

The Freethinker

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EMMETT McLOUGHLIN's first book, *People's Padre*, sold nearly a quarter of a million copies, despite a newspaper boycott. His second, *American Culture and Catholic Schools*, appeared in 1960, and I was pleased to recommend it wholeheartedly in these columns (October 21st, 1960) as having a wider application than its title might suggest and incidentally teaching an important lesson to all anti-Catholics—the habit of full documentation. Mr. McLoughlin's latest book, *Crime and Immorality in the Catholic Church* (Lyle Stuart, New York, \$4.95) is likewise fully documented, and is characterised by the honesty and sincerity so noticeable in all his work. Because he is an

ex-priest, he has been accused of being "bitter, prejudiced and unreliable". He admits to the first ("I am bitter when I think of the time spent and the forty-one years wasted") but he rightly claims that bitterness does not make his story any the less true. And his story is that among members of the Roman Catholic Church, "crime and immorality are greater than among the unchurched or the members of other churches". "Whatever else the Roman Catholic Church may be able to do 'in Heaven, on earth and under the earth'", he says, "it cannot, it has not, and it does not make the majority of its members better and holier".

Franciscan Study of Crime

Probably the most detailed study of Catholic criminals in the United States was carried out by three Franciscan priests who were prison chaplains—*Crime and Religion: A study of criminological facts and problems*, by Leo Kalmer, OFM, in collaboration with Elgius Weir, OFM, edited by James Meyer, OFM, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago, 1936. Mr. McLoughlin quotes these three as follows:

Convicts as a class seem to be the most religious people in the country. Or, from another angle: The sixty per cent of our people who profess no religion are represented by scarcely ten per cent of our prison population, whereas the forty per cent who profess adherence to religion are represented by close upon ninety per cent of our prison population.

And he reprints their table showing the percentage of Catholics in the population of 36 states compared with the percentage of Catholics in prison. Only in five states—Florida, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi and Oklahoma—was the percentage of Catholic prisoners lower than their total percentage. By contrast, in the first five states listed—Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado and Connecticut—the respective percentages were: 33.16 in the state: 53.26 in prison; 1.21: 3.14; 16.83: 43.61; 10.91: 37.42; 38.88: 50.63. And for the last five—Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming—the figures were: 21.50: 40.28; 6.35: 29.43; 4.35: 7.75; 23.79: 43.52; 7.13: 32.18. In Utah the respective percentages were 2.30: 32.79! And the average percentages, as I have worked them out from the list, are 15.26 in the population: 27.54 in prison.

Of course, that was nearly twenty years ago. Well, Mr. McLoughlin informs us that the Bureau of Prisons of the US Department of Justice stated that in 1951, 26.4 per cent of all federal prisoners were Roman Catholics, and "In that year, less than nineteen per cent of the population was even claimed to be Roman Catholic". Moreover, he carried out his own survey by means of a questionnaire to 287 institutions in the then 48 states, plus the District of Columbia, on the basis of a 1954 guide. 198 institutions responded, but 11 of these kept no religious statistics. The other 187 answered all the questions, with 153,857 prisoners covered. The results are again printed in tabular

— VIEWS and OPINIONS — *Roman Catholic Crime* — By COLIN McCALL —

form, compared with the official percentages of Catholics in each state, taken from the *National Catholic Almanac*, which, as Mr. McLoughlin reminds us, "are inflated and unreliable . . . parish guesses [which] include those fifteen million or so who have left the Catholic Church".

The tables are too long to reprint, but I have extracted a few details. Again five states show favourable Catholic figures, Louisiana this time being joined by Missouri (where the percentages were 15.0 in the population: 14.9 in prison), Ohio (19.4: 19.2), Texas (where a very low percentage in the State School for Colored Girls swung the balance) and West Virginia. The average percentages, as I have calculated them, are: Catholic percentage in the population, 17.9: Catholic percentage in prison, 26.6.

Church Responsibility

Clearly the discrepancy would be greater if the population figures were more accurate. For instance, as Mr. McLoughlin says, "where the actual Colorado State Penitentiary figures show 41.9 per cent against a hierarchical boast of 16.7 per cent, or almost exactly two and a half times as many Catholics in jail as their percentages outside, the true figures are probably four to one". Of course, not all those listed as Roman Catholic in prison may be practising, but certainly they were brought up as Catholics. And I agree with Mr. McLoughlin when he holds the Church largely responsible for this appalling record, in opposition to the view (held by Paul Blanshard and others) that poverty and bad housing are more to blame. The Catholic-crime correlation is too widespread for that. And the Rev. H. D. Longbottom, former Lord Mayor of Liverpool, exploded the economic theory by his Merseyside surveys of juvenile delinquency.

Anyway, it should be remembered, as Mr. McLoughlin says, that the Church is "at least negatively responsible for the poverty and bad housing".

It canonises poverty and insists that men humbly accept their lot in this world as ordained by God and as a test of their worthiness for a better life to come. It fails to teach its members to think, to doubt, to question, to probe, to inquire, to want and to fight for a better world for their children than their parents gave to them.

Why?

But Emmett McLoughlin is not content merely to point

out that Roman Catholic criminal percentages are high (he gives examples from various countries). He also asks—why? He finds the clue in the “tremendous differences in the moral indoctrination of Roman Catholics and of all other peoples in the world”. And he summarises these briefly as: “(1) The Catholic teaching on venial sin; (2) The theological concept of *penal* law (not to be confused with laws or punishments having to do with penitentiaries); (3) The perpetual preoccupation with and over-emphasis on sins of sex; (4) The substitution of ritual and superstition, especially *confession* and *indulgences*, in place of personal, determined integrity and prayer as the principal means of rising above moral weakness and improving one’s life”.

Hell

Hell is vividly real to the Catholic child of seven, eight or nine, says Mr. McLoughlin. And

Every sin concerning sex, whether in deed, in word, or even in passing thought is a serious and therefore a mortal sin. Far less emphasised, but also mortal, are the usual sins—murder, bank robbery, grand theft, sacrilege, serious drunkenness, idolatry. Manslaughter is not a mortal sin.

In addition, missing Mass on Sunday, eating meat on Friday, attending Protestant services, letting a woman (even a female baby) into a monastery, marrying a Jew without permission, riding on a horse if one is a Franciscan, and many others are classed as mortal sins.

But the routine everyday violations of common morality, upon which the integrity of nations is built are normally only venial sins, which need not even be confessed and are therefore perpetrated with complete impunity by Catholic youngsters and elders.

Lying and Stealing

The Baltimore Catechism, Mr. McLoughlin tells us, “does not emphasise respect for one’s family as an incentive to good, nor love of country, nor the conventions of society, nor simple respect for oneself”. And lying, surely a fundamental failing likely to undermine the whole basis of morality, is only a venial sin. Were it a mortal sin, it would bode ill for the priesthood, which frequently lies for the greater glory of God or the Church. An instance occurred in the ITV programme *Tempo* on March 18th, when an Irish Roman Catholic priest said the only way that books could be banned was by being placed on the *Index*—a statement he must know to be untrue.

Then, says Mr. McLoughlin, “Stealing as it develops among youngsters is merely a trifle that needs no confessing unless one knowingly steals enough to seriously hurt a family or steals about one hundred dollars from a well-to-do person or from a bank or corporation”. And this is terribly important, for a life of crime so often starts in childhood. Our Australian contributor, Dr. J. V. Duhig, has been accused of exaggerating stealing and lying among Roman Catholics, but Mr. McLoughlin bears him out. And he adds:

If Catholic venial sin provides an insufficient deterrent to prevent wholesale stealing, cheating and lying, certainly the reduction of the general laws of the country to mere “penal” laws furnish even less deterrent. The violation of these laws is, in themselves, no sin at all

To take two examples. Traffic offences like speeding are unimportant unless one is found out (President Kennedy was reported in *Look*, 17/1/61, to have committed many such offences in his younger days), while it is no sin to cheat the state or the federal government through income tax fraud. The obligation to finance the Church, on the other hand, is binding under penalty of mortal sin.

Sex

Mr. McLoughlin devotes several chapters to the disastrously cruel Roman Catholic attitude to sex, one chapter heading, “Training People to Become Neurotics”, more

or less summing-up the matter. In a standard text-book *Sex-Education and Training for Chastity*, Father Felix M. Kirsch, OFM Cap, gives ways of eliminating “bad” thoughts which in Catholic theology are as bad as the deeds. The suggestions vary from saying quickly, “Mary help me; Jesus save me”, to mentally “composing a baseball team of the nine fattest men he knows”. Cold baths are also recommended, but Kirsch warns that a hot bath can bring on temptation! The attempt to eliminate “bad” thoughts by confession can lead to a neurotic frenzy that Mr. McLoughlin describes as trying to separate the speech mechanism from the reflective mind. Every time a penitent confesses these sins, he thinks of them again. “He whispers faster and faster, trying to unburden his sins before his mind can catch up with them and sin again. This mad performance can go on by the hour. Some people never recover from it”.

“The official teachings of sex and the unenforceable law of celibacy have”, says Mr. McLoughlin, “throughout Roman Catholic history been the most direct and the greatest single cause of immorality and crime among the clergy.” A Professor of Canon Law is reputed to have said that the law of celibacy is observed in Austria by 40 per cent of the priests, in Italy by 10 per cent, and in Brazil by 0 per cent! Historically Mr. McLoughlin leans heavily on the firm foundation of H. C. Lea. But, he says:

If all the recollections of all ex-priests and all honest priests could be recounted, the Catholics of America would be shocked to know that the rules of celibacy and chastity are observed in 1960 only slightly more than in 1500.

And, what is socially worse, when hearing confessions a celibate priest does not consider stealing and lying “nearly as important as masturbation, fornication and adultery”.

So, Mr. McLoughlin builds up a formidable—and I think unanswerable—case, which I have only been able briefly to outline. I have only detected a very few flaws. It isn’t really true to say that the French Revolution “was carried out by Roman Catholics”, or that “The army that marched on Rome under Garibaldi . . . was likewise Catholic”. Many of the French civilians and Italian soldiers were Catholics, but the leadership in both cases for the most part, was not. But these slips don’t affect Mr. McLoughlin’s main argument which, as I have tried to show, is supported throughout by careful documentation. No doubt *Crime and Immorality in the Catholic Church* will be treated with the same silence by the press as were *People’s Padre* and *American Culture and Catholic Schools*, but that will only enforce my view that it can’t be answered.

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

English in a Nutshell by J. E. Thompson.

Arithmetic in a Nutshell by J. E. Thompson.

Things Worth Knowing by J. E. Thompson.

Stiff backs, all at 1s. 6d. each, plus 4d. postage.

The Children’s Dictionary by S. Johnson, D.Sc.

Look and Learn by S. Johnson, D.Sc.

Both at 6s. each, plus 10d. postage.

The Human Body by Cyril Bibby and Ian T. Morison, 2s. 6d., plus 4d. postage.

Blackie Easy to Read Books. (Hard backs) at 1s. 6d. each, plus 4d. postage.

Blackie “Join up the Dots” (Hard backs) at 2s. each, plus 6d. postage.

Blackie “Picture Puzzles” at 2s. 6d. each, plus 6d. postage.

Very large stock of *Ladybird Picture Books for Children*, 2s. 6d. each, plus 4d. postage.

National Secular Society Marble Arch Branch Social in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1, on Saturday, April 14th, 7.30 p.m. Tickets 2s. each. All welcome.

Robert Bellarmine—Jesuit Saint

By F. A. RIDLEY

AS I MENTIONED RECENTLY, I have been receiving for some time past, copies of the house journal of the Jesuit College at Heythrop, Oxfordshire, entitled *To Our Friends*. A recent issue of this notable ecclesiastical publication contained *inter alia*, a picture of the famous Jesuit theologian of the Counter-Reformation (1542-1621), Robert, Cardinal Bellarmine, who has been canonised and proclaimed a Doctor of the Universal (Catholic) Church in the present century (1930-31). Not inappropriately, this perhaps most famous of post-Ignatian Jesuits, has been accepted as the patron saint of Heythrop College, where students of the English Province of the Order (after a preliminary residence at Manresa College at Roehampton) do their theological studies for the priesthood. In my unsolicited capacity as, so to speak, a kind of honorary associate of their Order, it occurs to me that some mention of this famous figure in ecclesiastical annals might be of interest at this time.

Bellarmino was not only one of the most famous of modern Roman Catholic theologians and controversialists (ranking in this respect with clerics like Bossuet and Newman), he also played an important role in both the secular and scientific annals of the stormy era of the Counter-Reformation, actively participating in the activities of the Jesuit Order, then at the height of its power. He also enters secular history as one of the judges appointed by the Roman Inquisition in what are probably the two most celebrated cases in the long and dramatic story of the conflict of religion and science, the first process against Galileo and the trial of Giordano Bruno. Nor did Bellarmine's influence end with his death, for one of the most famous books in English literature, *The Leviathan* of Thomas Hobbes (1651) was composed primarily as a reply to Bellarmine's defence of the political authority of the Papacy over secular society. It was in reply to the Jesuit's defence of Papal supremacy that the English critic produced what is still the classical definition of the Papacy in world literature. "The Papacy is the ghost of the Roman Empire sitting crowned upon the grave thereof: for so did first start up this great ecclesiastical power".

The future saint was born in Italy in 1542, only two years after the formal inauguration of the Company of Jesuits by St. Ignatius of Loyola. Bellarmine was educated at the Catholic Universities in Rome and Louvain and became a professor in Rome, where he specialised in controversial theology and became the leading Catholic apologist in current controversies with the adherents of the Reformation. In this capacity, two of his most famous controversies were with two Scottish Calvinists, King James VI of Scotland and I of England, and an Aberdeen professor named William Barclay. By the end of the 16th century, the Jesuit professor had become generally recognised as the foremost scholar of the Roman Catholic Church. One of his modern biographers has even stated that he "created a new science of apologetics", and that he "permanently cast the then current religious controversy into an entirely new mould".

In 1598 these formidable intellectual achievements were officially recognised by Rome, when Pope Clement VIII, created Bellarmine a Cardinal on the express ground "that he had not his equal for learning in the Church of God". Bellarmine also became Archbishop of Capua

until 1603, after which date he returned to his professorship at Rome where his later years were passed in theological study. His major work *Against the Heretics of our Time*, remained a *locus classicus* in the evolution of Roman Catholic theology for centuries to come.

In respectively 1599 and 1616, Bellarmine forsook his studies—possibly reluctantly—in order to undertake judicial activities at the behest of the Roman Inquisition, which have caused his name and fame to appear in a lurid light in the pages of both secular and of scientific history. In 1599 he was one of the judges on the panel of the Inquisition who sent Giordano Bruno to the stake for pantheistic heresies which struck at the very roots not only of Catholicism, but of supernatural religion itself. Incidentally, it is rather ironical to recall that the one of Bruno's numerous heresies that seems to have aroused most fury in 1599, was Bruno's confident assertion that other worlds were probably inhabited, whilst in 1962 the Vatican has just created a patron saint of Space Travel, and a Dutch Catholic professor of theology has recently pronounced: "One will not offend against Faith if one assumes the existence of rational beings in other worlds". (In view of this, how long will it be before they canonise Bruno?) Here, Bruno was evidently premature rather than heretical. However, this did not save this heroic pioneer of free speculation in 1599.

Bellarmino does not appear to have dissented from the sentence passed by his fellow inquisitors. In 1599 an Atheist was, no doubt, beyond the pale of mercy; no doubt along with them he heard in silence Bruno's last heroic defiance: "It is perhaps with more fear that you pronounce this sentence than that I hear it". In the later (1616), Galileo process, where not religious, so much as scientific heresies were involved, Bellarmine displayed a more liberal attitude. He had already corresponded with Galileo and had expressed admiration for his scientific discoveries. Indeed, it appears to have been Bellarmine who devised the eventual compromise under which the first trial of Galileo ended in the great astronomer being, so to speak, "dismissed with a caution" on the sole condition that he would in future teach the Copernican (heliocentric) theory as merely "an hypothesis" and not an ascertained scientific fact. When (in 1633) the second Galileo trial began, with its dramatic finale, Bellarmine was dead; he died in 1621, was canonised (as noted above) in 1930, and his "saint's day" is now annually commemorated in the Roman Catholic liturgy on May 13th.

St. Robert Bellarmine, to give him his proper ecclesiastical style, was no doubt one of the most eminent men that the Company of Jesus has so far produced. Next to the founder, Ignatius of Loyola, he was probably the most famous Jesuit, actually the only one to merit promotion to the exalted rank of a Doctor of the Church, the *ne plus ultra* of theological eminence. How far theological proficiency in what is after all only a pseudo-science, can establish a claim to real intellectual eminence, is perhaps a moot point. But some of these old scholars, who wrote in an age when theology was still "the Queen of the Sciences", were certainly able and learned, and Bellarmine certainly was in this category. Theologically, he seems to have been a liberal (like many of the early Jesuits) in his current terms of reference. The Jesuits have now be-

(Concluded on next page)

This Believing World

The break in the 16th century between the Vatican and Scotland was a thorough one, and there have never been more bitter opponents of "Popery" than the Scots in spite of their unhappy Queen Mary. Now following Dr. Fisher, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, Dr. Craig, has been to see the Pope and has heard him talk of Christian Unity. Well, Dr. Craig can have his share of this Unity tomorrow if he really wants it. All he has to do is to join the Church of Rome with all his followers *unreservedly*, and the trick is done. In any case, Dr. Craig declared that "the Pope's views corresponded closely with his own" — a sentiment some of the members of the Scottish Kirk won't particularly like.

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One of these is Mr. John Herbison, a brother of Labour MP Miss Herbison, who, directly he heard of the Christian love between the Pope and the Moderator resigned from St. Andrew's Church in Rome, in indignant protest. After all, was it not the Presbyterian John Knox or one of his followers who first designated Roman Catholicism as the "Whore of Babylon"? Scots Presbyterians in general haven't changed towards the Vatican much since then.

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The Bishop of Bristol, Dr. Tomkins, does not like the Christianity preached by Mormons. He has found out rather belatedly that it is "heretical". He wants all Churchgoers to "resist" the invasion of the Latter Day Saints because their belief is based "on the heretical assertion that Joseph Smith in 1820 was given a special revelation of God in Christ". But the leader of the Mormons in Bristol insists that Mormon teachings *are* the teachings of Jesus Christ "who is our Lord and head of our Church" (*Daily Mail*, March 2nd). We think that the issue should be settled by the Pope. Was Joseph Smith favoured with a special revelation from God Almighty? What do you say, chum?

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Now that the new Cathedral in Coventry has been built and the stupendous tapestry masterpiece by Graham Sutherland has been hung in it, the Bishop of Coventry, Dr. Bardsley, and many other fervent Christians are going on a "pilgrimage of thanksgiving" to the "Holy" Land. The pilgrims will naturally visit the Lake of Galilee, and Nazareth, and probably worship in utter reverence the many relics of "our Blessed Lord" with which Palestine is filled. Perhaps Dr. Bardsley will even write a book, *In the Footsteps of our Saviour*. This is still the way the the Christian mythology is perpetuated.

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Dr. Donald Soper is billed by the "Leicester Evening Mail" (March 15th) as "one of the Methodist Church's most outstanding figures" — which we are sure he is; for, bluntly speaking, we cannot remember another one. He is of course also an "infidel slayer" on Tower Hill though, when all is said and done, Dr. Soper does not appear to have met, let us say, any distinguished Freethinker in debate and annihilated him. As far as ITV's "About Religion" is concerned the audience he has to face on his "soap-box" are all, or mostly, teenagers who have never read a Freethought book in their lives, and probably have never even heard of Thomas Paine.

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However, Dr. Soper's great plea now is that the "Church doesn't do enough to attract the young" — though the interview recorded in the *Leicester Evening Mail* does not tell us what the Church ought to do. We wonder how Dr. Soper, in his great efforts to attract the young, would

explain the Virgin Birth — especially the bit about an Angel coming to Joseph "in a dream"? How exactly does an Angel — a *real* Angel, not a *Dream* Angel — come to anybody in a dream? There are a hundred similar tit-bits in the Gospel Story of our Blessed Lord which Dr. Soper might find most intriguing to explain to the "young".

THEATRE

IRISH TRAD

LET ME SAY first of all that I thoroughly enjoyed James McKenna's Irish musical, *The Scatterin'*, at the Theatre Royal, Stratford, London. It may be bitty and disjointed, as a companion remarked, but it is also splendidly pungent. It has little plot, but the opening song, "This is the story of nothing at all", isn't quite true. It is the story of Ireland, a sad story of a land that is largely dead.

"The big men are all dead, the big lovers are all dead," says Sue (the "female machine gun"). "Here in this heaven on earth," she goes on, "it's all heaven and no earth. An island surrounded by sea and sanctity." And the male view? There's "no chance in this country", even the women are "for export only." "They have 'em so well trained in them factories called convents," declares Jemmo, that a new species has developed — "abstract women". "You can't even kiss them unless they write a letter to the *Evening Mail* about it." And the National Schools aren't much better, teaching "nothing except Gaelic games and catechism."

Little wonder, then, that the four young unemployed are bored and depressed, that at times they become desperate; that they should hate the police ("the furies") and despise religion. "I want to do something, be something", says Conn dreaming. Instead it is Jemmo (Donal Donnelly) who does something. He knives one of the furies who beat up Conn, and he pays the penalty. But not before he has folded us up with laughter at his satire. The rest of the boys (Billy Boyle, Tony Doyle and Noel Sheridan) embark for "the promised land", to work out their problems at Hyde Park Corner with a pneumatic drill.

As may be inferred, sadness and satire are well mixed in *The Scatterin'*, but no attempt has been made to integrate the songs. They are treated as the boys' way of relieving their tedium. Music, says one, is "better than a sermon, and a hell of a lot more enjoyable". But the large microphone is rather obtrusive, though the rock and jive numbers no doubt depend upon it. Most of them are based on traditional airs, "Biddy the Whore" being perhaps the best. "Here's to Biddy, even though she was no child of Mary," says Jemmo, lifting his Guinness bottle, and I echo him.

C.McC.

OBITUARY

It is with deep regret that we report the death, on April 7th, of Robert Johnson, a Director of G. W. Foote & Co., Ltd., and a member of the Executive Committee of the National Secular Society.

The funeral will take place at Marylebone Crematorium on Saturday, April 14th at 11.30 a.m.

ROBERT BELLARMINE (Concluded from page 115)

come the quintessence of reaction, but one must recall that in their early days, the Jesuits were "modernists"—in many respects in opposition to the fundamentalists in their Church. Bellarmine demonstrated this both in relation to Galileo and in the critical attitude which he took towards the more extravagant claims of the Papacy, an attitude which got him into trouble with his more fanatical co-religionists.

No doubt this learned Jesuit deserved his rather belated canonisation for services rendered to his Church. Personally, I have always considered that St. Robert's best title to sainthood lay in a remark that he is once alleged to have made when tormented by the flies during the malignant heat of a Roman summer: the Cardinal refused to kill his tormentors on the express ground that "this world is their only paradise". This was probably not cited at the canonisation process in 1930, but it sounds a note of authentic moral grandeur that is none too common in the "Lives of the Saints".

THE FREETHINKER

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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 Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m. MESSRS. I. EBURY, J. W. BARKER, C. E. WOOD, D. H. TRIBE, J. P. MURACCIOLE. (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.

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: L. EBURY.

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

INDOOR

Conway Discussions (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Tuesday, April 17, 7.30 p.m.: PROFESSOR HYMAN LEVY, "The Humanists—Are They Human?"

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, April 15th, 6.30 p.m.: LEN EBURY, "There is no God".

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, April 15th, 11 a.m.: DR. JOHN LEWIS, "Victory Through Martyrdom (Brecht's *St. Joan of the Stockyard*)".

Tyneside Humanist Society (100 Pilgrim Street, Newcastle), Wednesday, April 18th, 7.30 p.m.: N. WINDER, "A Humanist View of Progress by Morris Ginsberg".

Notes and News

IT IS A PITY that anthropologist L. S. B. Leakey, when reporting his recent discovery near Lake Victoria in Kenya, should have spoken of the Garden of Eden being in Africa. This is the type of remark that perpetuates the misconception that the Bible is being vindicated by science. What Dr. Leakey meant was that man had originated in Africa, and that is what he should have said. The two halves of a palate and a lower molar described as more man-like than ape-like were radioactively dated as about 14 million years old. "It would seem to be heading towards man, but it is not man", said Dr. Leakey.

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COLIN MCCALL, the General Secretary of the National Secular Society recently took part in two interesting religious discussions: on Friday, March 30th at Abbotsfield County Secondary School, Hillingdon, Middlesex, and on Tuesday, April 3rd, at Woolwich Day College, London. At the former, before an audience of boys aged 14-18, a Methodist lay-preacher and a Catholic Evidence Guild speaker also participated: at Woolwich, the mixed audience was older (17-21), and the other speaker was the Rev. Maynard Wilson (Methodist). A Modernist, Mr. Wilson occasionally reads THE FREETHINKER and ex-

pressed a special liking for "This Believing World" which "takes cracks at parsons". The Woolwich Day College hopes to arrange another discussion between Mr. Wilson and Mr. McCall for students in a different department.

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THE REV. MAYNARD WILSON admitted frankly that he didn't believe in the Virgin Birth—a heresy apparently permitted (or overlooked) in Methodism today. The New Jersey Synod of the United Presbyterian Church was less lenient to the Rev. Dr. John H. Hick, Professor of Christian Philosophy at Princeton Theological Seminary. Noting that Dr. Hick refused to deny or affirm his belief in the doctrine, the Synod barred him from membership of his local presbyterian (*Newsweek*, 26/3/62). The case will come before the General Assembly of the Church when it meets in Denver on May 17th. "I anticipate", said Dr. Hick, "that when this matter is finally decided . . . the broader view will prevail".

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FOUR GIRLS and two boys (aged 10 to 13) found what they thought was a deserted cottage in the New Forest and, after watching it for a few weeks, moved in. They painted doors and window frames, scrubbed and dusted the rooms, and hung new curtains at the windows. "We thought we could clean up the house and make it tidier", said one of the girls. "It was such a wonderful den" (*Daily Herald*, 30/3/62). But the house had not been abandoned, and when its owner returned he was annoyed. At Lymington Juvenile Court the children were accused of causing £11 wilful damage but the magistrates dismissed the case. The owner commented: "They are naughty children. What I did not like was that they burned a Bible, and I have the remains to prove it".

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"SITES FOR NEW parish churches are to be provided in Rome by the Italian government", reported *The Universe* (30/3/62), "a step which will save the Church up to 30 per cent of construction costs". No doubt this concession will be fully appreciated by the wealthiest organisation in Italy, though not necessarily by all Romans.

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ON MARCH 27TH, the *Evening Standard* printed a delightful cartoon showing a Jewish scribe at work on the first verse of Genesis. "Once upon a time . . .", he was writing, when the dictator strode across saying: "Wait a minute! Make that 'In the beginning!'"

★

IN HIS "Diversities" column in *The Catholic Times* (30/3/62), P. A. McD. suggested that there should be a two minutes' silence at football matches on Good Friday "in memory of Our Lord's death", and asked people to write to their local clubs about it. For several years, apparently, this practice has been observed by some clubs "at the suggestion of Catholic Actionists", and although this "may fall short of what we might wish . . . it is better than nothing". Mr. McD. argues that the way thousands of Englishmen sing "Abide with Me" at Cup Finals shows "that football matches bring out religious feelings in them", which is, of course, rubbish. The hymn, like the waving of programmes, is a traditional preliminary completely without religious significance to the bulk of the crowd at Wembley. Talking of football, though, we recall that the Roman Catholic supporters of Glasgow Celtic stormed on to the field to stop the Scottish Cup Semi-Final on March 30th, because their team was losing. They hoped thereby to get the game abandoned and give Celtic another chance, but they didn't succeed. Would Mr. McD. say that the occasion brought out "religious feelings in them"?

A Modern Reformation

By E. G. MACFARLANE

IN YOUR ISSUE of March 23rd, you had a note on "The Church of Scotland" where some quotations from the Rev. Nelson Gray indicate that he sees the power and influence of the Church of Scotland crumbling before his eyes. He instances the cessation of religious observances in homes and points out that "grace before meat has largely gone by the board".

I can vouch for the truth of this in my own circle of acquaintances and I feel sure that this change of practice indicates a change in their real beliefs even although many of them are still members of some Church or other and some make regular contributions to the upkeep of the churches they belong to. The point I am interested in is the fact that this change of practice is not accompanied by any stated change of view in these matters by the people concerned. Most of them would be unable to justify their change of practice in terms of a statement of new beliefs although it is obvious, to anyone who accepts the view that rational conduct is a hallmark of mental maturity, that changed practice is necessarily connected with changed beliefs.

I find that most of these people take refuge in a taboo on the discussion of their beliefs. Yet if you were to ask them point blank whether they thought there should be a ban on the discussion of beliefs I am sure that they would hotly oppose any such suggestion. But whilst denying any wish to adopt the principle of having a taboo on the discussion of beliefs they would probably try to change the subject as quickly as possible by saying that they themselves were a bit vague in these matters and didn't wish to discuss things of that sort.

An older colleague of mine in the teaching profession used to quote Omar Khayyam to me,

Myself when young did eagerly frequent,
Doctor and Saint, and heard great Argument,
About it and about,
But evermore came out by the same Door
as in I went.

But this same man never broke with the Church he had joined early on although like so many others he took it much less seriously in his later years.

One could give many instances of this sort which all add up to support Nelson Gray's general thesis that the Church of Scotland is the "Sick Man" of Scotland.

In my view however it is not a question of pointing out these things in order to urge people to try to make the "Sick Man" well again. I want to see the Church, as it is, die out altogether. But I cannot see this happening unless we provide a new positive basis for social co-operation which has a clear and logical connection between what we say we believe and what we do.

In my view the last Reformation, I mean Luther's Reformation, was really a failure because those who led the movement to abandon the Roman Catholic Church did not have a philosophy which was distinctively new or radical. In their mental poverty, the leaders of the Lutheran Reformation had to adopt the same ridiculous beliefs as had been held in the Roman Catholic Church they had just left. They left the way open therefore for the Ecumenical movement which we now see being grasped so eagerly by Roman Catholic and Protestant alike. No doubt, as the Rt. Rev. Dom Columban Mulcahy said, "Christians cannot afford to be divided . . . there are few enough of us as it is . . ." and no doubt, as was stated

in a TV religious programme on March 25th, "Coloured students are amazed to find that in a Christian country like Britain only one out of ten people seem to be interested in the Church"; the fact remains that unless we can express an ideology which will effectively take the place of the Christian structure of ideas we will continue to see this Christian minority dominate the scene.

In other words the "Sick Man" of Scotland will continue to totter around in our midst here in Scotland. Church ministers will continue to interfere in our schools by way of conducting prayer meetings among children whose parents have obviously stopped going to Church, by encouraging the saying of grace at school meals among children whose parents no longer do so at home, by getting promotion-conscious teachers to organise school visits to churches and religious clubs which are obviously based on beliefs which are no longer held by the majority of the populace.

There is much insincerity and hypocrisy around in Scotland at the moment, which is quite disgusting to those who want to see truthfulness and rationality between our beliefs and our actions. I am prepared to grant that much of it may be due to the inherent difficulties of expressing a new social ideology in such a way as to overcome all the possible objections and misunderstandings which may arise in the course of public discussion of such matters.

I therefore look forward to an Ecumenical movement among the non-Christians of the world to replace Christian theories of civilisation, with Free Society theories which will constitute a Modern Reformation in our lives such as would kill the old religions of all kinds for ever.

Such a Reformation would definitely abandon all ideas of a God "who created the world" or "who is a present help in time of trouble". The Reformers I have in mind will see clearly that such ideas are "bad" insofar as they make nonsense of the scientific approach to phenomena. After the modern Reformation has been carried through science will be supported and encouraged as it can never be under a Christian dispensation, because the assumption underlying the modern Reformation, namely, that it is because the truth is not known but appears desirable, is the natural basis of all scientific enquiry. Belief in God is also bad because it logically makes God responsible for affairs which are a human responsibility.

No doubt there will still be differences of opinion among the supporters of the Modern Reformation but if we keep our eyes on the main issues between us and the old religions we will see the urgency of our task from the point of view of human survival and try to develop a sense of proportion and proper priorities which will make the social reformation we have in mind a practical possibility.

PAPERBACKS

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David and Saul

By P. G. ROY

IN MY SCHOOLDAYS the legendary kings of Rome, starting with Romulus, were still treated as real and we had to memorise not only their names but even the approximate dates of their supposed reigns. Considering the quasi-historical authenticity accorded to another myth collection, the Bible, it will take far more time to dispel the belief that the founder of the Jewish kingdom was no more real a personage than Romulus, Theseus or David's female namesake, Queen Dido of Carthage.

Like Moses, Sargon, Govinda, and other legendary founders of a new age, Saul and David rise from lowly origins and have continuously to fight tyrants and monsters, i.e. the representatives of the old order, of darkness, of winter. David's famous fight with Goliath, the giant (Assyro-Babylonian *Galittu* means ocean), is a parallel to god Marduk's with Tiamat, the horrid dragon of the Netherworld or dark water region. We are still used to the allegorical picture of the New Year as a babe opposed to an old man; the Old Year or representative of the Winter, of Darkness, or the bad past.

David (short for Dodajahu, 2 Chron. 20, 31) = Beloved of Yahveh, was also known as Dōdō (2 Sam. 23, 24) and Dovaj (2 Sam. 23, 9 Kethib), the "Beloved One". According to Professor Sayce, Dodo was originally the title of the Sun God in the Tell el-Amarna tablets (15th century BC), whose reign extended from Karchemish to Edom and Palestine; in Damascus he was worshipped as Rimmon, or Hadad-Rimmon (Sach. 12, 11), the beloved of Astarte. Shalmanasser mentions the "God Dada" of Aleppo, equivalent to Thammaz, the lover of Dido, hence DOD, DODO, DAVID (or cuneiform DADU) with the vocalised suffix of the nominative case, is but the masculine form of Dido, the Beloved or Lovable, and like another youthful god, Jesus (who is supposed to descend from him), he is "My beloved son". As is known, Dido-Elissa was the legendary founder of Carthage (= New Town), the Phoenician colony in North Africa.

In a mythological sense David too is a twin through his frequently renewed league with Jonathan (Jehō-Nāthān = God's Gift, Theodore), an archer-like Apollo, the Green twin. His picture, however, grew rather dim in the scriptural report, whilst David supplanted him also in the capacity of the Hebrew god of music and leader, as it were, of the Muses. In other respects, particularly as shepherd, he is more like Apollo's twin, Hermes. Like all heavenly twins Apollo-Hermes are connected with a beautiful sister, Aphrodite (Astarte, Istar, etc.), sometimes wife of one of them (cf. Set-Osiris-Isis). These three altogether represent the three most conspicuous heavenly bodies, Sun, Moon and Venus.

In our fable, David's first wife is Jonathan's sister, Mīqal (water channel), but foremost in the story is Abigail (1. Sam. 26, 42)=Joy is the Father ('Abi-Gayel), who at the same time is David's sister (1 Chr. 2, 16). According to rabbinical literature, Abigail was one of the four outstanding female beauties, the others being Sarah, Rachel and Esther, all of them representatives of Venus.

Like his successor, Jesus, David is a personification of the Sun in its benevolent aspect (the other aspect, as austere desert sun, is Jesus's twin, John the Baptist), in scriptural legend substituted by *aries* (Hebrew "toleh" = the lamb). They are six months apart and one must die so that the other can prosper; hence the fable frequently

runs that the opposite of *aries*, *scorpio* pursues his mild brother (cf. Esau and Jacob) to the Netherworld of Winter, or the Watery region (i.e. the rainy period, where there is no Winter in our sense); however, after death the former is triumphantly resurrected in Spring. The opponent of David is Saul (Sha'ul, perhaps euphemistic "The Desired One"), the man of the Netherworld, She'ol, arising from Benjamin, the tribe whose emblem was the scorpion, representative of Saturn. Hence he represents the vicious desert sun, symbolized in Saturn and Set-Typhon. The captain of his army is Ab-ner (Father of Light), the son of Nēr (Ner-Gal, the Babylonian god of the Netherworld and hostile aspect of the summer sun). Even when after Saul's demise David starts his reign, Abner instals a Saulite as counter-king, whose name is given as 'Jish-Boshet = Man of Disgrace, or Idolater—a name highly unlikely to have been bestowed on any real person, let alone a prince.

The numerical symbol of light, twelve, is always split up into 5 and 7 for the Sun's propitious and inimical aspects respectively. Hence in his great battle against Goliath (plural of gal, with the meaning of waves or breakers of the sea), David chooses five smooth pebbles (though he needs only one); Abigail is brought before him by five damsels (26, 42), whilst his kinsman Assāh'el (God's Toil) is killed when Abner's spear goes through his fifth rib.

Incidentally, an interesting sidelight on the naive conception of the Hebrew god is found in 1 Sam. 15, 35. Saul has been wicked all his life and has even slaughtered all the prophets and priests of Yahveh. In the end, the Old Man has to admit his total lack of forethought, let alone omniscience.

"And the Lord repented that He had made Saul King over Israel" . . .

Free Will

By ROBERT LITTLE, M.D.

CLARENCE DARROW, the noted American lawyer, once debated with a Jewish rabbi the question, Is man a machine? Neither contestant followed the Socratic advice of defining one's terms, although the rabbi produced a jumping jack with a large head, which Darrow contemptuously referred to as a "punkin". Darrow was all for science and determinism. He believed, as Einstein did, that "Gott würfelt nicht". The rabbi talked about idealism, religion, sin, art, beauty, and emotion.

The Oxford Dictionary says that determinism is the theory that action is determined by motives, which are themselves determined by causes independent of the will. We may say we do as we please, but our past environment and heredity make us please to do that way. The most ardent believer in free will cannot deny that men (and all life) are in, not outside, the universe. Life is born of the world, acting and reacting according to natural laws. Man's whole nervous system is built for *reaction*. A belief in uncaused free will requires a belief in supernaturalism. Free will is a theologic, philosophic concept. Its corollary is "sin"—beloved by priests—for do not they have special powers to *forgive* sin?

Let us examine these concepts further. No machine

gives an invariable response, because even a simple machine is influenced by its environment—temperature, friction, position, and movement in space, and its relation to other matter. No experiment in physics or chemistry gives precisely the same result because the condition cannot be precisely duplicated, and even our measurements distort results. Position is a property of matter, as is movement. No particle “lives to itself alone”. Equality is an impossibility. The only equality is identity and two identical things cannot occupy the same space. Nevertheless, variability of results in a kaleidoscopic universe does not mean that determinism does not exist. There can be and is determinism and necessity, even though things never happen twice in exactly the same way. Every event is preceded by related events—its causes.

Science thus resolves itself into a faith in probabilities and an expectation of similarities. Man is not a cause uncaused. His actions in the mass are statistically predictable. Like other phenomena in the universe, he is both determined and indeterminate. So-called free will is merely intelligence in action.

CORRESPONDENCE

CRITICISM OF TWO CRITICS

An unpleasant feature has crept into your correspondence column—viz. letters criticising the efforts of contributors. This has occurred twice within three weeks, in your issues of 9th and 30th March.

No fair-minded reader can possibly expect to approve of every item supplied in your interesting and controversial paper—but very few indeed are ungracious enough to write to complain in public when they disagree with the writer concerned. You have only one contributor who always delights me, the incomparable F. A. Ridley. Others vary considerably. Occasionally I consider some articles to be really dreadful—but I see no point in writing to complain in public, just because they do not happen to appeal to myself.

About 140 years ago, there was a London magazine called *The Quarterly* which frequently attacked Keats in an unkind manner. After his untimely death, Byron wrote an acid quatrain—

“Who killed John Keats?”
“I”, said *The Quarterly*—
So savage and Tartarly.
“I killed John Keats.”

(This was not strictly true, as Keats died of TB. But his last years were saddened by these criticisms.)

I am not advocating a ban on temperate exchanges of differing opinions—but I do recommend that immoderate accusations should be disallowed. The humblest of your contributors possess human feelings and I don't think that their efforts to entertain readers should be sneered at in public. These efforts are often unpaid, and always entail a degree of care and preparation.

Messrs. Thomas and Cheverton should remember the placard which used to be displayed in the American drinking saloons in the Wild West a hundred years ago—“Don't shoot the pianist; he's doing his best!”
ADRIAN PIGOTT.

DICKENS

May I be permitted to add a footnote to Mr. Cutner's excellent article on Dickens in *THE FREETHINKER*, March 23rd?

Few people, Dickensians included, are aware of the fact that Dickens wrote a work entitled *The Life of our Lord Jesus*, in 1849, specially for his children. It was not published, however, until March, 1934.

The first paragraph sums up his “private” religion as it was twenty one years before he died. Here it is:

“My Dear Children,

I am very anxious that you should know something about the History of Jesus Christ. For everybody ought to know about him. No one ever lived, who was so good, so kind, so gentle, and so sorry for all people who did wrong, or were in any way ill or miserable, as he was. And as he is now in Heaven, where we hope to go, and all to meet each other after we are dead, and there be happy always together, you never can think what a good place Heaven is, without knowing who he was and what he did.”
W. HARTLEY BOLTON.

In common, I am sure, with many of your readers, I

greatly enjoyed Mr. Cutner's article on Charles Dickens. As one who has regularly followed Mr. Cutner's articles for many years, I am aware of his encyclopedic knowledge of literature, in particular on those subjects in which your readers are specially interested. May we not have more similar articles from Mr. Cutner's versatile pen?
C. H. CLEAVER.

ANGELS

No doubt other readers will have called your attention to the utter nonsense which was spoken on the Radio week commencing March 19th by the Most Rev. John Murphy called “Christian Space Research”. At ten to eight each morning we were told about angels and how each one had a guardian angel and the BBC allowed the most stupid dribble I have ever heard to go over the air for six mornings, with a repeat of the previous broadcast each morning at ten to seven, so we can say that one hour of their time was taken up by the Most Rev. gentleman. I wonder if he submitted his script beforehand and if the BBC announcer had his tongue in his cheek as he listened to such juvenile fairy stories? As the Bible says “Except you become as a little child, etc. . . .” and I would add that only a little child could swallow such dribble.

When other broadcasters can hardly get a quarter of an hour in which to speak commonsense, why should the BBC allow this Rev. gentleman a whole hour for such nonsense?

(MRS.) M. JENKINSON.

DR. DUHIG

I should like to say how much I enjoy Dr. J. V. Duhig's extremely interesting articles exposing the hocus-pocus of the modern dog-collared witch doctors that still dupes people. The letters that appear in the Catholic press thanking various canonised conjurers for favours received bears out the truth of Dr. Duhig's article “Woman and God”. Will women never see through this old super confidence trick?
JOHN W. TELFER

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