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Views and Opinions

The Philosophy of Marxism

CONTINUING our examination of Mr. Lindsay's fundamental propositions upon which he bases his appeal to the N.S.S. to take part in a campaign in favour of Marxian Communism, I again premise that my disagreement is not so much with the first principles laid down, as it is with the assumption that their acceptance must lead to the acceptance of Marxism. They may lead to Marxism, or they may not; with either proposition I am not concerned in these articles. It is enough for me to show that they do not of necessity lead there. I have seen text books on "Proletarian Psychology"—as though there was a science of psychology for the Proletariat and another science of psychology for capitalists. Which is absurd. The laws of mental operations are the same for all, whether we are dealing with millionaire or pauper. One might as reasonably talk of a Proletarian chemistry, or a Marxian biology.

Mr. Lindsay cites from Lenin:—

There is no abstract truth, truth is concrete as embodying the basic attitude of Dialectical Materialism, but again I have to protest against the assumption that it has a special application to Dialectical Materialism. Of course there is no such thing as abstract truth, if by that is meant a truth that does not apply to concrete things. That is why I have said that the description of the "class" relationship of the employer and the employed stands for an abstract truth, but for a precise understanding this needs to be brought back into relation with concrete things. When we do this we find that the man we know is not wholly made up of one social relation, but is a compound of a number of social relations, each of which acts upon the others and is in turn acted upon by others. An artist may belong to the class, painter, but in actual fact he is also a member of a number of other classes. He may also be a politician, an employer, a man of letters, a policeman, a family man, a club man, a sporting man, etc., and from each of these connex-

ions will emanate influences that are mutually interactive. It is true that in certain conditions any one of these functions may be so strong as to over-influence the others, but on the whole, if we wish to reach the actual man, we have, as Engels says, to consider all the factors that play upon him. The final—and the scientific result—is reached by taking all the truths that are reached by a series of abstractions, and then observe how the associated fact—the man—behaves.

* * *

Phrases

Another citation is from Marx, and occurs in the preface to the second edition of *Capital*. I cite it here mainly because that what Marx understood by it and what many Marxians understand by it, are different things:—

With me the idea is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought.

Again, I think it only fair to assume that this was a form of speech adopted by Marx, because he was anxious to drive home a particular thought to men and women who were not used to the niceties or the exactitude of scientific terminology. Otherwise the picture of the "mind" as a mirror reflecting the material world is incorrect. It would support the very thing that Marx opposed—the religious interpretation of the world. The correct phrasing would be that the world we know is the product of the interaction of organism and environment.

Unfortunately the "material world" has come with many to be the equivalent of the economic situation throughout the whole of human history, with the addition that each man's thinking is determined by his economic status.

Let us take it for granted that in the very earliest stages of the history of the human group, the first great essential is the conquest of the material environment, and the need for securing food, clothing and shelter. We may also make a further safe assumption that the form in which the earliest thoughts of man is cast in satisfying these fundamental needs will be determined by the nature of the material environment. Living near the sea will dictate one form, living in a forest will dictate another form, and so forth.

All this may be taken for granted. But the first law of Dialectical Materialism is that of the "transition of quantity into quality." (This, again is an ordinary scientific generalization, and should accompany all scientific thinking, although some workshop scientists appear to ignore it in many circumstances). But if this law is accepted along with another law of Dialectical Materialism, "The interpenetrations of opposites" (this is our old Newtonian friend, "action and reaction are equal and opposite") it follows that no sooner does the material environment give rise to

an idea, than the idea reacts and affects the material environment. One cannot have a "one way" scientific law.

It is again quite clear that man's earliest form of thought is a religious one. The earliest conception of natural forces is that of personal agencies. The environment controls these ideas to the extent that where they are of such a nature as seriously to threaten the security of life, there is an end to both man and his ideas. The ideas that survive and operate need not be wholly good—they seldom are—but they must be consonant with the perpetuation of life. A sickly organism may persist, a dangerous practice may continue, but there is a limit beyond which sickness and dangerousness cannot be carried.

* * *

Man and his Environment

Now man's distinctive difference from the animal, the essential fact in the creation of human society as distinct from the animal group, lies in this "transition of quantity into quality." An animal grows the tools—teeth, claws, thicker fur, or keener sight, smell and hearing—all the things with which it fights the environment. Man does not grow his tools, he *makes* them, and the difference is fundamental. It is the central fact that is responsible for social growth.

I use this word "tools" so as to cover such things as institutions, beliefs and customs, and also to bring out another important distinction between human and animal societies. The improved tools of the animal can only appear very gradually, and they can be transmitted only by biological heredity. But the tools that man creates for the purpose of mastering and *controlling* his environment cannot be handed on by biological heredity. They are consciously transmitted, mainly through the agency of language, by social *heredity*. The implements that his ancestors fashioned, the discoveries they made, the institutions they formed, the beliefs they held, are transmitted in an increasing quantity and quality. This is probably what Marx had in mind when he said that "Man begins to differentiate himself from the animal world as soon as he begins to produce his own food." It is the fact that man begins to attack the environment in terms of his ideas concerning it, and to transmit the knowledge and experience gained in the creation of set teachings and established customs and institutions, that creates an increasing rate of development. The work of one generation, its mistakes and its successes, its discoveries and its acquired knowledge, is transmitted to another, and like a travelling snowball becomes greater and more powerful in the passage. In other words, the essential feature of human life is the capacity for the transmission of ideas. Leave on one side the power of ideas in the life of man, its capacity to modify and subdue the environment to his needs and *desires*, and human history is non-understandable.

One further consideration, which illustrates the law of the "transition of quantity into quality." Taking it for granted, that in the first stage civilization is a direct reflexion of the material environment (I don't like that way of putting it) it follows that, because of the reaction of ideas on the environment (they actually are a growing force in the environment) life is lifted to a higher level. We have to face the "emergence" of a phase of life that represents the dominance of quality over quantity. Man needs food in common with all forms of life, and even now if he is reduced to the starvation point he will eat it as an animal eats it, without regard to anything but quantity. But above that stage, at the human stage, he demands that it shall be cooked in special ways, served up in special

ways, and with other accompanying features. In other words, things that are not necessarily connected with the basic fact of food, operate and determine whether a man shall eat or not. There is the same thing with the fact of sex. This again, reduced to the animal level, need be no more than the mating of male and female. But as with food, so long as man is not reduced to the animal level of sex hunger, the expression of this fundamental fact in relation to particular members of the opposite sex is determined by purely ethical and æsthetic considerations. Again the crude fact of quantity has been transformed into a question of quality. There are many other directions in which one can trace the dominance of the primary fact by secondary and tertiary developments.

* * *

Human Society and Animal Groups

It is in this direction that we have to look for the distinction between human societies and animal groups. Man shares all the essential needs of the animal world. They are primary with man; they are exhaustive with the animal; and if we reduce man to the animal stage they become again exhaustive with him. We have, then, in human history first, the naked material fact and the need for adaptation to a physical environment; then the birth of ideas connected with that fact; then the handing on of ideas in the form of teachings, tools, institutions and customs, which creates a gradual change in the dominating quality of the environment. Even the perpetuation of "class" distinction comes under the same generalization, for it is mainly in terms of inherited notions of obedience, duty, loyalty, etc., that these distinctions are perpetuated. If that is not clear to the class that is governed, it is certainly clear to those that govern. This is shown by the care taken to control the methods of education—in the widest sense of that term.

We may accept the statement of Marx, that in the earliest stage of human society the material environment exercises a dominating influence, indeed, it is only when the physical environment contains certain favourable conditions that human society can establish itself. But it is a far more important truth that the development of the intellect of man exerts a continuously increasing force, and supplies the condition of progressive social life.

I leave one or two important considerations until next week, which will conclude this series of articles. But I again point out that I am not contesting the goodness or badness of Communism or any other specific social theory. I am only trying to show that most of what Mr. Lindsay has said does not, in my judgment, either establish the thesis that Communism is the necessary next step, or that the time has arrived when the N.S.S. ought to abandon its neutrality in politics and join hands with a particular party. I do not know any party in which the habit of free criticism, encouraged by the N.S.S., would be welcome, even if we were inclined to take that step.

But I am convinced that there is always room for informed, drastic, and, as the system criticized is certain to characterize it, "destructive" criticism. This applies to any and every established system, whether Communistic or otherwise. There is no greater virtue in everyone saying the same thing in sociology than there is in theology. Variation is the condition of improvement, and uniformity—often an agreeable name for stagnation—paves the way for degeneration. The ideal situation to my mind is to establish a working, but mobile arrangement between State action and individual freedom. The imposition of authority in matters of opinion must be altogether discarded, and

no matter what conception of social life is established, or what is destroyed, this is a freedom that mankind can only weaken or destroy at its peril. It is in this conception that the historic function of Freethought is to be found.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be concluded)

The Light of Asia

"Mortal has made the immortal."

"Rig-Veda" (Sacred Books of the East).

"Be ye to yourselves your own light, your own refuge, seek no other refuge."—*Gotama Buddha*.

The chief rivals of Christianity in the religious field are Buddhism, Hinduism, and Mahommedanism, and of these outstanding religions the first-named is generally credited with the largest number of adherents. Although it has been claimed as an offshoot of an earlier form of religion, Buddhism is identified with the name of one man, in whose life, teaching, and personality we find its secret; but it would be a grave mistake to fancy that a study of the story and character of Gotama Buddha will throw much light on modern Buddhism, which has strayed so far from the intellectual intention of its founder as to be scarcely recognizable.

What is so important to remember is that Gotama Buddha was born about five centuries before the alleged birth of Christ, and that the Buddhist sacred writings antedated the Christian New Testament by centuries. The very many resemblances in these Buddhist books to the Christian Religion are startling in the extreme, and throw a searchlight on Christian origins. In the Ages of Faith, Christian theologians were amazed at finding their "old, old story" in a strange Buddhistic setting, and Jesuit fathers declared that details of the promised Messiah's life had anticipated them by an impudent caricature in the person of Gotama Buddha. But, before long, more sober scholars began to write more sanely, and pointed out that Buddhism, being by far the older, must, of necessity, be the parent religion, and that the writers of the Christian Gospels must have come in contact with Buddhistic ideas, legends and even missionaries. Others contended, with greater courage, that the Christian legends had gradually received Buddhistic accretions. It is quite clear that the unknown writers of the Christian New Testament, apocryphal and otherwise, are responsible for this borrowing, for the Buddhist legends had been current for centuries before Christian scribes began to weave their very imaginative account of the alleged founder of their religion. Indeed, the Christian Gospels are largely made up from the material of the Tripitaka, the Three Baskets that constitute the evangel of the Buddhist faith. These older religious records were by no means inaccessible to the Christian scribes, for they had been transmitted for hundreds of years by trained schools of reciters before they had been written down and the canon determined by the Buddhist priesthood.

In these Buddhist legends it is narrated that Maya, the mother of Gotama, was a virgin. According to the Christian New Testament the Mother of Jesus was also. Previously, in each instance, the coming of a Messiah had been long foretold. The infant Jesus was visited by magi. The infant Buddha was visited by Kings. Both, however, preached charity, chastity, poverty, humility, and self-denial. Both fasted in a wilderness, and both

were tempted by a devil. Both announced a second advent, and both were transfigured. Both died in the open air. At the death of each there was an earthquake. Both healed the sick. Both were said to be the light of a world which both said would cease to be.

According to the Christian New Testament, a courtesan visited Jesus and had her sins remitted. According to the story in the Sacred Books of the East, Gotama was visited by a harlot, whom he instructed in things divine. In the Christian Gospels, Jesus is depicted as consorting with wine-bibbers. In the Buddhist records, the picture of Gotama is the same. In the one story there is a sermon on the mount; in the other a sermon on the plain. In both records there is the so-called Golden Rule, which Christian theology impudently pretends is so much superior to all other religious teaching. Not only in Buddhism is this Golden Rule to be found, but it occurs also in Confucianism, in the Talmud, and elsewhere. It is a recognizable feature of so many religious and ethical systems.

The Buddhist priests, ever thirsting for power and domination, grafted serviceable superstition on to the simplicity of Gotama's teaching. With the grossest effrontery they transformed the founder into a deity himself. About him a whole host of divinities was strung. The most austere of doctrines was festooned with ignorance and tawdriness into an idolatry puerile and money-making. Nirvana became Elysium, and a religion which began as a negation of superstition culminated in an orthodoxy as remote from the original as the stars are from the earth. That is the history of priestcraft and the story of the creeds. It is no less true of Christianity than of Buddhism, and a score of other religions.

Unlike so many legendary figures in religious history, Gotama was only a man, and he never pretended to be other than a man. He won the admiration and love of the people, not by miracles, but by being a plain truthseeker. His original system was that of Humanitarianism, and was as much disassociated from supernaturalism as the Analects of Confucius, which are secularistic and the antipodes of priestly teaching. Buddha taught no future life, and nothing higher than the perfect man. After the master's death, Priestcraft made his simple teaching a vast, impenetrable jungle of superstition, of contradictory principles, and of popular idolatry, the mazes of which it is hardly worth while to tread. Gotama taught the uselessness of prayer, and, ironically, Buddhism is the only religion that has, with its praying wheels, invented mass-production invocation of deities. Such a transformation may be impressive, but it is by no means unique in the history of religions. Consider, for a moment, the simplicity of some of the utterances ascribed to Jesus in the Christian Gospels, and then turn to that conflicting farrago of superstition, idolatry, fetishism and money-grubbing that is covered by the banners of the Greek and Roman branches of the Christian Churches.

How small, mean, and contemptible such a creed as the Christian Religion appears, after all, in comparison with the original ideals of Buddhism. Were Gotama Buddha to reappear upon the earth and see great nations in the grip of Priestcraft, and believing in hell, devils, and eternal torture, he would be pardoned for thinking that a blight had fallen upon the human intellect after the lapse of twenty-five centuries. Hear what the wise old Atheist said, as Englished by Edwin Arnold in *The Light of Asia*:—

"Pray not! the darkness will not brighten! Ask
Nought from the silence, for it cannot speak!
Vex not your mournful minds with pious pains!

Ah! Brothers, Sisters! seek
Nought from the helpless gods by gift and hymn,
Nor bribe with blood, nor feed with fruit and cakes;
Within yourselves deliverance must be sought,
Each man his prison makes."

Antiquity was largely cruel and very superstitious, and the Orient even more so than the Occident. From the East emerged Gotama the enlightened and the humane, the luminous counterpart of the human tragedy. With the mind's eye we can perceive the beginning of the slow journey from the valley of the Shadow of Death towards the idea of a regenerated humanity, interrupted by the machinations of a corrupt and self-seeking Priestcraft. Gotama's teaching may be compared to a torch which flings light fittingly in a cavern; Priestcraft to the murkiness which finally enveloped it, leaving so fair a part of the Eastern world to darkness, devilry, and despair, for twenty-five centuries. Trampled into the dust, the followers of Gotama Buddha lay prostrate, whilst the vampires of Priestcraft fed on them. Priestcraft is the universal enemy. It has been occupied in no employment but in keeping down Wisdom. Perhaps the time may come when Wisdom shall exert her energy in repressing the machinations of the priests.

MIMNERMUS.

Duck for Dinner

Little Tommy Tucker
Lied for his supper.—*Cursory Rhyme.*

We live in a materialistic age, chant the clergy. We live in a materialistic age, echoes the gramophone Press. Well! the newspapers should know. If ever there was an institution barefacedly on the side of the loaves and fishes, it is our Yellow Press. The first lesson in sophistication acquired by the writer was when a mere boy on a newspaper founded and run by the working-classes. The late Arthur Henderson held a position on that paper, and the Editor, too, was considered to be a man of ability. In a year or two the Editor left to take a better paid position on a Conservative journal. The transition was effected almost without comment. A good journalist, it was generalized, was he who could give satisfaction to any master, dancing competently to the tune called. That was a nearly sound generalization a generation ago; it is still not absolutely true.

Still no one will be seriously misled if he accepts it to-day as an article of faith. What happens in this year of disgrace is that a score of men, of all varieties of speculative belief and non-belief, employed on a Fleet Street newspaper, are liable to be told any morning that henceforth every paragraph written by them must, for example, harmonize with the view that Christianity is in peril because of some political event in Spain, China or Timbuctoo, and that it needs the assistance and co-operation of every one of its deeply spiritual readers. Then every little scribe gets down to it, no matter what his religious cargo, entering with zest into the opportunity given him of letting the gvnor realize his plastic potentialities. *Materialism; that is the Enemy. A Wave of Materialism threatens to engulf us. Materialism, the Curse of the Age.* Every morn they return to their vomit, and in a while it is hoped by implication one may become aware of that stately institution known as The Church, brimming over with ascetism and idealism, preaching that the poor will always be with us; that if we accept Religion, we shall have our reward; and that, if it were not for the existence of an Almighty Policeman, men would so far forget themselves as to commence

killing one another. The great requirement to-day is a Spiritual Idealism, not quite as Lofty and Inspiring as the great Northcliffe Tradition, but as near to that as one can hope to get.

The dirge of the undignified Clergy, plugged by the Press, runs on these lines: Things are not as they were. People don't come to Church. They are selfish. They seek gratification and spurn the things of the Spirit. They avoid the collections. And, they are materialistic. This Blessed Word: materialism, has two meanings. One of its connotations is an excessive regard for creature comforts, and from that there is a very short step—no step at all in speech—to Materialism, which leads at once to Atheism and all its attendant horrors. This probable short circuiting is foreseen by those who preach a kind of Truth known as the Truth which is in Christ. Their honesty is of the substance of newspaper honesty. Yet there was once a clergyman, so goes the legend, who joyfully gave as his ten reasons for accepting the Thirty-Nine Articles, a wife and nine children. Such an example of disarming candour would not, one feels, throw away his good marks by giving weekly sermons to his parishioners on the sin of acquisitiveness. The press-man is sometimes apt, over a beer and sandwiches, similarly to refer to his hostages to fortune, thus bringing a hint of altruism into a rather sordid business. But any of that commodity is surely drowned in the shameless onesidedness of the attack made on the irreligious and selfish. So intent is he on administering correctives in definite channels, that those who by strict attention to materialistic aims have got into the happy position of being able to distribute largesse, somehow always escape the whipping.

One need not be so cruel or unimaginative as to wipe out of consideration altogether the existence of that wife and nine children. Ethical judgments on individuals there is rarely need to pass quickly, for the loftiest altruism, working on all cylinders, may at times encounter obstacles which make a moral problem hopelessly obscure. Early, one is puzzled by running up against conflicting loyalties; later, unless one's path is unusually placid, one learns the extreme difficulty of applying fairly one's individual problem to the larger issue of general social usefulness. There is a tendency in Freethinkers, as well, to detest preaching in all its guises. They even recoil from the free use of the word "morality" fearing the possibility of losing touch with finer issues by cheap verbal attachments.

There are signs, however, that follow those that believe. The political game, for instance, all admit to have its tortuous, insanitary, recesses. Still there are those who play the game relatively cleanly. There is, really, no necessity, as some do, to take a bee-line for the cess-pools. In the Army are to be found lofty spirits, selfless to the last degree. One does not, however, find them clamouring for the shabby duties of a Sergeant-Major. In the Church, one quickly senses the cleric who refuses to allow his flock the luxury of remaining at a low level. In the Press there are some—all honour to them—who have still contrived to retain a high degree of independence; there are others who sorrowfully and reluctantly succumb to the pressure of circumstances. But most, it is useless to deny, experience no pang, simply regarding the bigger the enormity they have to "put over" as a finer playground for their ingenuity.

It is those in this latter category who are at the present time employed in reproaching the masses for their gross materialism. These are the penners of paragraphs to the effect that the beloved religion they learnt at their mother's knee is being endangered by huge numbers of fellow human beings who have a

materialistic feeling that they would like, occasionally, duck for dinner, to go to the Pictures now and again, and, annually, have a few days at the seaside. To those who have these delectables "reglar," this seems to be regarded as an alarming symptom foretelling the end of all things. It calls for the positioning of the Big Berthas; the heavy artillery of *God, Christianity and Religion*. *With your permission, Ladies and Gentlemen, Beelzebub is about to show you how to cast out Beelzebub.*

T. H. ILSTON.

Things Worth Knowing*

LI.

FREEDOM IN EDUCATION

THERE are two views of teaching. One regards teaching as a sort of handing out canned goods to the pupils, so much canned goods so much knowledge. Well, if it is a canned goods business, we may need a Pure Food Law to make sure the children get the right brand of "corn." But this is not the real theory. This was held by Gilman John Hopkins, when he took Professor Gildersleeve into a bare room and said, "Now Radiate." We have got to have the kind of teachers that radiate. For that we not only need contented teachers, but we must have teachers that think for themselves.

In a pamphlet issued in the New York school controversy, the "Reply of the Superintendents," is a statement that teachers should be obedient, and to support is a quotation about the sort of obedience that is necessary in the army and navy. Of course, teachers to some extent have to obey, but the kind of obedience we ought to get from them is far from the kind they get in the army and the navy. In an autocracy, they might get along without teachers of independence. But this country has to be run by the people in it, and they are people who are taught in the schools; and if the teachers cannot think for themselves, the pupils cannot think for themselves. They cannot discuss merely the questions of the past. They must discuss the critical problems of the present time if they are to solve them.

To what branch of citizens should we turn more for help in these matters than the teachers? And there is no class of people who are more injured by repression than teachers. If you say to any other man that he must not express his ideas on political questions, he can at least devote himself to his job, but if you confine the teacher in his thinking, what do you leave him? That is his job, to think.

People say that the teacher is employed by the Government, and ought to agree with the Government which pays him. The courts are just as much a part of Government as the schools—more so, for we have private schools, but we do not have private courts. Do we say that everyone in the courts must agree with the Government? Do we say that the judges must always decide in favour of the Government? Not at all. They often decide against it. We retain lawyers to defend criminals whom the Government accuses. It is even suggested that we shall have one lawyer to do so all the time. Progressive manufacturing corporations employ men just to criticize the products of the corporation and see how

they can be better made. The teacher may be serving the State even while he criticizes it.

Of course, we have special considerations in the schools. We have this social interest in favour of the education of children. We cannot let everything be said in the schools that we might let be said outside. A teacher might be allowed to stand on his head at home, but not in school. In the same way there is much that he ought not to do there in the way of free speech. If he taught that all boys and girls at sixteen were at a proper age to marry, he certainly ought to lose his position. He must adapt his discussion to the maturity of the pupils before him. And we certainly can require concentration on his subject; we can require judgment; we ought to demand of a teacher that he should be a master of his subject and a man of sound common sense.

But, on the other hand, you cannot control an expert. You cannot stand over Galileo and say, "Use your telescope, but do not find that the earth goes round the sun." You cannot stand over Pasteur and say, "Investigate spontaneous generation, but do not discover that spontaneous generation exists." You cannot stand over a man that deals with economics and say, "Find out that economics exist according to this or that system"; or if he deals with history say to him, "Find out that the men who are in power in Russia are a gang of thugs." If he finds it out, all right; but you cannot force him to do so, and you cannot force him to teach lies. Outside of the classroom he should be even more free. There he is a citizen, and as the New York constitution says, every citizen may safely speak, write, and publish his sentiments on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of that right, and no law shall be passed to restrain or abridge the liberty of speech or of the press.

Be sure that the right is not abused. Be sure that freedom of speech weighs much in the scale. I think that if every board which had to pass on the removal of a teacher would first read Milton's *Areopagitica*, and Mill *On Liberty*, that some of the decisions would be very different; because they would see that, after all, freedom of speech is just as important as the maintenance of order.

Why are we so worried? Why are we so scared? Have we no confidence in the arguments that can be used against these radical ideas? Parents argue on the other side, and we have with us the army and the police, and everybody who has a savings bank account or a life insurance policy. After all, the dangers of rebellion are not very great, unless our case is very weak, and I do not think it is.

Finally, repression will produce just the kind of spirit in the teacher that we want to get rid of—that is, the revolutionary spirit. The French experience in this matter has been very instructive. There the Government threw its force against religion. Teachers were dismissed because they went to church. Teachers were dismissed for attacking the Prefect of their department. The State held a general inquisition into the opinions of all the teachers, a cabinet minister saying, "The Government will not surrender the right to know the attitude of its servants towards the Republic." . . . What was the result? The teachers of France, although by birth, by training, by disposition affiliated with the middle class rather than the working-class, have formed a revolutionary trade-union and affiliated with the syndicalist organizations of France.

It is all very well to say that we ought to be loyal to the State. What do we mean by the State? After all, it comes right straight down to the Government that we deal with, and the Government comes down to the men that we deal with, which means the educational authorities, and those who have power to put

* Under this heading we purpose printing, weekly, a series of definite statements, taken from authoritative works, on specific subjects. They will supply instructive comments on aspects of special subjects, and will be useful, not merely in themselves, but also as a guide to works that are worth closer study.

us in prison, and if these men do not stand for the best things we stand for—for the development of mind and spirit and the search for truth—we begin to wonder whether, after all, that Government ought to endure, and whether we do not want a Government which will stand for the things we believe in. So it becomes important that the men who constitute the Government, who, after all, are really the State, should stand for these things. We cannot love the State as a mystical unity, when that unity, as we actually face it, prevents us from living a true human life. So that in order to make men loyal to the State, you must make the State a sort of thing that they want to be loyal to.

We have got to take risks. Of course it is not perfectly safe to allow teachers to be free. There ought to be this balancing of youth against truth. But there are plenty of risks that we take in life. We let our children go on the street, although they may be run over by automobiles and street cars. We do not keep them home till they are twenty-one years of age. In the same way we might like to leave them until a little later, before we discuss some of these economic problems, but then they are out at work, and it is too late. We have got to take them when we can get them. And even if an occasional teacher does speak very radically, that does not mean that high school students will believe all he says. If we go back to the time when we were sixteen, we remember the keenness with which we discussed these problems. We did not take everything the teacher said for granted, and the more he said, the more were likely to oppose him.

We cannot lead sterilized lives. . . . Democracy is not a water-tight compartment. It is a great adventure, and in order to prepare people for that adventure we have to teach them to think for themselves on the problems they will have to face when they grow up. It is not simply teaching them the ideals of the day—we must train them to make the ideals of tomorrow.

Freedom of Speech (1920),
by ZEPHARIAH CHAFFEE, pp. 372-6.

Christian Origins

(*Pagan Elements in Christianity*, by H. CUTNER,
London, Pioneer Press, 6d.)

IN these 60 pages readers will find concentrated, in a most readable form, many very valuable facts with which all Freethinkers ought to be familiar. Where Mr. Cutner speculates he gives ample reasons, and suggests lines of thought likely to lead us to agree with his conclusions. In the main the author lets the facts speak for themselves in this most interestingly written summary.

The book is divided into three parts dealing respectively with (1) the broad details of the relationship between the outstanding features of Christianity on the one hand, and their almost exact counterparts in Pagan mythology and custom; (2) the origin and intention of what Christians have called "The Lord's Supper"; and (3) the large part which "sacred relics" have played—and continue to play in religious worship.

Some of the myths still recognizable in the Christian religion possessed a beauty of romance and poetry which has almost disappeared under Christian maltreatment. One remembers Wordsworth's plaintive cry: "Great God, I'd rather be a Pagan, suckled in a creed outworn." If those myths have been perverted and polluted by Christian literalists for theological purposes, the best way to appreciate them is to expose, as Mr. Cutner has done, the debasing theft. We can then, and only then, renew the child-like sense of admiring wonder, un-

qualified by the attempt to religionize ancient folk-lore. It is a pleasure to see the belated tribute Mr. Cutner pays to the Rev. Robert Taylor, whose theories, as Mr. Cutner shows, are supported and amplified by the authoritative confirmation of Sir James Frazer.

The origins of the Virgin Mother, the Man-god, the Cross, the Sabbath, the miracles of the "Saints," and—in a very excellent chapter by itself—the sources of the Mass (or the Eucharist, or Holy Communion), are all traced, examined and explained in this useful little work.

The Chapter on "God-Eating" is as serious as its subject needs to be. As Mr. Cutner says, intrinsically it is just a huge joke. But its history has proved it a perennial tragedy, involving cannibalism amongst the uncivilized, and persecution amongst the "civilized" religionists. The denial of Transubstantiation was for centuries punishable by death.

In the Chapter, "Any Old Bones," our author is at his wittiest and wisest. Relics are here "exposed" in a different sense from the Church exhibitions. The many "relics" I have seen, chiefly in Italian churches, always seem to me the saddest of sights from the mental point of view. Yet their comic side is often irresistible. Mr. Cutner might find a fruitful field of thought in correlating the political and religious superstitions of mankind—they are not so far apart as some people think.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

Myth, Religion and Art

ÆSTHETICS—the science of artistic creation—is a much-neglected subject. Probably the majority of people would consider it a dry, hum-drum kind of subject which could only appeal to specialists; actually, when properly considered, it is a theme of the most absorbing interest, especially when it is written by a man who is both widely-read and imaginative. For this reason everyone who is interested in artistic creation, or in the strange borderland between myth and religion would do well to get hold of a copy of Mr. Colin Still's *The Timeless Theme* (Nicholson and Watson, 21s.). For this is a book which attempts a most ambitious task, and comes very well out of the ordeal. Mr. Still attempts to show that the old Greek idea of the four elements—earth, air, fire, and water—is a central theme in all myths, all religions, and all really great works of art. In the first half of his book may be found a general formulation of the theory, and in the second half its application to an admittedly great work of art—Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

To Freethinkers, however, it is the application of this idea to the development of Christian religious dogmas from the myths of ancient peoples which will most appeal. In such noteworthy comparisons as the Virgin Mary to the "heathen" Danae, Mr. Still points out what Freethinkers have long advocated; but he does it with such suavity and good-humour that many readers will probably assimilate his central thesis without even realizing that they have read some really outstandingly destructive criticism of their Church. Naturally, Mr. Still himself sees that this is so, even though he may nowhere show precisely where his sympathies lie. This, indeed, is one's only adverse criticism. He does not show whether he believes these old mythical ideas to have a sound foundation in fact, or whether he thinks that they have no better material basis than the myths to which they have given rise. If he had adopted a sound materialism as the background of his critical creed the book might have been a truly great one. As it is, it is one of the most interesting volumes of criticism which have appeared for many years. It is a work which should on no account be missed. Certainly all who are interested in art ("art" in its broadest sense, meaning painting, sculpture, poetry, drama, music, and all the rest) should read it. They will find it a very stimulating production, and one which gives a good basis for the philosophy of art at which Freethought must eventually aim.

Acid Drops

The *Daily Mail* is still working hard, backed up by the Roman Catholics, to convert the Civil War in Spain into a new religious crusade, and continues to shriek that it is a fight against Atheism and anti-Christianity. And bearing in mind that the Northcliff group was the chief agent in the manufacturing and circulation of the filthiest lies that were circulated during the European war—such as the cutting off of children's hands in Belgium, the boiling down of German dead for fat, the raping of women in public squares by command of German officers, etc., one is not surprised to find these stories revived with a substitution of Spaniards for Germans. Nothing, of course, is allowed to appear of the circumstantial denial of many of the atrocity tales by Britishers on the spot.

In the circumstances we are pleased to find the *Church Times*, not for the first time, taking up a sensible attitude on the matter. It warns its readers that the stories told are probably exaggerated, reminds its readers of "the now admitted lies told of Germans twenty years ago," and then adds that there is no reason for supposing that "in the sight of God the cold-blooded murder of a priest is one whit worse than the cold-blooded murder of a Communist." Omitting the "sight of God," we commend that piece of common sense to the moronic imagination of the *Daily Mail* readers, who, apparently, can see nothing wrong in the brutalities of the Foreign Legion in Spain, which, as the *Church Times* points out, "takes no prisoners." Lurid reports of the burning of a Church, with nothing said of the substantiated fact that the Church was being used as an ammunition store, and that priests were barricaded therein shooting civilians, can only affect those who are still in that infantile stage at which "sacred" buildings, and "sacred" persons exist. We agree with the *Church Times*, There is no more in the murder of a priest than in the murder of a dustman; and nothing worse in the burning of a Church than in the burning of a museum or a working man's house.

The appeal of the *Daily Mail* is, of course, made to sheer ignorance, invincible prejudice, and to the savage in man. But one is tempted to dwell upon this blazoning of the burning of churches, and killing of priests as an example of how little modern culture has done with whole masses of the people, from the throne to the cottage, to eradicate sheer fetishism. People who will read unmoved, or with a certain sadistic enjoyment, of the killing of a multitude of ordinary men and women, are roused to hysterical indignation when a few priests are killed. Whole streets of houses may be destroyed by fire or bombardment without doing more than create a little excitement. But the destruction of a Church, or the killing of a priest rouses a sense of horror or indignation. It is proof of the survival of the most primitive of superstitions—that things devoted to the gods are strictly taboo, and will bring misfortune, not merely to the doer of the actions, but to all of the tribe to which he belongs. When the world has to come to the point of realizing that a church is of no more intrinsic value than a cottage, or the life of a King or priest no more than that of an ordinary citizen, it will have taken a great step forward. We need, to use a Nietzschean term, a revaluation of values, and that need becomes the greater with the progress of civilization.

Meanwhile, it is well to remember that the Roman Catholic Church is openly allied with Fascism in Italy; and in Spain, is backing the Fascist rebellion against the Government. In Germany it is not openly supporting the most beastly form of Fascism in existence, simply because Fascism there will not give to the Roman Catholic Church the privileges that is given it under Mussolini. But it might come to terms with German Fascism some day, and in that case it would have the Rothermere Press on its side. This, as we have said many times, is only what one might expect. For the Fascistic policy of ordering people what they may or may not think, and what they may or may not read or hear; of bringing up child-

ren to repeat certain things, so that when they reach maturity they will become as responsible to set sounds and slogans as mechanical toys might be; was tried by the Christian Church long before it was adopted by the secular State.

There have been some strange rumours concerning King Edward's attitude towards religious questions, and we are, of course, not able to say how much truth these contain. The latest one we have is that there is a sharp limitation to the number of prominent preachers who are to have the pleasure of preaching before the King at Buckingham Palace. It is also whispered that the chapel there may be closed altogether. About his father the yarn was published, that every day he read the Bible. There was something almost miraculous about this because the story went on to say that he always used—daily—a Bible that was presented to him when a young man, and when he died it was quite fresh and new in its appearance. The worst of the religious liar is that he so often overdoes it. He lacks the artistic sense of the value of light and shade.

From the *Melbourne Age* we read of the attempts of Official Christianity to explain how it is that the young aviator, Charles James Melrose, from all accounts a lovable and attractive personality, has met an early death in an air crash. Archbishop Head at the funeral ceremony said "Frankly, apart from Christianity, I do not see what explanation there is." Apart from Christianity, no explanation would seem necessary. Apart from Christianity the situation would be faced and "Love while you may," remain the only abiding lesson.

We were sure that the Congress of the World Faiths would lead to a new sect being formed to add to the present more than adequate supply. It appears that there have been only two Congresses, one at Chicago in 1933, and one recently in London. But already there are several new sects arising out of these friendly rivalries. There is Mr. Kedarnath Das Gupta (address, Savoy Hotel, London) with his "Union of East and West." His Highness the Gaekwar of Baroda is President of the World Council of Faiths. Sir Francis Younghusband is Chairman of the British National Council, and no less a person than ex-President Hoover is President of the American Council of Faiths. The next "Congress," we learn, is to be held in India.

The *Freethinker* was one assailed for suggesting that Christ's first miracle—in his father's shop—was probably turning shavings into fire. A poet, in the pious *Christian World*, has another idea, also based on His early acquaintance with the carpentry business:—

Boy Jesus played in Joseph's shop,
And watched the curly shavings drop;
Then by-and-bye now still he stood
To see how Joseph shaped the wood,
And how he made a box or door
From what was just rough wood before!

All out of Joseph's own head, so to speak!

At last a modern example of blood flowing from a "host during mass," has occurred. It took place in a little Italian town called Paganico Sabino, and the Pope has authorized the Bishop of Rieti to hold an enquiry. It was when the priest was exhorting the people not to be seduced by Protestant propaganda that "eight drops of blood fell on the altar chart." We are almost sure that the enquiry will indisputably prove that another miracle has taken place on behalf of the church.

The Founder of the Oxford Group Movement (a sort of "upper-class Salvation Army") says that "God only speaks when man listens." An echo, in fact! But Dr. Buchman goes further. He calls this echo "a radio-telephone on which man may listen-in to God." Apparently Groupists get tired of God—just as ordinary listeners-in get tired of the Divine but Boring Services of the B.B.C. According to the *New York Times Magazine*, a Group house-party is entertained by listeners-in, not to God, but to lively stories of human naughtiness:—

If the guest is to have his life changed according to the procedure adopted by Dr. Buchman, he must agree to give an honest account of all his sins, vices, poses and faults, however petty. . . .

In order to bring sin to the surface and as a first step toward a remedy, the guest is invited to make a complete disclosure of his offences, here and now. . . .

It is this organization of environment for a spiritual result that transforms the session into a "house party."

Commercial travellers are said to have discovered this way of passing an evening long ago. But they lacked the wit to commercialize it.

City Temple High Priest, Leslie Weatherhead, has a most wonderful imagination. He tells the "story" of Christ's "Agony" in the Garden of Gethsemane. He says that Mark was actually present in the Garden on this occasion and saw all the agony himself. Who told Leslie? "Mark creeps nearer," says our Fictionistic Preacher, "He is near enough now to see Christ's face, a ghastly pallor in the moonlight. . . . Mark cannot move. . . . God wrestling in a garden." Yes, but what new revelation is this? Mr. Weatherhead knows all about it. He even knows Mark's relations. He guarantees (he is our only authority) that it was Mark "whose father lent the upper room for the famous supper, and who owns the olive orchard called Gethsemane." And Mark was only a few "yards away in the deep shadows of the olives" when the agony business took place, and we imagine Mark also had a shorthand writer with him to record the "agonized words."

In *Jack, Jill and God*, by A. E. Edwards, there is an account of a priest, who sets out to try and show the way to "Our Lord" to a young couple. A reviewer tells us that the author, "after considering the undigested religious difficulties and objections to which these young people were likely to have absorbed," decides to say as little as possible about the Old Testament, the truth of the Gospels, miracles, the Cross, etc., and "wisely" decides to get his young friends "straight away thinking about, and facing, Our Lord himself."

This is very disingenuous; for, in the past, the only way to approach "Our Lord" was through the long preparation the Old Testament, miracles, and the truth of the Gospels, etc., gave; "Our Lord" being the culmination of everything in the world, blessed or otherwise. We fancy, with any intelligent fairly well-read person, the first thing Mr. Edwards would have to prove would be that "Our Lord" really lived, and the only way he could do it would be through the Old Testament, the truth of the Gospels, miracles, and inspiration. Still, it is a good sign to find people giving up all the nonsense which surrounds the "approach" to "Our Lord." It may be that in the end they may find it quite easy even to give up "Our Lord" himself.

The Rev. Canon Armytage has added another title to the large number of qualifications possessed by Jesus. He is "the greatest teacher the world has yet known." Well, of course, he is as he is God Almighty. The Canon, in fact, insists that Jesus "is truly, perfectly, both God and Man," but the "Man" part really means very little to pious Christians. Mr. Armytage shows that "if you pass beyond the limits of the first century," Christian writers "declare that Christ is God, and Pagan writers declare that Christians worship Christ as a God." To this may be added that the Nicene Creed declares "Our Lord Jesus Christ" is "very God of very God," so we claim Christians can prove to themselves beyond all doubt that Jesus is God. It adds but little to say he is also "truly and perfectly and completely Man."

Canon Armytage thinks all "the joy of this faith lies in its inexhaustible riches," and the belief "is the very heart of our religion." It is difficult to imagine anybody really believing all this drivel. But that millions of people still do, in an age of science and discovery, merely goes to prove that the anti-religious work of Freethought is still as necessary as ever.

Roman Catholics who are horrified at "dictatorships" keep discreetly silent at the savage dictatorship imposed in the Irish "Free" State. The authorities there, are determined to ban contraceptives in every shape or form; and Catholics here would no doubt heartily agree that the same heavy penalties should be imposed in England. For example, according to the *Pharmaceutical Journal* of July 11, "a fine of £100 was imposed on a chemist's assistant in Dublin for being concerned in the importation of contraceptives. A grocer was fined £50 and sentenced to six months imprisonment with hard labour for the same offence; for selling contraceptives, £50 fine or three months' imprisonment; and the same fines for attempting to sell or import contraceptives elsewhere." Equally ferocious attempts to stamp out Birth-Control in Ireland could be further cited. Yet Catholics are always shrieking for "freedom" in Protestant countries!

A Catholic woman J.P., Mrs. Mathew, in a lecture at the Catholic Social Guild, pointed out the "greater opportunities for Catholics in public life." She wants more of the "Faith" on public committees, particularly "in view of the advocacy of birth-control, euthanasia and sterilization." The insolence of these people is getting more and more beyond bounds. No one interferes or wants to interfere with the absolute freedom for Catholics to do as they like in these matters as well as in the practice of their particularly obnoxious brand of religion. But we claim the same right of perfect freedom for other people who may wish to use contraceptives or not, just as they fancy, irrespective of the thunders of Roman Catholicism.

At the same Guild, a Mr. Toledano actually declaimed against "dictatorships," which he said, "were all alike. They are based on the same principles and are all un-Christian. We Catholics have to fight them, for sooner or later they will fight us." It is quite amusing to see how these "dictatorships," religious or secular, have, in the end, to fight one another. Mr. Toledano can rest assured that his own dictatorship of Roman Catholicism, is in the minds of many people, quite as loathsome as the others. Freethought is, in fact, in its very designation, opposed to all dictatorships, and as such is bound finally to triumph.

We are glad to see that Mr. Belloc claims that he has been saying for forty years that "England was the most anti-Catholic of all great countries; was that in which the Catholic position was least understood; and that in which people least desired to understand it." Perhaps if they really did understand the "Catholic position," they would reject it even with more determination. In any case, so long as Catholicism is rejected, there is greater hope of all religion being rejected also.

The "Freethinker" Circulation Drive

It is proposed to celebrate the coming-of-age of the present editorship by an attempt to create a substantial increase in the circulation of this paper. The plan suggested is:—

(1) Each interested reader is to take an extra copy for a period of twelve months, and to use this copy as a means of interesting a non-subscriber to the point of taking the *Freethinker* regularly.

(2) So soon as this new subscriber is secured, the extra copy may be dropped by the present subscriber. Until this is accomplished, he will regard the extra threepence weekly (for one year) as a fine for his want of success.

The plan is simple, and it is not costly; but it does mean a little work, and whether or not it is more blessed to give than to receive, it is certainly easier for most to give than it is to work. But in this case it is the work alone that will yield permanent benefit. There are many thousands of potential readers in the country; why not try and secure some of them?

Spain and the Church

In no other country in the world has the Christian Church a blacker history than in Spain. In that country it wiped out a civilization superior to anything that then existed in any part of the world, and since then it has steadily set itself to crush liberal thought, to hinder scientific progress and to obstruct education. Spain was made a heaven for monks and a hell for men.

No time could be better than the present to call attention to the work of the Church in Spain, and incidentally to its work in other parts of the world. Acting on the suggestion of some friends, the Secular Society, Limited has issued as a sixteen page pamphlet the articles that have been appearing in these columns on the Church in Spain. It is being sold at one penny, and we want the help of our interested readers in putting this work into circulation. We are trying to arrange for some men to sell the pamphlet in the streets of London, and we think this example might be followed in Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, Tyneside and elsewhere. Another way of helping is to purchase small quantities and distribute them among friends. Newsagents should be induced to stock the pamphlet, and exhibit showcards advertising it. Parcels will be sent at 6s. per hundred. Smaller quantities in proportion.

We want everyone interested to take a hand in what we believe to be a very important piece of propaganda work. *There is no time to be lost.* No more convincing indictment of the Church could be provided. It is a cold recital of historic facts.

At least fifty thousand copies of this pamphlet ought to be sold within a month, and can be sold, if all lend a hand.

Now let all get to work. The Church and its influence in Spain is a question of the moment. The pamphlet will help thousands to determine what that historic influence has been.

C.C.

Why go to Spain?

Why go to Spain because you itch to fight
The bloody Roman Church? You can sit tight
In our dear island yet attack this foe,
That brings on Spain this crushing load of woe;
Freedom in England too the Church doth blight.
'Tis true that Spain has now the greater plight;
'Tis true that English freedom is not quite
Extinguished, though it has been brought low.
Why go to Spain?

Avert your gaze a moment from the sight
Of tortured Spain; observe the keen delight
Of Catholic slaves around you at this blow;
This menace is in England and may grow.
In England you can rally to the right;
In England we can put the Church to flight.
Why go to Spain?

BAYARD SIMMONS.

In the matter of domestic morality the New Testament is altogether wrong. Domestic morality being the beginning of all morality, it is of primary importance. Civilization grows out of the family. What counsel has Jesus Christ to the husband and wife and the father and mother? Simply none. He himself apparently knew nothing of this relationship or he looked down upon it with ill-disguised contempt.—G. W. Foote.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

VIVIAN PHELIPS.—Pleased to enrol you among those who are on the hunt for that additional reader of the *Freethinker*. We know a number that have been actually "roped in," and are hoping for a good accession to them before the year is out.

L. G. TEED.—Cuttings are always useful, if not at the moment, often as a record of things worth remembering. We may be writing at length on the subject later. It will keep for a week or so.

H. DRAKARD.—A great many of the actions of missionaries in places where some responsible officials are not able to exert control would look queer if published. The details are not quite clear in the *Melbourne Age* report, but it is plain that missionaries in out of the way places make their own laws, and generally it is in their interests that the "laws" are interpreted.

D. MACDONALD.—Interesting from one point of view, but hardly worthy of serious treatment. Bishop Frodsham is important only as an object lesson in the survival of primitive types of mind. Thanks for sending report.

S.C.—Mr. Cohen hopes to be able to resume lecturing in October, when he has arranged to visit Glasgow. He does not intend doing as much platform work this year as he has done in previous years, but everything will depend upon how he stands the exertion of travelling. He hopes to be able to lecture at least once a fortnight. He has still to submit to a certain amount of medical control.

F. NEWALL.—Many thanks for your efforts on behalf of the Circulation Drive. Paper being sent.

The "Freethinker" is supplied to the trade on sale or return. Any difficulty in securing copies should be at once reported to this office.

The offices of the National Secular Society and the Secular Society Limited, are now at 68 Farringdon Street, London E.C.4. Telephone: Central 1367.

Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London E.C.4, and not to the Editor.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connexion with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary R. H. Rosetti, giving as long notice as possible.

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.

All cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to "The Pioneer Press," and crossed "Midland Bank, Ltd., Clerkenwell Branch."

Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4 by the first post on Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Sugar Plums

We do not like to see our old and early love, Lucretius, scurvily treated, so we hasten to correct a serious misrepresentation of him by Sir Alexander Cardew in a recent issue of the *Literary Guide*. Noticing a new work on Lucretius, Sir Alexander, who is apparently not familiar with his subject, sums up by saying "He was regarded as an Atheist because he rejected the popular beliefs of his time, and denied any divine interference in human affairs. Though styled an Epicurean, he advocated self-control, renunciation, and the conquest of the passions." The italics are ours, and they are marked enough, and sufficiently reminiscent of the rankest old-fashioned religious prejudice to rouse any lover of Lucretius to protest.

In the first place, as anyone who turns to the fifth book of the *De Rerum Natura* will see, Lucretius does deny the existence of the gods in every religious sense, and actually gives an account of their origin. Religion, whether expressed in form of revelation or in that of natural theology, he deliberately rejects as mere fanciful, but deadly, superstition. He admits both the soul and gods; but the first is made up of a finer kind of atom, and is part of the human body, much as a modern might speak of mind and body as two aspects of the human organism, while denying the soul an independent existence. As to the gods, he admits their existence as psychological facts, just as the visions of a dipsomaniac would exist as psychological facts, but explains their origin as due to the fact of men seeing images of the gods in their waking hours, and afterwards in their sleep endowing them with magnified and glorified human qualities. Men would also give the gods "abounding strength" and immortal life. And in their sleep men would see the gods "work many wondrous things and yet for all their toil suffer no weariness." But even though the gods existed they do nothing, they have created nothing. Nature is everything, and the gods that men see in their visions are natural creations at most. The man who could write "For man was never by the gods designed," or who asks how the gods could ever have known enough of the atoms and their ways to create things, and who affirms the absolute eternity and indestructibility of the atom is shabbily treated when he is described as being "regarded as an Atheist because he rejected the popular beliefs of his time." That is the way in which dishonest Christians described Charles Bradlaugh.

Worse still is the remark that Lucretius "though styled an Epicurean," etc. It is true that Shakespeare calls Falstaff a "damned Epicurean rascal," but he was just repeating the religious ignorance and slander of his day, and there is no need to repeat it now. The great master of Lucretius, whom he loved with passionate devotion, was Epicurus, and Epicurus did not teach "renunciation"; that was a religious teaching, a Christian one in its direct reference, and due to distortion and misdirection of human faculty. What Epicurus taught was the control of the passions, a very different proposition. He did teach self-control, and a reasonable love of enlightened pleasure. In this Lucretius followed him. This implied identification of Epicureanism with loose-living is one of the oldest of religious slanders heaped upon Epicurus, and is the more reprehensible to-day because there are so many excellent translations of Lucretius, either in whole or part. Of these we commend the prose translation of Munro, and (to be read with due caution) the work of Masson on Lucretius, in two volumes. But recent writers of repute who have dealt with Lucretius have all treated him with tolerable justice.

A large number of new members were admitted to the National Secular Society at the last Executive meeting. No less than twenty-nine came from the West London Branch, and we congratulate this Branch on its activity. It holds a number of meetings in Hyde Park every week, and occasionally goes farther afield. Bearing in mind the population of London, much might be done in the direction of the extension of propaganda.

The following is taken from the *Star*:—

The visit to Berlin next month of Col. W. de Basil's Ballets Russes, now at Covent Garden, is causing anxiety in Germany.

Col. de Basil was asked by the management of the theatre in Berlin, to supply a full list of members of the company for the purposes of labour permits. He did so.

To-day he received from the theatre by telegram a request for particulars of the religion of each artist.

The Colonel wired back: "All our artists are Atheists."

We congratulate Col. de Basil's Ballets Russes on their reply. It is the only one consonant with an elementary sense of dignity and human decency. We do not know whether all of Col. de Basil's ballet are Atheists or not, but the wittiness of the reply is a fit retort to the impu-

dence of the question. We have no doubt but that the *Daily Mail* will be much upset by the reply, but this champion of Hitlerism must make the best of it.

Councillor Hall, of Manchester, is continuing his fight on behalf of Sunday games and Sunday Cinemas. On a newspaper vote over 32,000 with a majority of 900 declared in favour of Sunday opening. The agitation is to be kept going, and we wish Councillor Hall and his colleagues a quick success. The Sunday Tabooists say that the majority is not decisive. But it is at least a majority. And the subject is not really one for a majority vote at all. In this case we have just over thirty thousand people, whipped-up by the Churches and Chapels, whose sole aim is to prevent competition, deciding whether men and women shall spend their "day of rest" as they please, and to do on Sunday what is quite lawful on every other day in the week. It is about time we got rid of the superstition that the more stupid a man's religion is, the greater is his warranty to interfere with the harmless enjoyment of other people.

Mr. G. Whitehead pays a return visit to Bolton, and will speak in that area for the week commencing to-day (August 30). The local Branch of the N.S.S. will co-operate at all meetings, and the Branch Secretary, Mr. W. H. Sissons, may be relied upon to see that the arrangements are efficient in plan and carrying out. Pioneer Press literature will be available at all meetings, and the local saints, unattached, as well as members, should consider it a duty to be in attendance.

Kingston-on-Thames is not at present on the Free-thought map, but it is hoped that a Branch of the N.S.S. may soon be formed there. Mr. J. W. Barker, of 92 Canbury Avenue, Kingston-on-Thames, will be pleased to hear from any Freethinkers willing to become members, or better still, ready to help in the formation of the Branch. In connexion with the effort a London speaker will address a meeting in the Market Place on Sunday evening, September 20, at 7 p.m. That will allow time during which the local saints may get in touch with Mr. Barker.

The Greek Bible

I.

ONE of the most interesting traits in the character of Charles Bradlaugh is shown in the way in which he calmly re-wrote his careful analysis of the first chapters of Genesis while he was engaged in the turmoil of entering Parliament. His attempt to do so without taking the oath, and the hatred it engendered in people of all sorts of beliefs, but particularly in those who thought it was their duty to make laws for the country, form one of the most striking chapters of our history as well as in the history of freedom of thought—and is too well known now to bear repeating. But few things are more interesting than Bradlaugh, the man of action, turning to biblical commentary, forgetting the shouting and screaming of offended Christians, enlarging his patient analysis of the myths of Genesis, and publishing it under the title of *Genesis: Its Authorship and Authenticity*.

It may have been quite unconscious on his part but he must have somehow felt that getting into Parliament without taking the oath was inevitable, if not for him, for somebody else, in the near future. But it was by no means so sure that the great majority of people would so easily come to see with him the myths and legends which filled the "holy" Bible. Millions of people in his day believed that Genesis was the true history of the "first" man and woman, that it gave a true account of the "creation" of the world, and that it proved, by God himself, that

Israel was the Chosen Race. Bradlaugh did his best to prove this was untrue, and thousands of his followers thought that, for the great majority of intelligent people, the truth of Genesis was exploded.

But is it even *now*? Nearly sixty years after the publication of Genesis, is it not a fact that millions, literally millions of people, are thoroughly convinced of the truth of the Bible? Is it not a fact that millions of people almost jump with joy when some well-known writer shrilly proclaims his belief in every word? Or when some excavator insists that he has found the walls of Jericho, or a bit of wood on Mt. Ararat, or the bones of some fish near the spot where Jesus fed the five thousand? Do not our "national" papers solemnly print long articles on the "truth" of the Bible, and repeat the pious yarns of the friends of our "great" men and women—particularly our generals and admirals—showing them to be "simple," but thorough, Bible believers, and a holy example for lesser fry?

I therefore need not apologize for returning now and then to "Bible banging" as it is often called by the "emancipated." Freethinkers in urging the claims of Freethought meet with more opposition from religious believers than from anyone else. They should be armed not merely with the older objections, but with the newer ones. It is not sufficient to say, "I don't believe in Noah." An intelligent reasoner should go with the claim to unbelief. A trained theologian can often make a mess of the arguments of an untrained unbeliever, however passionate and sincere the latter may be. It may only be a war of words, but one can get entangled in such a battle to a surprising degree.

There is a school of thought which believes that common sense and understanding of science must inevitably undermine religion; and here I am in thorough agreement. But it is a slow process. The science of the Victorians is actually jeered at as "exploded" and quite out of date. Yet did it not completely, or almost completely, undermine religion? Surely nothing proved more thoroughly than evolution the absurdities of religion in general and Genesis in particular? Yet hundreds of millions of Christians—genuine Christians—still believe.

There is, of course, a school which believes that Atheism could be established if the existing social order were changed. In one, or perhaps two generations, the people would no longer believe. It would lead to a rather fruitless discussion were I to give a lengthened opinion on this question. I believe in *Freethought*, and I say quite seriously that one can have Atheism *without* Freethought. This does not make for the free expression of ideas—particularly for those ideas with which we are not in sympathy, but which have the right to be expressed. I do not believe in forcible repression, nor in the idea that I must be always right, and my opponent wrong in matters of opinion.

Let me, therefore, turn to the recent discovery of the "oldest Bible fragment by 300 years," as the *Daily Telegraph* calls it. The fact that a half-column is devoted to the discovery at a time when men's minds are occupied with economic questions and systems, with war and the rumour of war, shows that anything appertaining to the Bible still is supposed to be of the greatest interest. The claim is made that the discovery is a "most romantic find," as "it brings us to within a century of the first translation of the Old Testament from the Hebrew. It is far older than any of the codices, for the codex, or book form, had not yet come into being."

The fragments, written on papyri, are from Deuteronomy, and are 300 years older than any other MSS.

of any part of the Bible; and the claim is made that "they enable us to reach a definite conclusion about the type of text circulating in Egypt about 100 years after the first translation had been made in Alexandria."

Now the first thing to note is that the "experts" have settled the question of date for us. For my part, I am, and often have been, dubious about their positive certainty in the realm of paleography. I know, of course, that it is founded on an intense study of inks, the shape of written characters, and the kind of papyrus in use at a certain period; but I venture to assert that a good deal of their certainty is based on guess-work. Whatever the case may be with regard to the classics, I have always a sort of uneasy feeling that even the greatest of our paleologists, as soon as he handles a Bible manuscript, wants to give it an age as early as possible. Are we *absolutely* sure that any MS. is not a forgery?

For example, in August, 1883, "the world was startled," says Dr. Kenyon in *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, "by the announcement of a discovery . . . of some fragments of a manuscript of the Old Testament purporting to have been written about 800 years before Christ. The material was old leather, and the writing was similar to that of the Moabite stone." The contents were portions of the Book of Deuteronomy, "but with many remarkable variations." It was shown, in the end, that the MS. was a forgery, but there must have been quite a flutter in the theological heart when the discovery was first made. What more marvellous proof of the truth of God's Word than a manuscript of 800 B.C. in "Moabitish" Hebrew (whatever that is)?

Now, the translation of the "Hebrew" Bible known the Septuagint was made, we are told, sometime about the year 284 B.C. That is all we really know about it. We do *not* know from what "Hebrew" Bible it was composed. We are told, of course, that there was a Hebrew Bible, written down, by divine inspiration, by Ezra, who faithfully reproduced, word by word, the one destroyed by the Babylonians. But there is not a scrap of evidence adduced for this statement. It is simply what is claimed by the Jews as the history of their Old Testament, and as such, must be believed in on faith and faith alone.

Is the Septuagint really a translation? No one knows for certain. I think that I am right in saying that there is a considerable school of thought which claims it may even have been the "original"—or that the Greek and the "Hebrew" are both translations or adaptations of some pre-existing documents which are now quite lost. From what was the Samaritan Pentateuch copied? It differs from both the Greek and the Hebrew in dozens of places; and it cannot be too strongly emphasized that our present Hebrew Bible is the one fixed about 600 A.D. by the Massorites. It may be a copy and a true copy of some pre-existing Hebrew text. But no one knows. It is all surmise or guess work, and as such, is the despair of Bible commentators.

I shall try in some subsequent articles to deal a little fully with this question of the Septuagint. It forms a fascinating problem in Bible origins and primitive beliefs.

H. CUTNER.

The human body is only just coming to real life. With the Greeks it gave a lovely flicker, then Plato and Aristotle killed it, and Jesus finished it off. But now the body is coming really to life, it is really rising from the tomb. And it will be a lovely, lovely life in the lovely universe, the life of the human body.—D. H. Lawrence.

Two Anti-Fascist Novels

Days of Contempt, by André Malraux. Gollancz, 176 pages, 6s.

READERS of this novel who have not yet fully realized the enormity of Fascist brutality, and the unending bloodshed with which it is carried on, should be led to reflect upon the question: what must be the amount of physical violence which is the background of, or shall we say the medium of causing, the mental aberrations described in vivid outline by André Malraux?

To many the day-to-day accounts of Nazi violence become wearisome; reports and statistics become a bore to be passed over lightly along with much more of the world's sordidness. Yet they are not incapable of being impressed by what is terrible in human life; especially when so hellish a tragedy as Fascism is being enacted.

The horror and significance of it all needs to be concentrated, for such readers, by the artist. If the novel is the art form of their choice, then André Malraux, in *Days of Contempt*, has done them a service.

The story is not a complicated one. Kassner, an anti-Fascist worker, is arrested and examined by a Nazi official. False identification papers prevent discovery whom he is, although there is grave suspicion. He is sent to a cell in the prison, in the hope that his incarceration and the beating-up which he receives will cause him to give himself away. After nine days of hell Kassner is released, and is told that someone has confessed to being he. That the end of that comrade will be a cruel death he feels sure; but he will never know who he is, and so takes home with him a feeling of a wonderful comradeship enshrined in sadness.

Kassner's escape from Germany to Prague is accomplished by a dangerous air journey, which provides the thrill of the book. At Prague—home, wife, and child—but the consciousness that Party work will soon separate them again; yet they face the future with hope.

The chapters devoted to Kassner's period in the prison cell carry the burden of the book. How many—both men and women—who have gone into Nazi Concentration Camps and prison cells must have suffered mental agonies like those of Kassner? In the description of his brief imprisonment is concentrated a world of hellish suffering.

Detailed description of physical violence finds little space in *Days of Contempt*; but the author describes with much artistry the brain images which oppress Kassner, in the terrible solitude of his cell, and force him to the verge of suicide. He lives in a state of "controlled madness." Certainly, if the process of going mad, being conscious of the fact, and fighting against it is anything like that described in this book the physical tortures, inflicted by the Nazi, are but a preliminary to the mental agony of thousands confined to the solitude of a bare cell.

Choose a Bright Morning, by Hillel Bernstein. Gollancz, 208 pp. 6s.

For the most part one has to take Fascism seriously, but there are times when humour and laughter relieve the tension and revive the nerves for renewed activity against the monster.

On the "jacket" of *Choose a Bright Morning*, Low is quoted as saying of this book, "I laughed so much I couldn't sleep"; while C. E. Bechhofer Roberts received it at breakfast and finished it in his bath an hour or two later. As for myself, I have not lost any sleep, and I have certainly remained on dry land

while reading and enjoying Hillel Bernstein's humour. This means that *Choose a Bright Morning* is not limited in its appeal, and while some may lie awake laughing all night, and others will keep a tight hold on the book while in the bath, there will be many who will laugh now and then, but chiefly enjoy quiet appreciation of the subtle way in which the "tin lid" is lifted up, and the villainy of Fascism revealed.

To tell the "story" of the book would be somewhat ridiculous; it would be minus its humour and, I think most Freethinkers will agree that, if dexterously handled, humour is an excellent weapon in the fight for freedom. Hillel Bernstein realizes this, but he is not unmindful of danger. Hence: "I do not want to regard dictators and their heroes as funny, even if they are." "It really is dangerous to regard them as funny," said Mulden. "Winsatz, you know, was practically laughed into power. When he first appeared, a good many people found him so funny that his personality brightened their days with laughter. It was a mistake. They had no defence against him. Their laughter wore them out and exhausted them, but he was still funny. They had to capitulate. And they've learned to their sorrow that humour is no protection against a clown with a political mission and a financial subsidy." (pp. 201-202.)

The reader will have little difficulty in detecting Winsatz the dictator, but the above warning is needed in Great Britain to-day. The Freethinker or Liberal who thinks humour can defeat Fascism is mistaken.

Humour should be made use of in exposing Fascism and to keep the Anti-Fascist in good form, but it must not be allowed to delude us as to the strength and cunning of Fascism. Hillel Bernstein has done his work well. It is to be hoped that those Anti-Fascist workers who read this book will be refreshed, and that others will be enlightened as to the stupidity and horror of Fascism which are laid bare.

Hasten the time when we shall be able to choose a bright morning to rejoice over the chasing away of the Fascist nightmare from the face of the earth.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

The World of Books

Mechanistic Materialism and Animal Behaviour, by T. H. Savory (Watts, 5s.), we can welcome as a genuinely scientific work, as distinguished from those "mugged-up" catalogues of facts which so often take the place of a scientific study, and which so many read under the impression that they are getting a scientific education. The author says that his work is one result of twenty-three years study of spiders, but the scope of the book and its implications go much further than this. The book does not lend itself easily to citations, but the various experiments make fascinating reading, and, so far as we can judge these experiments have been carefully devised, and are free from the romantic but misleading qualities of popular works by men such as Fabre. Mr. Savory follows the lines of Jacques Loeb and his successors, and is able to show how much the older biologists took as the product of a special and distinct quality, is elaborated from simple tropisms and the like. Mr. Savory's claim that the mechanist is the only scientific biologist is firmly made and soundly backed up by evidence. A very handy work to read in conjunction with this book of Mr. Savory's would be *How Animals Find their Way About*, by Etienne Raboud, a fine translation of which appears in Messrs. Kegan Paul's *Library of Psychology and Philosophy*. (7s. 6d.)

There are two ways of dealing with the subject of prostitution. One is to deal with it from what is called a moral

point of view, which has the peculiarity of having little genuine morality connected with the treatment. The other is to take it as a sociological phenomenon, and to make the attempt to study what has been called the world's oldest profession from a scientific point of view. Mr. G. Ryley Scott, in his *History of Prostitution, from Antiquity to the Present Day* (Werner Laurie, 10s.) follows the latter plan. His aim is to understand rather than to condemn, and he divides his work into three parts—Causes, History and the position to-day. In the course of a single volume, it is impossible for Mr. Scott to deal exhaustively with the history of the subject, but he serves up a very useful summary, with the proper biological and anthropological background. But here we are inclined to disagree with Mr. Scott's generalization that in its earlier phases prostitution was always associated with religion. It would seem to have developed with, and to have sprung from, the growth of customs and regulations concerning the biological relation of the sexes. On the other hand it is not quite scientifically correct to call the practice of a woman having to offer herself, before marriage, to some man within the precincts of the temple—a custom very general in the early history of most people—as religious prostitution. As a mere term it will do, but this seems to spring (Mr. Scott notes the practice and the belief) from the belief that the male needed some religious protection from the supernatural consequences of the sex act. It was a form of self-protection for the male, and the woman who wished to get married had to perform the ceremony.

Mr. Scott appears to think that religious prostitution was due to the belief "that sexual intercourse with a god or goddess was beneficial to the human participator." But we do not recall reading of sexual intercourse with a goddess, and the theory of protection for the male appears to us to be more probable. Mr. Scott has much useful information concerning the prostitution of to-day, and some well-merited comments on the hypocrisies of modern society.

Man Makes Himself, by Professor V. Gordon Childs (Watts & Co., 7s. 6d.) is a work we can strongly commend to our readers for three reasons. It is a book clearly and attractively written; it is written by a master of his subject; and lastly, it avoids that very irritating display of knowledge, with which a poorer type of writer tries to dazzle his readers. As is the case with so many other branches of knowledge, history is being largely rewritten, and things which were taken for granted by earlier writers are often now either questioned or decisively disproved. The necessity of progress, once taken for granted by so many of our leading writers, is now shown to rest on very slight foundations, and the early evolutionary conception of progress is called into serious question. Quite rightly, Professor Childs finds it "unnecessary" to take into consideration peculiar "psychological endowments, inherited along with bodily characteristics by the human groups." Nothing more inherently useless than the theory of natural endowment of one people for this development and another people for another development, has ever been conceived. To juggle with these phrases is to make a scientific study of history impossible. As much for what it avoids as for what it says *Man Makes Himself* is a book that all who can, should read. And along with this we would also like to commend two other works that will help to develop the true significance of the title chosen by Professor Childs. These are *The Discovery of Intelligence*, by J. K. Hart, published in 1926, and *The Progress of Man*, by A. M. Hocart (1933). The last author's *Kingship* (1927), although a more specialized work, should also be read. All illustrate the aptness of the title, *Man Makes Himself*.

For reasons that many people may accept as peculiar, we strongly commend for reading, *Fascism*, by Major J. S. Barnes (Home University Library, 2s. 6d.). It is the finest collection of childish fallacies and clotted rubbish that we have come across. It cannot be intended to convince any man of even moderate intellectual ability,

so that it must be meant to serve as a *credo* by Fascists, much as unthinking Christians repeat a confession of faith. We are told that "we must consent to be taught by Italy." If we would be guided by Fascism, one naturally thinks of the castor-oil regime, the women imprisoned because their menfolk have escaped the net of the castor-oil king, etc. Also we learn that:—

Fascism is a definite revolt against Materialism, that is against all forms of interpreting the universe from a purely naturalistic and individualist standpoint. If all Fascists are not as yet fervent believers in a divine transcendent Providence, all Fascists have at least a will to believe in such a one; all Fascists have a reverence for the supernatural, and are resolved that the new generation shall be brought up in a religious atmosphere and be protected from the dissolving poison of Materialism in all its forms. (This new generation is to be protected from) the demoralizing influences of contemporary scepticism, and of almost sadistical indulgence in destructive criticism.

The work is to be done by the aid of "comprehensive intuitions." And if one's "comprehensive intuitions" do not lead them in the direction of supernaturalism, a belief in a divine Providence and the fervent desire to be protected from "destructive criticism," and never hearing anything in the nature of independent criticism, there is nothing for it but a "comprehensive" use of castor-oil, rubber truncheons and prison. It is some time since a little book of just over two hundred pages has given us such an amount of amusement. If Major Barnes showed any indications of a sense of humour we might take the whole work as an elaborate satire on Messrs. Hitler and Mussolini. The man who does not get a full half-crown's worth of laughter out of the book ought to join at once the Mosleyites, whom we presume have learned from both their spiritual overlords, Mussolini and Hitler. They will never feel quite at home anywhere else. Let all who can get a copy. If the book were only written in a different style, it would be worthy of Mark Twain.

QUONDAM.

Epistolary Pearls From The Archives of Edessa

(Continued from page 523)

THE term "apostle," as here used, is probably restricted to the so-called "twelve," one of whom is named Thaddæus in Matthew's and in Mark's list.¹⁵ The Eusebian Account, however, specifies the present Thaddæus as one of "the seventy" apostles whom Jesus selected after he had chosen "the twelve." This specification may be an interpolation designed to bring the Account into harmony with *Acts*. But in any case it does not meet the difficulty, because, according to *Acts*, the fugitives in question made northwards, and thus struck a course quite different from the road to Edessa.¹⁶ Moreover, the evangelization of Edessa in A.D. 29, the year alleged for it in the Eusebian Account, is contradicted by many statements made in *Acts*.

This work indicates that for a good while the apostles, because of their Jewish prejudices, avoided preaching to Gentiles; and it says that Peter, the first apostle from whom a Gentile sought instruction, would have refused the appeal had he not been pre-adviced by a divinely-sent vision.¹⁷

The incident is placed after the conversion of St. Paul, but before he himself began to teach the Gentiles. Dr. Hoennicke, in his Chronological Chart of Paul's Life, cites fifteen authorities, mostly of great eminence, who attempt to date Paul's conversion.

¹⁵ *Mt.* x. 2; *Mk.* iii. 17. ¹⁶ *Acts* viii. 1.

¹⁷ *x.* 1-48.

Only one of these, O. Holtzmann, gives A.D. 29 as the year.¹⁸

Besides this, after Paul had converted many Gentiles, he appeared before a council of the original apostles held at Jerusalem, wherein the disciplinary status of those converts was discussed. On that occasion, Peter is said to have reminded the assembly of how he himself long ago had been divinely commissioned to convert Gentiles, but he is not said to have recalled the Gentile ministry of any other apostle selected before the ascension of the Lord. Out of fourteen authorities cited by Hoennicke, one alone, Kellner, gives A.D. 44 as the earliest date assignable to this Council.¹⁹

It is strange that, although Abgar and his subjects were idolators who worshipped various deities, yet he speaks as if only one God existed, who, however, might have a son. It is stranger still that whilst taking Christ either for God, or for a son of God,²⁰ Abgar suggests that Christ should evade danger from the Jews by coming to live with him, and adds that his city, small as it is, may perhaps suffice for them both.

In Christ's alleged epistle to Abgar there is a passage which says:—

It is written concerning me, that they who have seen me should not believe in me, that they who have not seen me might believe and live.

This evidently refers to *John* (xx. 29), where Jesus reproving Thomas for declining to believe in his resurrection until he saw him alive, says unto him:—

Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.

But in the aforesaid letter Christ is found showing that he himself had not yet died, much less died and risen from among the dead; whereas Christ's remark to Thomas could not have been made before Christ's resurrection, and was not reported in the work now containing it until a much later date.

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

(To be continued)

¹⁸ *Die Chronologie des Lebens des Apostels Paulus*, Leipzig, 1903, pp. 70, 71.

¹⁹ *Ib.*

²⁰ The definite article does not occur in the Greek Text. *Matthew* xxvii. 54 presents the same feature. In both cases the rendering should be "a son of God," not "the son of God."

National Secular Society

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD AUGUST 20, 1936

THE President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the chair.

Also present: Messrs. Hornibrook, Clifton, Saphin, Tuson, Easterbrook (W. J. W.), Ebury, Preece, Elstob, Mrs. Grant, Mrs. Quinton, Junr., and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and accepted. Financial statement presented.

New members were admitted to Bradford, Leeds, Bethnal Green, West London Branches, and the Parent Society.

The Society's interest under the will of the late G. F. H. McCluskey was noted. The death of Mr. H. Theobald, the Society's accountant, was reported, and a motion of appreciation for his long service was passed.

Reports of meetings held by Messrs. Brighton, Clayton, and Whitehead were received, and the booking of halls for the coming indoor season was sanctioned.

Correspondence from North London, Edinburgh, The Rationalist Press Association, The International Union of Freethinkers, and Le Penseur Proletarien were dealt with and instructions given.

On behalf of the Executive the President accepted a crayon drawing of the late Francisco Ferrer, offered by Mr. A. J. Mathie, a member of the N.S.S., with many years of keen and useful work to his credit.

Motions remitted from the Annual Conference were again discussed, but no decision was reached.

The next meeting of the Executive was fixed for Thursday, September 17.

R. H. ROSETTI,
General Secretary.

Obituary

EDWIN SWAIN GRIFFIS

I REGRET to announce the death of Edwin Swain Griffis, of Sale, who crashed to death in his glider at a small place near Kirkby-in-Furness, on August 12.

At the week-end Mr. Griffis had gone with his glider to the ground of the Furness Gliding Club, at Ireleth, near Barrow-in-Furness. Soon after taking the air it appeared to the onlookers that something was wrong, and shortly afterwards the machine crashed in a field. Spectators rushed to his aid, but Griffis died before he could be reached. He fell from about 200 feet.

Mr. Griffis came of a family of Freethinkers, and was in his 39th years. He is survived by his widowed mother and brothers and sisters.

A last tribute of respect was paid to Mr. Griffis at the Crematorium on August 15. Mr. Bayford made a few appropriate remarks before a large gathering of relatives and friends, which bore testimony to the respect in which the deceased was held.—W.C.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4 by the first post on Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

LONDON

OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park): 6.30, Mr. G. F. Green.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Mr. L. Ebury. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, August 31, Mr. L. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 6.30, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Bryant, Wood, Evans, Tuson and Connell.

Messrs. Saphin, Bryant, Wood, Evans, Tuson, Lacey and Connell. Wednesday, 7.30, Messrs. Wood, Bryant and Tuson. Thursday, 7.30, Messrs. Saphin and Wood. Friday,

7.30, Mr. A. Leacy and others. *Freethinker* on sale at Kiosk. Should be ordered in advance to avoid disappointment.

COUNTRY

OUTDOOR.

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. (Market): 7.0, Mr. F. Maughan. — "Bombs or Brains." Literature for sale.

BLYTH (Market Place): Monday, August 31, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

BURNLEY: 7.30, Monday, August 31, Mr. J. Clayton.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive, opposite Walton Baths): 8.0, A Lecture. St. James Mount, Liverpool, 8.0, Wednesday, A Lecture.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Alexandra Park): 7.0, Saturday, August 29, Mr. J. Clayton (Burnley).

MIDDLESBROUGH (Dawson Street): 7.0, Tuesday, September 1, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NELSON (Chapel Street): 8.0, Tuesday, September 1, Mr. J. Clayton.

NEWBIGGIN: 6.30, Sunday, August 30, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

PRESTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Preston Market Place): 7.45, Mr. J. Clayton (Burnley).

SEAHAM HARBOUR (Church Street): 8.0, Saturday, August 29, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Gill Bridge Avenue): 7.0, Mr. A. Planders.

TRAWDEN: 7.45, Friday, August 28, Mr. J. Clayton.

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