to grow, it will be too late to make him your prey!

At the opening of the National Congress on Religious Instruction, held some time ago in Paris at the Maison de la Chimie, Mgr. de Provenchères, Archbishop of Aix, addressing 2,300 delegates who crowded into the insufficiently large hall, was naïve (or cynical?) enough to tell them, "Those who cannot see, will easily find consolation, because as catechists they know that 'blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed'" (quoted in *La Croix*).

These words are taken from the Gospel of Saint John (20, 28-29). They express, therefore, the basic conception of Christianity—and its desire to dominate by the blind submission of human minds! They are beyond the reach of comment. It is necessary to believe with eyes closed, without reflecting, without reasoning, without trying to comprehend, to verify.

In this twentieth century, it is surely outrageous that thousands of men should still be mercilessly striving to impose on their fellow humans such a barbarous, disastrous and immoral approach to life.

I am not exaggerating. St. Thomas Aquinas declared, in fact, that man is obliged, from the time he reaches the age of reason (that is 7 years), under pain of grave sin, to make an act of love of God, an act which is, in effect, a decision for good or evil. The love of God, is therefore an obligation, an order coming from without, and not a spontaneous and sincere action of the individual. On the other hand, the child himself is subject to this obligation, at the time when his slowly awakening reason, is not strong enough to allow him to comprehend dogmas so obscure that the Church herself has given up all hope of explaining them!

THE FREETHINKER

103 BOROUGH HIGH STREET, LONDON, S.E.1
TELEPHONE: HOP 2717

THE FREETHINKER can be obtained through any newsagent or will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates: One year, £1 15s.; half-year, 17s. 6d.; three months, 8s. 9d. (In U.S.A. and Canada: One year, \$5.00; half-year, \$2.50; three months, \$1.25.)

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1. Details of membership of the National Secular Society may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High Street, S.E.1. Members and visitors are welcome during normal office hours. Inquiries regarding Secular Funeral Services should also be made to the General Secretary, N.S.S.

Lecture Notices, Etc.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch N.S.S. (The Mound).—Sunday afternoon and evening: Messrs. CRONAN, McRAE and MURRAY.
London (Tower Hill).—Every Thursday, 12—2 p.m.: Messrs. J. W. BARKER and L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch N.S.S.. Thursday lunchtimes, THE FREETHINKER on sale, Piccadilly, near Queen Victoria Statue. (Platt Fields), Sundays, 3 p.m.: Messrs. G. H. MILLS and G. A. WOODCOCK.

Marble Arch N.S.S. (Marble Arch), Sundays, 12 noon: MESSRS. F. A. RIDLEY, D. H. TRIBE, C. H. CLEAVER and G. F. BOND.
Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. L. EBURY, J. W. BARKER, C. E. WOOD, D. H. TRIBE and H. A. TIMMINS.

Merseyside Branch N.S.S. (Pierhead).—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: Messrs. L. EBURY and A. ARTHUR.

Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square, Nottingham).—Every Friday, 1 p.m., Every Sunday, 6.30 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY

Notes and News

"WE NEED to scour out the dirt in our national life, our political life, our economic life, our school life and our home life through a change in men." The quotation, taken from the latest Moral Re-Armament full-page advertisement (*Daily Mail*, 20/7/61) is typical of the late Dr. Frank Buchman. He spoke with the requisite amount of vagueness and certitude to capture "The True Believer". As Eric Hoffer wrote in his splendid little book of that title, "in order to be effective a doctrine must not be understood, but has to be believed in. We can be absolutely certain only about things we do not understand . . . The devout are always urged to seek the absolute truth with their hearts and not their minds". And Mr. Hoffer cited Rudolph Hess's words in 1934: "Do not seek Adolf Hitler with your brains; all of you will find him with the strength of your hearts".

THIS IS NOT to suggest that Buchman was a Fascist. The oft-quoted praise of Hitler, "I thank heaven for a man like Adolf Hitler who built a front line of defence against the anti-Christ of Communism", was (as *The Guardian*, 9/8/61 reminded us) followed by the extraordinarily naive admission: "My barber in London told me that Hitler saved all Europe from Communism". But Buchman exercised what a Church of England Bishop, Dr. Hensley Henson aptly called an "oracular despotism". And, whether as Oxford Group or MRA, his movement continued—in the late Dr. Henson's words—in its "toadying on rich and prominent individuals, its unscrupulous use of well-known names, the grotesque exaggeration of its advertisements, the unseemly luxury of its travellers, the artificiality of 'sharing', the mystery of its finance . . .". *The Guardian* may be right in suggesting that Buchman was "successfully used as a figurehead by people whose

The Freethinker Sustentation Fund

Previously acknowledged: £94 8s. 6d. Anon, 10s.; R. V. Ross, 7s. 6d.; J. McLean, 4s.; J.A., £2; W. L. Clayton, 2s. 6d.; P. G. Bamford, 16s.; O.A.P., 10s.; E. Drabble, 5s.; S. Merrifield, 5s. 3d.; Mrs. A. Vallance, £1 10s. Total to date, August 11th, 1961: £100 18s. 9d.

preoccupations were not strictly religious". It will be interesting to see how MRA fares without him.

★

THE VATICAN, "Atticus" of *The Sunday Times* hears (6/8/61) "is casting covetous eyes on Cardinal Godfrey, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster". Indeed, "It is being said openly in Rome that he will be asked to join the Curia and that an announcement is imminent". Should this happen, it is certain that Dr. Heenan, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool would be translated to Westminster, and "Atticus" recalls that "Dr. Heenan is extremely friendly with Dr. Ramsey, the Archbishop of Canterbury". "I would be surprised," "Atticus" concludes, "if the possibilities of this friendship have been overlooked by the Vatican".

★

IN THE SAME ISSUE of *The Sunday Times*, the regular Jesuit contributor, the Rev. M. C. D'Arcy wrote with sweet condescension of "a speaker in a public place" who had declared that "Christianity was not a subject for thought but for act". "It is a pity that he spoils his point by exaggeration", Father D'Arcy said. "In the first three Gospels Christ is shown speaking chiefly to the simple and uneducated, and asking for purity of soul, a humble mind and a loving heart. But in the fourth Gospel . . .". Here, Father D'Arcy rather spoils his own point—that it is "folly to leave knowledge and wisdom aside when embracing the Christian religion"—"But in the fourth Gospel Christ is the Word, and some of His discoveries are so profound that no one can plumb their depth . . .".

★

A FANATICAL Baptist minister in Chattanooga, the Rev. Ed. Taylor, recently set fire to a TV set, roulette wheel, packs of cards, several pairs of dice, and more than 100 pairs of shorts and skintight slacks. "They are real hindrances keeping us from being close to the Lord", he preached (*Newsweek*, 7/8/61), and his congregation agreed. "One felt his radio was a hindrance in thinking about God", while "A young person confessed that her rock 'n' roll records stimulated her to be unscriptural".

★

ANOTHER AMERICAN clergyman, the Rev. Sidney Lanier of St. Thomas Protestant Episcopal Church in New York, turned his attention to films. He is amazed, he said (and again we are indebted to *Newsweek*) "when a skilled technician turns lacquered stones into bread, or lights vacant eyes with a light that passes for love, but it does not transform me. It may even disgust and anger me".

★

A ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIEST has been accused of disrupting the academic life of the University of California, Los Angeles, we learn from *Church and State* (July-August). He has continually referred to the "totally pagan atmosphere at UCLA", and demanded that the university should open a school of religion; he has referred to the student newspaper, *The Daily Bruin* as "the campus *Daily Worker*". Dean Byron H. Atkinson of the University has described the priest's attacks as "vituperation without sense or logic" and has said he would consult with diocesan officials "about curbing these fanatical attacks". The University is prohibited by state constitution from providing religious facilities on the campus.

Four Philosophers: 3—Hobbes

By H. GEORGE FARMER

ONE FUNDAMENTAL AXIOM of the great French philosopher Montaigne was *Que sais je?* ("What know I?"): and when we know "what he knew" and "how he knew it" we can understand why he said that "To learn philosophy is to learn to die". One would have preferred that the latter should have read "to learn [how] to die", since all moral philosophy—in the widest application of the term—has a far nobler purpose since it teaches us to "learn how to live". That is what Hobbes was at such pains to elucidate in his *Leviathan* which—in 1666 when a Bill designed to suppress "Atheism and Profaneness" was presented to Parliament—was so severely condemned. Hobbes tells us that "Moral philosophy is nothing else but the science of what is good and evil in the conservation of society", and he was one of the first in Britain to recognise philosophy as a science, by seeking to discover the nature of ultimate forces and the origin and destiny of such. Some would hesitate to call philosophy a science, and would regard it merely as a unification of the higher truths of other sciences. But philosophy is—as we shall see from Hobbes—something more than a synthesis of extra-scientific conclusions. Science, as opposed to non-scientific knowledge, has always been understood to be the investigation of causes and principles, and since philosophy claims to be a science, not because it generalises the related discoveries of the physical and moral sciences, but that it investigates the ultimate principles which are beyond the purview of such.

Whatever strictures may be passed upon the theories of Hobbes, it must at least be borne in mind that this philosopher proceeded on scientific lines, and may justly be claimed as the great exponent of materialistic determinism. In this departure his influence has been more potent and far-reaching than that of any other British philosopher. By accepting a purely mechanical theory of the universe, he was driven to posit his conceptions of morality upon a deterministic basis. Following the Cyreniac doctrine that motion is pleasure, and that the law of action was deducible from subjective feelings only, sensation therefore became the criterion of good and bad. The good equates with pleasure, and the bad with pain. Yet if mere sensation determined for man what was pleasure and good, it must follow by implication that complete satisfaction for one man could only be gained by pain and evil to another. This led Hobbes to build up a theory that social origin and moral philosophy began when man first recognised that conduct should be regulated by "usefulness". His theory of morality as laid down in the *Leviathan* is frankly utilitarian, although far removed from the ethic of Bentham and Mill. Let us see what Hobbes's account of morality really is.

Like Plato and others, Hobbes assumes early man in a "state of nature", but unlike his predecessors, he denies that man is a social animal. He insists that "Men have no pleasure in keeping company". Indeed, "they are in that condition which is called war, . . . every man against every man". This, he claims, is the outcome of man's exclusive egoism in the "state of nature" which tells him that "every man has the right to everything". This is what Hobbes calls the "Rights of Nature", in which man refuses to recognise that *his* "rights" end where his *neighbour's* "rights" begin. Such an attitude is sheer anarchy, and as Hobbes himself says:

In such conditions there is no place for industry, because

the fruit thereof is uncertain . . . no art, no letters, no society, and which is worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death, and the life of man solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short . . . No propriety, no dominion, no *mine* and *thine* distinct, but only that to be every man's that he can get, and for so long as he can keep it.

In this "state of nature" the notions of right and wrong, of justice and injustice, have no place, for if man's *mine* and *thine* are non-existent, how can one speak of "justice", which the Platonic school says is "to restore to each man what is his due". Yet in these "rights of nature" there is one "right" which asserts itself in every man, and that is "the preservation of his own nature; that is to say, of his own life". It is apparent however, that if "every man has a right to everything, even to one another's body, . . . so long as this natural right of every man to every thing endureth, there can be no security to any man". Here, says Hobbes, reason comes to man's rescue, and he conceives certain laws of nature which assure him of security, and the first of these concerns "Peace" and says—that "every man ought to endeavour peace, as far as he has hopes of obtaining it". From this primary law, the second and subsequent laws are deduced. This second law is "Liberty", and he says that man should "be content with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himself". The third law is "Justice", and it is the "commutative justice" of the ancient philosophers, although he refuses to accept the Aristotelian definition on the "equality of value of the things contracted for". He insists that "the value of all things contracted for, is measured by the appetite of the contractors: and therefore the just value is that which they be contented to give". He denies explicitly that there is injustice in selling dearer than we buy. The fourth law enjoins "Gratitude", which, he says, is dependent upon antecedent grace. "No man giveth but with the intention of good to himself". Thus, says the philosopher, there can be no beginning of benevolence or trust unless grace is answered by gratitude. The fifth law is "Complaisance" or sociability, by which he means "that every man strive to accommodate himself to the rest" of his fellows. The sixth law is "Pardon", which is "nothing but granting the peace to repentants who desire it". The seventh law is "Revenge", which is the punishment for evil doers, but in which we must inflict correction not for the "greatness of the evil past, but for the greatness of the good to follow". Some nineteen or twenty laws of a similar character are given in the *Leviathan*, which are called the "Laws of Nature", which Hobbes says are the only sure and certain means of "the conservation of men in multitudes", for he insists that "All men agree . . . that peace is good, and therefore also the ways or means of peace". Such are "immutable and eternal", for injustice, ingratitude, arrogance, pride, and their like "can never be made lawful".

These laws, says Hobbes, become apparent to man when he realises what his interests are, and when that happens the elusive egoism of the "state of nature" becomes a rational egoism. How man arrives at this blessed state of perfection we are not told, but since the ego is identified with appetite or fear, it would appear that fear constrains appetite, and thus the "Laws of Nature" are born. Yet seeing that man's motive is purely self-interest, the acceptance of the "Laws of Nature" meant that he must renounce the "Rights of Nature", and he naturally asks

whether every man will surrender this liberty; as he very pertinently observes—"if other men will not lay down their right as well as he: then there is no reason for any one to divest himself of his". Clearly, some sort of mutual understanding among men was necessary, but Hobbes argues that a mere covenant among men will not hold, and he proceeds to demonstrate that some "common power" is necessary to enforce the keeping of the covenant of the "Laws of Nature". This "common power" is "the state", which may be "one man" or an "assembly of man", and this renunciation of individual "rights" to the "common", this reduction of "all their wills by plurality of voices unto one will", is brought about by "contract".

What sort of State was to enforce obedience? Hobbes says that mere "force of words" is too weak to hold men to the performance of the covenants, and so two helps are necessary. They are:—"Fear of the consequences of breaking their word", or "A glory or pride in appearing not to break it". Upon the second of the above, Hobbes placed small reliance. He therefore laid particular stress upon "fear". This latter he placed in two categories: 1, "The power of spirits invisible", and 2, "The power of those men they shall therein offend". Although he admits the value of fear of the invisible world, he realises that it is a two-edged weapon that might be turned against the State. Indeed he goes so far as to say that "men would be much more fitted than they are for civil obedience" if fears of the spiritual world were taken away. He certainly refuses to allow anyone—save the State—to determine upon religion and doctrine. The one thing needful was the State, since "Covenants without the sword [i.e. the State] are but words". With the supremacy of the State in this way, it follows that the supreme arbiter of the moral law is the State, since morality is a set of demonstrable interferences as to what adjustments promote general well-being. There could be no recognition of right or wrong apart from the social law. What stood outside the social law was evidently a great deal, but of this we have no explicit direction save the axiom—"Whatever is not forbidden is allowed". Let us examine Hobbes's theory of morality.

That man is selfish is true enough, but not wholly so, for if man were the complete exclusive egoist that Hobbes believed there could have been no such State as he proposes. It is remarkable that the philosopher who held to a mechanical theory of the universe should not have recognised that the individual ego was simply the expression of its relation to other egos, instead of accepting the notion of an independent ego possessed of particular feelings and sensations in conflict with other egos. Even admitting that man is selfish, surely this in itself is a social product, since selfishness cannot exist apart from society. It would appear therefore that Hobbes's State is an artificial, factored thing, instead of being something natural, which a determinist philosopher might more readily have proposed. Although he believed that man was not a social animal, there can be little doubt that man started his existence—as man—as a gregarious being, with untold generations behind him. Since gregariousness depends upon certain feelings of sympathy, purely mental in character—for it is primarily a psychological and not a physical fact—man's fitness to survive cannot be expressed in terms of his individual capacity to secure his own selfish ends, as Hobbes would believe. Man's fitness to survive is as much due to his mental as to his physical fitness, more especially in adaptation to the social organism. He had to become what Sir Leslie Stephen called "a cell in the social tissue", which clearly implies a mental environment.

It will be seen above that all the moralities—peace, liberty, justice, gratitude, etc., are reduced by Hobbes to terms of selfishness and fear. Such a statement must be faced by the moral philosopher. Firstly, what is man's self-interest? What exclusive ego is conscious how much his self-interest is really his own and how much is his desire to be a social being? Each individual mind is undoubtedly the function of a particular physical structure, but when we come to seek for the meaning of the content of the individual mind we are forced to take into account its relation to other minds. Man's mind is essentially a group mind, and the group mind is not concerned with mere self-interest, because the group is not simply an organisation which assures for man his food, clothing, and shelter, but a repository of ideas, beliefs, and moral aptitudes which go to make up social life. If, on the showing of Hobbes, the group triumphs over the individual in the physical or economic sphere, how much more must it be allowed that the group also vanquishes the individual in the psychical or mental sphere. Clearly the growth of society is the growth, not merely of the number of individuals, but of a number of ideas.

How far is Hobbes's theory of the regulation of conduct by the "useful" either moral or practicable? He argues that a thing may not be good in itself, yet by being the instrument of what is useful, will be conducive of good. "Power", for instance, is to Hobbes something to be sought by man as good, though not for itself alone, but because it produces goodness; so it receives his complete sanction because "it protects us from our enemies". Yet—in the very nature of things—it seems to do the opposite, because the very existence of "power" must produce enemies. Hobbes surely oversteps moral boundaries when he says that "covetousness of great riches and ambitions of great honours are honourable"! Surely the covetous and envious man is merely enemy writ respectable. The worship of power in Hobbes's State, which aims primarily at overcoming egoism, simply accelerates it. Fear cannot be banished by fear, no more than fire can be quenched by fire.

Conscience seems to play no part in the ideal State of Hobbes. Honour, loyalty, affection, etc., are things which the laws do not control. It is sufficient for him to say "Here is the moral law, and the state will compel its observance". But no law will be observed without consent, and no consent can come without reason, and reason in all that concerns social things is immensely influenced by conscience, honour, affection, loyalty, etc. Indeed Hobbes half admits all that in a fine passage in Chapter VI, which runs: "That which gives to human actions the relish of justice is a certain nobleness or gallantness of courage rarely found; by which a man scorns to be beholden for the contentment of his life to fraud or breach of promise". That morals should be based on a rationalistic foundation is a sound ethical and political doctrine. That morality is derived from society is also a fact which cannot be questioned; but Hobbes places too much stress on the State, and gives society a purely negative aspect. He is concerned with moral rules and not with moral feelings. His State is designed to protect us from unsocial elements, and has no room for the cultivation of social elements in the positive sense. Of course it may be argued that by eliminating the unsocial, the social must necessarily thrive. But the type of morality that survives in this way, is a rigid, conservative ethic which, owing to Hobbes's all-powerful State, admits of no variation. That was inevitable from his original theory of the State, which began with a primitive free man and ended with a complete State domination. In that thesis, Hobbes started at the

wrong end. Surely society began with primitive man as the slave of iron laws and customs, almost as relentless as Hobbes's finished State control. In the process of time the severity of law and custom relaxed through the play of moral and social ideas. Man thus threw off—by degrees—much external State compulsion, its place being taken by internal mental discipline, and that was accomplished by *ideas*, and it was there that moral philosophy had its sphere of action. It is not enough to say to the potentially unsocial, "Thou shalt not", for you must also say to the potentially social, "Thou shalt".

CORRESPONDENCE

A CORRECTION

My attention has been drawn to the enclosed cutting from your publication of July 21st. I would like to inform you that the paperback edition of John to which you refer in *This Believing World* as having been published by the British and Foreign Bible Society is not the Authorised Version, as you state, but the New English Bible translation, reprinted by permission of its publishers, the Oxford and Cambridge University Presses. Sales so far achieved and outstanding orders for many parts of the world now exceed one million copies.

The title of your paper suggests that factual integrity has a value on which you are likely to set a high premium, and I feel sure that you will therefore wish to publish a correction of your recent statement in the interests of accuracy.

(The Rev.) JAMES M. ROE,

Editorial Secretary, The British and Foreign Bible Society.

AN EXPLANATION

Your contributor D.W. writes in *THE FREETHINKER* (11/8/61) that Catholic nurses refused in some hospitals to admit women patients who were to be sterilised. I believe many readers will misunderstand this. "Admitting" a patient, to a nurse, is simply filling in all the necessary ward charts, getting the patient's permission for anaesthetics to be administered, arranging for the nearest relative to have visiting cards and so on. If, therefore, a nurse refuses to admit a patient, she is not denying the patient access to the hospital bed and treatment, but merely refusing to do the job she is given. It is the doctor and the hospital almoner who arrange for the real admission. The nurse's part in admitting a patient is really that of a receptionist.

P. FOSTER, S.R.N.

THE CHURCH IN SPAIN

Thank you for the copies of your paper containing Mr. Gabriel Coca's articles, "Under the Roman Catholic Church" (July 21st and 28th). Mr. Coca's experiences in goal are not news to us. We could add a few more pages to it. Nevertheless, we thank Mr. Coca and yourself for bringing to light in this country what we know so well to be the honest truth about the Church in Spain. Anyhow, we never expected anything else from them, since they always take the same line, with the same behaviour. But as Masaryk said, "La verité triomphe toujours". We have faith in our people and, all together, we will make possible the freedom of our beloved land. We have decided against reprinting the pamphlet, *Franco's Prisoners Speak*, in spite of many inquiries for it. We are now gathering material for a new one.

We don't know how to thank you for every kindness shown to us in our struggle for the freedom of our people. Very best wishes. M. BALDO (Chairman), J. HERMIDA (General Secretary), Spanish Ex-Servicemen's Association.

THE COMMON MARKET

Some people see Vatican threats everywhere. They live in fear and dread of Rome as others live in fear and dread of Moscow. "Francis Walsingham" observes British journalists "plotting the triumph of Rome"; Derek Green informs us that "Popery, with its perennial drive towards world conquest is preparing for a mighty crusade against progress and happiness" May I just ask two questions? Which British journalists does Mr. "Walsingham" refer to, and what inside information has Mr. Green about this "mighty crusade"? In contrast to this near-hysteria, Mr. F. A. Ridley's original article was moderate and reasoned.

C. W. BRAND.

"SKY PILOTS"

I am afraid that I cannot share Mr. E. Newbold's amusement at the use of the term "sky pilot". Not only is it in bad taste, it is not funny. It might be all right in the market place but not in your journal, and I hope it will not appear again.

J. P. THOMPSON.

"CHRISTIAN LOVE"

Some people will always find a pretext to don their feathered cap. If Mr. Dent wants to enlarge on the great diversity in

civilisation of Antiquity (plus the lesser variations the Church permitted where she reigned supreme), he is welcome, for all I care. I had never proposed in my article under review to deal with that; the Roman example was quite sufficient for my purpose, and had I gone into details, I would only have weakened my point, viz. that "Christian Love" did not exist in reality, and if it ever was propounded as a Christian doctrine, it was not new. My aim from the very first line had been to reject a pious insolence and to show, once again, the correctness of that old tag: "What is new in Christianity, is not good; but that which is good, is not new".

INVITATION

If any Freethinker or member of the National Secular Society should happen to be holidaying near Dover, a very old and very sick 76-er would be delighted to see you and have a "crack".

JAMES MATSON,

6 Primrose Road, Dover.

WANTED

I am looking for a copy of *What Freemasonry Is, What It Has Been and What It Ought To Be*, by Charles Bradlaugh. Can any reader kindly oblige?—JOHN BELLAMY, 14 Elrington Road, London, E.8.

THREE BOOKS BY JOHN SCARNE

THE AMAZING WORLD OF JOHN SCARNE

(Published at 35s.) 12s. 6d. Postage 1s. 6d.

SCARNE ON CARD TRICKS

Price 9s. 6d. Postage 6d.

SCARNE'S MAGIC TRICKS

Price 12s. 6d. Postage 1s.

A SHORT HISTORY OF SEX WORSHIP. By H. Cutner. Price 2/6; postage 6d.

THE DOLLAR AND THE VATICAN: Its Character, Methods and Aims. By Avro Manhattan. 3rd. Edition—Revised and Enlarged. Price 21/-; postage 1/3.

ESSAYS IN FREETHINKING. By Chapman Cohen. Series 1, 2, 3, 4. Cloth bound. Price 7/6 each series; postage 7d. each.

THE BIBLE HANDBOOK (11th Edition). By G. W. Foote and W. P. Ball. Price 5/-, postage 8d.

AGE OF REASON. Thomas Paine's masterpiece with 40-pages introduction by Chapman Cohen. Paper cover 3/6, Cloth 5/-; postage 7d.

THE THINKER'S HANDBOOK By Hector Hawton. Price 5/-; postage 7d.

HUMANITY'S GAIN FROM UNBELIEF. By Charles Bradlaugh. Price 2/6; postage 5d.

ROBERT TAYLOR—THE DEVIL'S CHAPLAIN. By H. Cutner. Price 1/6; postage 4d.

PAMPHLETS FOR THE PEOPLE. 18 of Chapman Cohen's celebrated pamphlets bound in one Volume. Indispensable for the Freethinker. Price 5/6; postage 8d.

CATHOLIC IMPERIALISM AND WORLD FREEDOM. By Avro Manhattan, 528 pages, paper cover Price 20/-; postage 1/3.

LECTURES AND ESSAYS. By R. G. Ingersoll. Cloth bound, 8/6; postage 10d.

FAMILY PROBLEMS AND THE LAW. By Robert S. W. Pollard. Price 2/6; postage 6d.

MATERIALISM RESTATED (Third edition). By Chapman Cohen. Price 5/6; postage 7d.

MEN WITHOUT GODS. By Hector Hawton. Price 2/6; postage 5d.

THE RIDDLE OF THE UNIVERSE. By Ernst Haeckel. Price 3/6; postage 8d.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE IDEA OF GOD. By Grant Allen. Price 3/6; postage 8d.

THE CULTURE OF THE ABDOMEN. By F. A. Hornibrook. Price 2/6; postage 5d.

THE LIFE OF JESUS. By Ernest Renan. Price 2/6; postage 5d.

THE ORIGINS OF RELIGION. By Lord Raglan. Price 2/6; postage 5d.

PRIMITIVE SURVIVALS IN MODERN THOUGHT. By Chapman Cohen. Paper cover 3/-; postage 4d.

BRADLAUGH AND INGERSOLL. By Chapman Cohen. Price 7/6; postage 8d.