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VIEWS AND OPINIONS

"Development" and Evolution

IN the year 1840 an Anglican theologian and Oxford clergyman, John Henry Newman, published a bulky volume upon the abstruse subject of, what we may perhaps term the philosophy of theology; he entitled his book, *The Development of Christian Doctrine*. A few years later, the talented author was "received" into the Church of Rome and after a somewhat stormy career, was eventually made a Cardinal (1879), by Pope Leo XIII. Newman took his book with him and it, too, underwent embittered controversy and narrowly escaped condemnation at the hands of the ultra-conservative Pope Pius IX and his advisers. For Newman was, what Rome describes as an "innovator"; he threw overboard the traditional apologetic of the Church and substituted a new and, for the time in which his book appeared, a very daring analysis of the actual genesis and evolution of Christian doctrine.

However, despite its conservative critics, Newman's novel theory of "development" made eventual headway and is now generally accepted, not only in the Church of Rome, its author's adopted Church but, equally, in the Anglican Church, for and in which it was originally written, and, generally, throughout the world of Christian theology. One can, in fact, affirm that Newman's masterpiece effected an intellectual revolution in theological circles; to be sure, it was probably the last work of permanent intellectual value to be written by a Christian theologian of unquestionable sincerity and of unimpeachable orthodoxy.

As is well known to all critics who have actually taken the trouble to read it—instead of merely reading about it!—Christian and, in particular, Catholic theology claims to be rationalistic in its essential character and in the philosophy that underlies it; that is to say it claims that its dogmas are congruous with reason, even if not always fully comprehensible by the human intellect. Indeed, since the Vatican Council of 1870, it is a dogma of the Roman Church that reason must, in all cases, precede Faith and that Faith, whilst it may transcend Reason as emanating from a higher world, can never contradict it. Consequently, the official theology of the Church—which must be carefully distinguished from the popular superstitions that it feeds to the multitude, such as Lourdes, Fatima, etc.—is a rationalistic one, at least in its own estimation; if it cannot pass the test of reason and/or History, it stands discredited in the eyes of its educated adherents.

Prior to the promulgation of Newman's theory of "Development," the Catholic Church in all its sections, Roman, Eastern, and Anglican, interpreted Christianity in some such manner as this: the Christian Revelation, what Catholic theology terms the "deposit of Faith," was revealed, once for all and in its integrity, by the God-Man, Jesus Christ, Who after His Resurrection, commissioned His disciples, who then formed the Catholic Church to go on teaching it until the end of time. From

that day to this, so ran the old theory, the Catholic Faith had never varied and what the Church taught in the nineteenth century was precisely identical with what it had taught in the first.

Such was the unanimous teaching of the Church prior to Newman; as Vincent of Lerins tersely summarised it, the Catholic Faith was that which had been taught universally throughout the ages; "always, everywhere, and by all"; the phrase itself came to acquire almost the force of a dogma. It is obvious, however, that such a theory could only hold water in an uncritical age in which little or nothing was known about the actual evolution of Christian Doctrine. When modern critical scholarship began to turn its attention to Church history, all kinds of awkward questions began to be asked; why, for instance, if the Faith had existed unchanged since the beginnings of Christianity, were so many dogmas unknown in the early centuries of its evolution? The critics, many of them theologians themselves, pointed out that the Trinity was not generally accepted prior to the fourth century, or Transubstantiation before the thirteenth, or Papal Infallibility before the nineteenth, and so on. To such questions the traditional theory was totally unable to reply, for the facts were, unquestionably, as the critics stated them.

Such was the problem which Newman set himself to solve in his book by his theory of "development," whilst remaining inside the fold of Christian orthodoxy. The theory which he eventually produced was plausible, subtle, and so far superior to the traditional interpretation that it eventually overcame the strong conservative opposition which its novelty inevitably aroused, and it is now generally accepted by all Christian theologians apart from the opposite extremes of "modernism" and "fundamentalism."

Put briefly, Newman's theory of "Development" amounted to this: Jesus Christ, the God-Man, knew everything and revealed to his Church everything necessary for salvation. However, the vast scope of this Divine Revelation far surpassed the understanding of any one generation of men; it could only be understood as a gradual "Development" throughout the centuries, of the collective mind of the Church, infallibly guided by the Holy Spirit, Who discovers, defines, and proclaims fresh aspects of the original Revelation. Hence, the admittedly gradual unfolding of the Christian doctrine between the time of Newman himself and of the original Apostles. Nor, of course, did this "development" stop when it was discovered. Fresh doctrines may be discovered also in the future; in Newman's own Church three have been defined since he wrote: Papal Infallibility (1870), The Immaculate Conception (1854), The Assumption of the Virgin (1950); all unknown in and to the New Testament.

The theory advanced by Newman is, of course, a great advance upon the traditional one; it can be squared with the actual facts of Church history and it explicitly admits the fact of change, which the older theory had

totally denied; "To live," declared our author, "is to change; to be perfect is to have changed often." This represented a new note in the Church of Thomas Aquinas and it stamps its author as an original thinker. Newman has even been described as an evolutionist who, nineteen years before *The Origin of Species* saw the light (1859), anticipated Darwin in his discovery of the Theory of Evolution.

This, however, is not so; for whilst recognising that the Church had changed, Cardinal Newman still regarded the Christian Revelation itself as final, definitive, and unalterable in the form in which it was originally revealed by the "Divine Founder" of Christianity Himself. Evolution, that is, applied not to Revelation itself, but only to the understanding of the Revelation by the Church in succeeding ages. Evolution as distinct from "Development," only entered the field of Catholic theology when, after Newman's death (1890), the French modernist Alfred Loisy proceeded to declare that Christ himself only preached a provisional message, which the Church had interpreted from age to age in a manner quite unforeseen by its Founder; a heresy, we may add, for which the author was immediately and, we think, inevitably flung neck-and-crop out of the Church of Rome. For an infallible revelation can admit "Development," but cannot possibly admit "Evolution," as and when applied to the Revelation itself. (cf. Alfred Loisy—*L'Évangile et L'Église*, 1903. Eng. Tr.—*The Gospel and the Church*).

A generation ago, Ernest Belfort Bax pointed out the similarity between the gradual disintegration of ancient Pagan mythology, as interpreted in a modernist fashion by the Neo-Platonists, "the Broad Church of Paganism" (as we have elsewhere styled it), and such modern trends in Christian theology as we have described above. The conclusion at which this eminent critic arrived was that Christianity is ultimately destined to follow its Pagan predecessor into oblivion and that what we are actually witnessing to-day are its dying convulsions; a deduction which appears to us also to be both justified and altogether in line with present day "development"!

F. A. RIDLEY.

HERBERT SPENCER

ON my first visit to Brighton many, many years ago, happening to be walking along from the Palace Pier in the direction of Black Rock, my attention was suddenly attracted to a small memorial tablet indicating that Herbert Spencer had at one time lived in the house directly opposite. The tablet was brightly polished then, an indication that Brighton had not yet forgotten her illustrious guest. I have since visited the spot many times, and on each successive occasion have had the mortification of observing that the tablet bore obvious marks of neglect, and that it was getting dingier and less legible with the passage of time. My last visit was during the second world war, when I was just able to catch a glimpse of the dilapidated tablet through a mass of barbed wire. *Sic transit gloria mundi*—at least so far as Brighton is concerned.

Fortunately, the fame of Herbert Spencer does not depend upon the caprice of a town where his name has gradually been overshadowed by those of Harry Preston and Max Miller. His more lasting fame is commemorated in the works he has bequeathed to us. This fame was already well established long before the last decade of the 19th century. At that time it could be said without fear of challenge that Herbert Spencer was the one living philosopher of world-wide reputation. Neither Germany

nor France had a thinker to show whose reputation could for a moment be compared with his. His *Synthetic Philosophy* was translated and studied in all the leading European countries; it had ardent adherents in Russia and India and, except perhaps for the orthodox colleges, it overran America. William Henry Hudson, in his *Introduction to the Philosophy of Herbert Spencer*, mentions that he has seen it stated, on the authority of a missionary, that the influence of the Spencerian philosophy was the chief obstacle to the spread of evangelical Christianity among the cultured classes of Japan.

Apart from the intrinsic merits of Spencer's work, one of the main causes of his unexampled popularity was the way in which he incorporated and utilised the results of the latest science of his day. He approached the questions of philosophy from the scientific side and filled his works with apposite illustrations from biology and physics, and was enabled thereby to impart to his theories a certain amount of scientific certainty. Nor must it be forgotten that Spencer's thorough-going mechanical evolutionism was promulgated before Darwin wrote his *Origin of Species*.

Many disparaging remarks have been made regarding the style in which Spencer wrote. He has been described as dull; as difficult to read, etc. It is interesting to note, however, that the disparaging remarks are usually made by those who are out of sympathy with his work. It is true that Spencer scorned literary graces on principle. All he desired was to express clearly and completely the meaning he had to convey. And this he did. A more ornate style may well have fogged the issue. Perhaps the critics' real complaint in this respect is that Spencer made his meaning too plain! As regards his being difficult to read, I am pleased to mention that I was reading, and enjoying, his works at 15 years of age; nor can I allow a false modesty to prevent my mentioning that it is chiefly to Herbert Spencer that I owe whatever critical faculties I possess. Hence my interest in the memorial tablet mentioned above.

There seems to be an impression abroad that Spencer is now out of date. It need hardly be stated that this impression is fostered by those who know little or nothing of his work. Considering the world-wide popularity of his philosophy in his lifetime, it would be ridiculous to imagine that his influence could have totally passed away in the short period that has elapsed since his death in December, 1903. Did space permit, it would be easy to give reasons for the temporary eclipse. But, happily, there are still many enthusiastic Spencerians throughout the world, and there are not wanting signs that Spencer is slowly but surely coming back into his own.

As regards Spencer being out of date, I here maintain that there is no system of psychology, past or present, against which fewer objections can be brought than that propounded by him in his *Principles of Psychology*. This epoch-making book placed the study of psychology upon an entirely new basis. *The Man Versus the State* is another work which is as applicable to the social problems of to-day as it was to those existing in 1884 when the work was first published. Of all Spencer's works, probably the most widely influential is *Education: Intellectual, Moral, and Physical*. Among other tongues it has appeared in modern Greek, Sanskrit, and Arabic; and education in Mexico and the South American States has been greatly moulded by it. This book continues to be an inspiration for all concerned with the vital subject of education. The two last-mentioned books have recently been reprinted and published by Watts & Co.

There is, perhaps, no better approach to the study of Spencer's work than by way of the numerous essays from his pen which were published in the leading organs of liberal thought during the years between 1850 and 1860, prior to his embarking on the colossal task of writing his *System of Synthetic Philosophy*. Four such essays are now published together in a volume entitled *Literary Style and Music*.* These essays: The Philosophy of Style; The Origin and Function of Music; Gracefulness; and Use and Beauty; are a fair sample of Spencer's early work, from which the reader will see for himself that he is neither dull nor difficult to understand. Every page reveals his remarkable independence of thought, and his absolute freedom from all trace of traditional methods and ideas. As Charles T. Smith, in his introduction to the work in question, points out, the feature that links the four essays together and also gives them lasting value is the mental attitude they exemplify. "There is no reliance on the credulities of fancy, or mystery, or mysticism; no indulgence in abstractions or in metaphysical dialectics; no traffic with supernaturalism."

It is to be hoped that the publication of these four essays will lead the thoughtful reader to ask for more; and that from these earlier writings he will eventually be led to a study of that *System of Synthetic Philosophy* to which Spencer was to devote the greater part of the energies of his later life.

FRANK KENYON.

* Watts and Co., x + 119 pp., Thinker's Library, 2s. 6d. net.

SHADOWS OVER FREETHOUGHT

IN his pamphlet on the philosophical conceptions of Lenin that doyen of the Marxists, Anton Pannekoek,* accuses the Russian leader of what he calls his "middle-class materialism" and of confusing revolt against the Churches with revolution for the emancipation of the masses.

Religion and the origin of religious ideas will never be understood, says the Dutch Marxist, if we insist in treating the human animal as an isolated individual. Only within and as part of his society can the spiritual life of man be explained. Man is a social being and his conscious existence is "engaged," as the Existentialists have it, as an integral factor in his community.

In its struggle against the landed aristocracy and medieval obscurantism, which culminated in the French revolution, the middle-classes seized upon science as a weapon wherewith they might carve their way to liberation. The natural sciences, says Pannekoek, were the spiritual basis of the new society; for they freed the bourgeoisie from feudal dogmas.

Nineteenth century philosophies put new "deified abstractions" in the place of the old religious dogmas, such abstractions as, causality in nature, the liberty of the individual, progress in society and so forth. By the twentieth century, the bourgeoisie now firmly established in power, a new set of abstractions was taking the place of the former ones of the Liberal era, such abstractions as The State, Nationalism, Organisation, Union or Party, and the like.

The changed conditions, implied thereby, made transition to the "new necessities" difficult, declares Pannekoek. For, to the masses, the new slogans had an all too familiar ring; they were indeed the echoes of their own struggles! They had become almost traditional. Yet tradition, too, can hamper. For ideas are not independent extant Truths but generalisations out of past

experience, and not to recognise this is to bind oneself a slave to new superstitions.

Lenin never got beyond these theories of "middle-class materialism," in the judgment of the Western Marxist, Pannekoek. Lenin was a Russian, that is, a subject of the medieval despotism of Tzardom, and he conceived the struggle much as the eighteenth century philosophers had conceived it. In the embattled hosts of the class enemy his glance was arrested by the waving banners of Religion. For Lenin knew capitalism only in its "colonial" form and to him the social revolution meant the annihilation of the big landowners and Tzarist despotism.

Yet, in his day, Religion was the least significant of the ideologies, observes the doyen of Marxism; it had only an imaginary power as a refuge for all. Like Lenin a lifelong Marxist, the Dutchman interpreted its philosophy in other ways. Lenin, he says, confounded the real observable world with the physical processes by which we endeavour to explain it; for the Russian leader nature consisted not only of matter but also of the natural laws directing its behaviour. In his *Imperio-Criticism* Lenin made the point that "in the proper meaning Dialectics is the study of contradictions within the essence of things," (my italics) which as another Russian, Bakunin the Anarchist, remarked is a metaphysical concept, since science does not recognise "essences."

Lenin when he talked about the class struggle showed, according to Pannekoek, how little he really knew about its operation in countries with an advanced form of capitalism. In Russia, however, circumstances were different. Since there was no bourgeoisie of any significance to take over the role of the ruling class, the task fell to the intelligentsia, who based their appeal to the masses on the doctrines of Marxism; but their kind of Marxism had nothing in common with the proletarian Marxism of the West. Theirs asserted, and this was clear from Lenin's writings, the decisive role of the Party and the proletarian's duty to trust and follow the Party's leaders; it asserted that the function of the Party was to bring to power "a layer of leaders" who should establish a programme of planned production by means of State control. Ultimately it coincides with other managerial concepts.

The form of Marxism which evolved in Lenin's Russia was one in which criticism of Religion stood in the forefront, and looking for support for this approach to their problems they found it in Marx's earlier attitude, when the bourgeoisie and the working classes in Germany were united in the common fight against Absolutism and its handmaiden, Religion. So, writ large over the portals of the Moscow presidium, is that slogan of Marx's earlier days—he was only 26 at the time—"Religion is the opium of the people." Whereas the Marxist of the Pannekoek school, turned to the maturer expressions of his later years, embodied in the phrase—"Social Reality determines consciousness."

Whatever may be our views of Marxism—and I hold no brief for any of its sects—at least we may endorse Pannekoek's view that the latter phrase expresses a profounder comprehension of the needs of mankind. For the realities of social life, as they develop, not the preconceptions and the prior reasonings of dialectical materialists or other religious bigots, are the essentials to human progress and freedom—freedom to think unshackled, freedom to express thoughts without reservations, and without fear of "disciplinary" restraints.

P. C. KING.

* *Lenin as Philosopher*, by Anton Pannekoek.

ACID DROPS

No one need be surprised to learn that the Archbishop of York is opposed to easier divorce—if he had his way, no doubt he would oppose divorce altogether. There should be no relief whatever if one of the parties to a marriage becomes incurably insane, develops into a murderer, or a child-torturer, or keeps the other party in a state of heart-breaking terror. Jesus Christ is against divorce and no other opinion is needed.

One reason why he is against easier divorce is that the country "as a whole is shocked by the large number of divorces and broken homes." But is that any reason why two people, who just hate the idea of living together, should be compelled to do so? Dr. Garbett could easily answer that question, but he prefers sheltering himself behind the pious nonsense that "marriage is a sacrament." People got married for thousands of years before the Roman Church discovered it had a better hold on its sheep if it called marriage a sacrament, and insisted that it could only be done by a priest. The Church of Rome has been found out, and Dr. Garbett doesn't like it.

No surprise need be registered at the Government decision against any "Fun Fair" next year at the Festival of Britain Exhibition on Sundays. We are a Christian country, and although the Christian "Sunday" is not the Sabbath Day either of the Bible or of Jesus Christ—so what? Proudly declaring that they are Christians, the Sabbatarians defeated commonsense and gave a delightful exhibition themselves in intolerance and bigotry. The idea that no good Christian would not be forced to go to a Fun Fair on Sunday did not seem to strike the victors in this intolerable example of religious humbug.

In his lately published will, George Bernard Shaw proved that, however much he talked about "Creative Evolution," he had no religion whatever in a Christian sense. He clearly rejected "the tenets peculiar to any established Church or denomination," and he wanted neither a religious service at his burial nor a cross on any memorial erected for him. Still, this will surely not prevent future Christians insisting that he was a genuine Christian without knowing it, that his writings are saturated with Bible feeling, and that he was converted on his death-bed. Like Charles Bradlaugh, in fact.

In these hopelessly materialistic days the Devil has become a joke even among the very people who have perpetuated his memory—the Christians. We grieve greatly over this and are in happy accord with "J.A.B.," who, in the *Church Times*, appears to fight a losing and pathetic battle on his behalf. As he says, almost with tears in his eyes, the Devil "is still the most bitter enemy of man. Our Lord calls Satan a liar and a murderer," and who knows the Devil better, considering the way in which His Satanic Majesty flew over Jerusalem with the Son of God desperately clinging to him before being put on the pinnacle of the Temple. No, giving up the Devil, or blasphemously joking about him, must be fiercely suppressed in all good Christian communities.

The people who complain that the B.B.C. is blatantly Atheistic these days are sure to be delighted with its broadcasting of four sermons by Professor C. H. Dodd on that glorious subject, "Is Christ Coming Again?" Professor Dodd does not quite agree that Christ's Holy Words can be either explained away, or that they can

be "literally" interpreted as meaning he was coming before his hearers were dead. But, of course, he is coming again—perhaps "like a thief in the night." Throughout the ages, Christians have been found to explain or explain away something "our Lord" said, and there are always enough mugs in the world to pay for the "explanation." Professor Dodd knows no more of the Second Advent than any kindergarten child, whatever he says about it on the radio.

Our very pious contemporary, the *Church Times*, is most religiously angry about the way "the modern world" so heartily dislikes the Advent. It loftily asserts, without a scrap of evidence, that "Advent is not concerned with pious opinions but with hard basic facts." Well, the hard basic fact is that after "Our Lord" disappeared into heaven after the Resurrection, he hasn't appeared since. It is his mother who has turned up at Lourdes, Fatima, and other shrines. And these many Advents of Mary have been a source, not only of glory for the Church of Rome, but of hard cash. Isn't it possible to get some immature young curate to swear that "Our Lord" has appeared to him, say, at Glastonbury or even at the site of Spurgeon's Tabernacle? What a smack in the eye it would be for Rome to have Christ appearing to a heretic first!

It will be news to a good many earnest anti-Catholics to learn that "England is on the way back to the Holy See," as a headline in the *Universe* puts it. This is the convinced opinion of Archbishop Masterson, who adds that no one "has dared to deny the truth of what was defined" in the small matter of the Assumption of Mary. There was, of course, "opposition," but what chance has opposition against the Holy See? That heavenly picture of a rapturous England, including its Free-thinkers, bodily going over to Rome is too, too beautiful.

On the other hand, Sir Henry Slesser has come to the conclusion that if ever our Parliament has a majority of Atheists in it, he feels that Catholics will be in great peril if they prefer to obey the Pope rather than the State. While Mr. Newman, who is Exeter's Town Clerk, feels that the Catholic laity should no longer be on the defensive. The time has long since come for attack. We have an idea that Catholics in this country have been attacking ever since Wiseman, and if they are allowed thus vociferously to press their claims in these days it is because there are so few real Protestants to oppose them. Or is it, perhaps, that they are too frightened?

It looks as if our Protestants have even given up the fight against the Assumption, and have been obliged to acquiesce, for Rome is now insisting that it is in the Bible, and therefore quite "historical." A number of them were invited to hear Mgr. F. Davis in Birmingham the other week, and to have the 12th Chapter of the Apocalypse interpreted for them as containing the Dogma of the Assumption in all its Glory. As Mgr. Davis said: "All Catholic theologians agree that the doctrine is contained in Holy Scripture." What a game all this is between the followers of the lowly Nazarene!

Our grand old National Anthem appears sometimes to have little respect in Royal circles judging from a book on the Royal Family just published. Princess Margaret actually asked the King, "Papa, do you sing God save my Gracious Me?" It is a pity that the King's reply is not recorded.

"THE FREETHINKER"

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TO CORRESPONDENTS

- J. NICHOLAS.—We do not print abusive letters and prefer to ignore them.
- A. J. CYNE-FLUCK.—Surely habitually using obscene language should be discouraged? Please do not confuse freedom of speech with absolute licence.
- A. D. CORRICK.—Many thanks. Will appear.
- B. A. TINEALL.—Thanks, indeed, for your bundle of papers. Will prove most useful. We agree that humour and wit help our propaganda.
- Mr. A. HENRY wishes to apologise to P. G. ROY for confusing him with J. S. ROY in the recent discussion on Esperanto. He is in full agreement with J. S. ROY.
- "MATERIALIST."—Your letter, objecting to a correspondent "erecting gods," seems based on a misapprehension. The writer in question did not attack Materialism but Marxism.
- J. H. MATSON.—What you say about Ethiopia is most interesting, but we cannot deal with every subject. Ethiopia is very Christian, is it not? We are pleased you like *Determinism or Free Will*.
- When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, 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, 1s.; half-year, 8s. 6d.; three-months, 4s. 4d.
- The following periodicals are being received regularly, and can be consulted at "The Freethinker" office: THE TRUTH SEEKER (U.S.A.), COMMON SENSE (U.S.A.), THE LIBERAL (U.S.A.), THE VOICE OF FREEDOM (U.S.A., German and English), PROGRESSIVE WORLD (U.S.A.), THE NEW ZEALAND RATIONALIST, THE RATIONALIST (Australia), DER FRIEDENKER (Switzerland), DON BASILIO (Italy).
- Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 41, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1, and not to the Editor.
- Lecture Notices should reach the Office by Friday morning.
- Correspondents are requested to write on one side of the paper only and to make their letters as brief as possible.

SUGAR PLUMS

From regular inquiries received at the N.S.S. offices we repeat the advice that the N.S.S. Handbook contains most of the information asked for by the inquirers, and a copy should be secured and kept handy for reference when required. The cost is sixpence, plus one penny postage, and can be obtained from either the Pioneer Press, or the National Secular Society, 41, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1.

Congratulations to W. Somerset Maugham on his frank declaration in the "Sunday Express" that he was an Agnostic, and, "I don't believe in an after life," he continues, "I made up my mind about that 50 years ago and I have found no reason to change my views." It may sound strange to Mr. Somerset Maugham to be congratulated on an ordinary statement like that, but it is such a rare thing among well known men and women. We wonder how many Agnostics voted with the majority against the recent bill to open the fun fair of the Festival of Britain on Sundays, through sheer funk.

For the information of Leicester readers, Mr. T. M. Mosley lectures for the Leicester Secular Society in their

own Hall at Humberstone Gate, at 6-30 this evening (December 17). His subject, "Christian Ethics and Modern Problems," is not only a topical one but also one which Mr. Mosley will handle very well. Admission is free, and those who have not yet heard the speaker should not miss this opportunity.

Admirers of the work of Bayard Simmons, "the poet of Freethought," will be interested to learn that the sonnet we published from his pen on George Bernard Shaw was actually written in 1912. Young Simmons' "prescience," however, is what we expect from our poets who, somehow or other, always manage to see things a little further than ordinary folk. All the same, he is to be congratulated for his fine appreciation—and we, too, for being so fortunate as to print it.

In its number for October, *Good Lines*, the Commercial Travellers' magazine, had the following:—

SHY "RATIONALISTS"

Here is another fact which seems to bear on the same subject. Some time ago a certain society of "freethinkers" arranged a public debate on Religion. They put up one of their star speakers, and the speaker for the Churches was a minister whom I will not identify except by the initials: E.R.R. It was a bad night for the "freethinkers!" They were surprised, for E.R.R. doesn't look a very formidable opponent. But his imperturbable good humour, his slightly acid sense of fun, and above all, his superb mastery of both his own case and his opponents' defeated them—and they knew it. Speakers of this society have now received instructions from their head office that they are not to engage in public debate with E.R.R.!

Unless, of course, we have the full facts before us, it is quite impossible to say how true or otherwise is this precious yarn. My we therefore ask *Good Lines* to give us at least the name of the "certain society of freethinkers," and the name of the renowned Christian champion. Our experience in the past has been that either these stories are just plain lies, or that it is the Christian side which runs away from debate. In any case, if E.R.R. would care to try his luck—either once again or for the first time—we can assure him there are plenty of Freethinkers ready to meet him.

Although in a poll of about 64,000, there was a majority of just under 3,000 in favour of the opening of Sunday cinemas at Swansea recently, it appears that there is "the possibility of a Council vote against Sunday films." If this is not Dictatorship we should like to know what is? "Quite a number of Labour councillors," it seems, who stood for a plebiscite, are now against the result. And the gallant Christian minority have put forward a petition signed by 20,000 people saying that "they will boycott on weekdays any cinema opening on Sundays"—which looks suspiciously like blackmail.

The matter rests as much in the hands of the exhibitors and owners of cinemas as it does in the hands of the cinema-goers. If owners do not take a firm stand against the bigots, they deserve to lose. They should never fear a boycott, for the "pictures" have got a very big hold on the public and there must be very few people content to do without them these days. We should like to see good Christian children who are used to going two or three times a week (if they can) refusing to enter a cinema, while their more lucky young friends go as often as their parents allow them. If the cinemas in Swansea combine, they can laugh at the boycotters.

MOTHER LOVE

(Concluded from page 491)

III

"NOW, Cathy," said the woman breezily. "We'll have tay and a nice long cosy talk."

"We'll have a talk," said the girl in level tones. "But it won't be nice or cosy. And I don't want tea."

"Ye must be thirsty and hungry after travelling. Of course ye'll have tay. I've stayed away from work to welcome ye. Yet ye don't seem very pleased at it."

"I'm not," said Cathleen in a low voice, sitting heavily at the table. "Don't mess about with that teapot. Sit down and talk, because it's urgent."

Surprised and mystified Mary Delaney seated herself facing her daughter, staring at her in perplexity.

From the girl came the direct question: "Why was I sent to that convent orphanage?"

"What else could I do? He that was yer father, curses upon him, disappeared leaving me with ye in the Maternity Hospital. I'd nowhere to go and not a penny. I was bound to find work, but how could I do it carrying a baby? The sisters 've looked after ye, Lord be praised, and . . ."

"It's all lies," interrupted Cathleen harshly. "I already had a good home before you thought of the convent, but the priest got at you and made you fetch me away."

The mother's mouth dropped open, then she recovered herself to ask: "Where'd ye get that yarn from? Ye've been dreaming, or imagining things as girls will, but I thought ye'd have more sense."

For a few seconds the girl stared at her mother, her eyes narrowing and her lips stiffening. Slowly she spoke with suppressed feeling, trying to keep her voice as colourless as possible: "If you won't tell me I'll tell you. When you came out of the Maternity Hospital you handed me over to an Adoption Society. They found fosterparents for me in a good private home. Soon afterward you told a priest about it, and he put you up to start a law case to recover your child, as the adoptive parents were Protestants and you were a Roman Catholic. You wouldn't've thought of that for yourself, and you hadn't money to pay lawyers. I see it all now; a plot to get a convert. That Judge may have known the law, but I suspect he was a Roman Catholic, and his decision was heartless, cruel to me, although in your favour, because you'd really abandoned me."

"I hadn't," cried the listener wildly. "I wanted to do the best I could for ye. I thought I was doing the best. I swear I did."

"The best," sneered Cathleen. "To take me from a comfortable home with loving people and dump me in an orphanage."

"Ye've been well looked after."

"Like an animal. Fed and clothed and kept clean, moderately well, not the best of any of 'em."

"I'm sure the sisters were kind," protested Mary Delaney.

"Perhaps. But it wasn't like home with personal care and affection. Sleeping in a bare cold dormitory with a crowd of girls, not all of 'em pleasant. We never had a moment's privacy. Always we were spied upon, lectured, preached to, made be good little Catholics. Ugh! What a life!"

"I don't believe it," objected Mary Delaney angrily. "The priests and sisters've always been good to me."

Cathleen emitted a short scornful laugh, saying: "Because you're the cringing sort as goes creeping for

favours. I've kept myself independent, waiting for the day when I should be free. Since I've known I've become doubly so."

"How did ye know," asked her mother suspiciously. "The good sisters wouldn't tell ye all about yer case I'm sure"

"They wouldn't. Their one purpose was to keep us submissive and meek. Also they made us work. We were only their servants. Through that I found out the truth about myself. Nearly a year ago I was given a special job because I was a big strong girl and more intelligent than the others. Most of 'em were dull, some soft. It was impressed upon me that it was an honour for me to be the one chosen to clean and keep tidy the Mother Superior's office. Some honour! I did it well, so often was left alone to do it. Dusting the shelves one day I opened some of the files and found all the girls were recorded, with details of their careers. I got out mine. It had everything, with Press cuttings of the lawsuit over me. Nothing was left out. It gave me a shock. I've thought about nothing else since. Not a word did I say about it, keeping everything to myself, making up my mind what to do."

"What're ye going to do?" asked Mary Delaney helplessly.

IV

Cathleen stood up, her face brighter than it hitherto had been, a look of triumph appearing, making her eyes shine.

"Leave you," she announced, her voice still hard but sounding self-assured as well as hopeful. "You're no mother of mine. You're not fit to be after the injury you did me, robbing me of a grand opportunity of living a happy life as a normal child at home with its father and mother. I have their name and address, so I'm going to them."

"They won't want you now," asserted Mary Delaney clutching at any chance to divert the damsel from her intent.

"I shall see. I'm sure they'll be friendly still, and kind. If they can't or won't offer me a home they'll help me to find work which I can do and earn my own living and keep myself."

Looking round the room in disgust she added, "I know why you're so eager to have me here; to work for you now you think me old enough; to live in this dirty hole and sleep in that same bed with you. Not me. I've finished with you and with priests and nuns and all that stuff they forced upon me."

Taking up her suitcase she walked out and down the stairs into the street. Left alone the woman remained seated, staring at the door as she heard her daughter's footsteps die away in the distance.

A. R. WILLIAMS.

CAPTIVE MINDS

ONE of the arguments Christian apologists seldom fail to put forward when their beliefs are attacked is the following: "Christianity has lasted for nearly 2,000 years. Do you think it could have done so if it were not true?" The answer to this question is that Christianity is still with us for the same reason that all the other religions have survived: because children are nearly always brought up in their parents' religion. The children of Christians, for instance, are brought up as Christians, the children of Mahometans as Mahometans and so on. As the number of converts to a religion is always small compared with the total number of its adherents, in general it is true to say that a man's

religion is decided by the accident of his birth. The majority of Christians, in fact, are no more responsible for being Christians than they are for being British, or French (or as the case may be). The system is self-perpetuating; for, when the children grow up and become parents in their turn, they see to it that their children too are brought up in the faith of their fathers.

The most thoroughgoing system of indoctrination is that practised by the Catholic Church, and we may take it as the archetype of religious instruction. The young Catholic's training begins at the earliest possible age. From his earliest years he is made to believe that the worst that can happen to him is that he should lose his faith. He is drilled in his catechism until he is word perfect and can produce the right answer whenever the appropriate question is asked, like a jukebox that selects the chosen record when a particular button is pressed. He is told so often that he believes in "free will" and many other things that eventually he does believe in them. He may never consider the implications of "free will" in his life, but if ever it is suggested to him in later life that there may be reasons for rejecting this doctrine his subconscious mind will at once produce an automatic denial: "Of course there is free will," he will say.

Everything is done that can be done to make the imprisoned mind its own jailer. The Catholic's conscience is carefully developed and made to enforce prohibitions and taboos intended to shield his mind from contact with ideas that might undermine his faith. He is told to avoid "bad companions" (i.e., anyone holding opinions repugnant to the Church); he is repeatedly warned that he must not read books that are on the *Index Expurgatorius* (the Catholic blacklist); and he is told that if he comes across any irreligious sentiments in a book he must stop reading it and put it from him.

His instructors inform him that Catholic scholars have considered all the objections and arguments of the wicked atheists and never failed to find an answer to them. In this way he is made to believe in the intellectual superiority of the Church and given the confidence of a spurious certainty in what he has been made to believe.

Although I have dealt with Catholicism in particular, the rule with every denomination is the same: "Catch 'em young!" Our pulpiteers know only too well how slender are their chances of converting educated adults with minds of their own: they must get the children at all costs. When we realise the extent of religious influence in our schools it becomes clear that Freethinkers still have many tasks ahead of them. Even in State schools there remain vestiges of religious instruction, and in the State-helped religious schools the taxpayer's money is being used to subsidise the various brands of "Christianity."

Until this poisoning of young minds is completely ended there can be no room for complacency in our ranks.

"APISTEO."

CORRESPONDENCE

COMMUNISM

Sir.—The following is a copy of a letter sent to the *Daily Telegraph*:

"As one of the proletariat, I have followed the correspondence on Communism with interest and as no letter from a member of this 'class' has been noticed, perhaps space could be found for this viewpoint.

The history of Communism appears to have many points which parallel that of Christianity; there is but room to state a few. Their origins were different, but both were looked upon first with derision then fear by the rulers and intellectuals of the time. The early stages of both, either in theory or practice,

were communistic, but on gaining power turned autocratic; both advocate the use of force ('I come not to bring peace, but a sword,' etc.) and both have used it often, and in a manner that Ghengis Khan would envy, e.g., the massacre of the Albigenses ('Kill all, the Lord will know his own'). Examples of Communism in action are too recent to need mention. Both have been twisted from their original 'purity' and both have crushed freedom of thought and expression. It is to be hoped that a thousand years of mental darkness and oppression will not emanate from the rise of Communism as it did from Christianity. Can we learn from the fact that 'history repeats itself?'

"For a great many, the Christian religion has now lost its appeal, but very few appear to be able to do without the mental crutches that some form of faith provides. Hence the turning to Communism to supply the opiate for which their religion impregnated minds crave."—Yours, etc.,

F. G. ROWE.

MARXISM

Sir.—As a Freethinker and a Marxist I regret the tone of M. Barnard's letter, but I think any criticism can safely be left to Freethinkers.

With regard to the Great Roman Civilisation, however, he certainly appears to have overlooked the ceaseless struggles in Rome between the Patricians and the Plebs and the following quotation from Plutarch shows very vividly the condition of the poorer classes:—

"The wild beasts of Italy have their caves to retire to, but the brave men who spill their blood in her cause have nothing but air and light. Without houses, without any settled habitations, they wander from place to place with their wives and children; and their generals do but mock them when at the head of their armies they exhort their men to fight for their sepulchres and domestic gods; for among such numbers perhaps there is not a Roman who has an altar that belonged to his ancestors or a sepulchre in which their ashes rest. The private soldiers fight and die, to advance the wealth and luxury of the great; and they are called masters of the world, while they have not a foot of ground in their possession."

—Yours, etc.,

T. D. SMITH.

LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

OUTDOOR

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (St. Mary's Gate, Blitzed Site).—Lunch-hour Lectures every weekday, 1 p.m.: Mr. G. WOODCOCK.

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead Heath).—Sunday, 12 noon: Mr. L. EBURY.

Sheffield Branch N.S.S. (Barker's Pool).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: Mr. A. SAMMS.

INDOOR

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Science Room, Mechanics' Institute).—Sunday, 6-15 p.m.: Rev. J. ISRAELSTAM, Chief Rabbi. "The Jews in England—A Historical Survey."

Glasgow Branch (McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street).—Sunday, 7 p.m.: H. W. HENDERSON, "The Soviet Myth."

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate).—Sunday, 6-30 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY, "Christian Ethics and Modern Problems."

Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society (Technical College, Shakespeare Street).—Sunday, 2-30 p.m.: Dr. BERNARD BORKIN (World Government Crusade), "One World—or None."

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, 11 a.m.: W. E. SWINTON, Ph.D., F.R.S.E., "Some Lessons of Evolution."

West London Branch N.S.S. (The Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.1).—Sunday, 7-15 p.m.: L. EBURY, "Progress?"

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SCIENCE, RELIGION AND MORALS

IX—THE ATONEMENT

(1) Alleged miracles have been a commonplace feature of almost every religion from primitive times till to-day.

(2) They form the main evidence which humans profess to possess of the intervention of the God they believe in.

(3) If no extra-natural intervention ever occurred what evidence would humans have of any extra-natural power?

(4) It seems mainly for this reason that all through the history of religions miracles are alleged to have occurred.

(5) In themselves these miracles were not evidence of anything more than the existence of some extra-natural powers.

(6) In the course of the first three centuries of its history Christianity developed theories of a complicated super miracle.

(7) After much thought and arguing and discussion and writing a reconciliation of these various theories was effected.

(8) This was a gradual process lasting for years, but one may fix an approximate date as the Council of Nicæa in 325.

(9) By the time of this first œcumenical congress the metaphysics of theologians had superseded the Gospel Story.

(10) Thus in the course of three centuries or so there was made official the Christian doctrines of the Trinity and Atonement.

(11) In these notes a Christian is defined as one who believes in the Atonement and its ancillary theories.

(12) It is desirable, therefore, to endeavour to summarise very briefly what this doctrine is and what it means.

(13) Many works have been written on this nodal Christian doctrine some of which mistake obscurity for profundity.

(14) Since, however, these works are esoteric this does not matter much to the bulk of Christian believers.

(15) The general outline of these theses seem to be within the scope of an ordinary intellect to summarise.

(16) The theory seems to be that the world and humans were originally made by God in a state of perfection.

(17) At a very early stage, somehow, these first humans "fell into sin" by disobeying God and so lost their status.

(18) After thousands of years of exhortations and punishments humans continued sinning and frustrating God.

(19) God's "only begotten Son" was willing and volunteered to sacrifice himself and thus "atone" for human sins.

(20) He therefore became "incarnated" as the man Jesus and by his death "redeemed" all mankind.

(21) By this method he "expiated" the sins of all humans, or rather, it seems, only all true believers.

(22) Only by this method of atonement, redemption and belief could humans be saved, apparently from damnation.

(23) He came to earth as Jesus Christ to teach humans the "Will of God" and the way of "Salvation" from damnation.

(24) It seems his mission was to save only those humans who believed and followed the Will of God as taught.

(25) To continue the work of conversion Jesus sent "the Holy Spirit," but whether the mission was retrospective is not clear.

(26) Long before the Council of Nicæa this involved series of contingent hypotheses had led to theological complications.

(27) This Council had been called by Constantine to arrive at some concordat, but even then acrimonious disputes occurred.

(28) The outcome of this and subsequent Councils in the fourth century was the formation of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

(29) It is unnecessary here to enter into either the theories or the disputes about them since they are well-known history.

(30) Here, merely for consideration, the hypotheses finally adopted as orthodox by the Western Church will be accepted.

(31) These hypotheses were briefly summarised in that extraordinary compilation known as the Athanasian.

(32) In defiance of both mathematics and logic, in this creed the three are stated to be one and the one three.

(33) The three parts of the Holy Trinity are each equal to the whole and Jesus Christ was God himself incarnate.

(34) Therefore, "the only begotten Son" sacrificed himself to appease the Father; yet he himself was the Father.

(35) The Father was appeased by the sacrifice of his only begotten Son; yet he himself was that Son.

(36) It is to be noted that all these theories constituted highly artificial theology of a Gnostic pattern.

(37) They had only a quite incidental connection with the non-theological teaching of the Historical Jesus.

(38) He might have been as perplexed and surprised as anyone at these theological developments of Christology.

(39) Nevertheless, these seem to be the hypotheses of the Roman Church which finally predominated in the West.

(40) This Creed and this Church maintains that unless one believes these mysterious theories one is doomed to Hell.

(41) The long history of Christian theology obviously cannot be followed here, not is this at all necessary.

(42) From the Council of Nicæa and subsequent ones in the fourth century one can pass on to Augustine.

(43) In his works one finds the first systematic statement of the extraordinary doctrine of Original Sin.

(44) These views were modified in time and will be alluded to subsequently under Morals in Part III.

(45) The theories of the Christian Churches probably reached their zenith in the great work of Thomas Aquinas.

(46) Modern theologians seem to have repudiated much of the theories of Athanasius, Augustine and Aquinas.

(47) Modern Christianity is trying to save itself by sublimating away much of its original theology.

(48) The result is that its connection with the Christianity of long ago is often hardly recognisable.

(49) Nevertheless Christianity to-day, if it is to be regarded as such, should not repudiate its origins.

(50) If it accepts the doctrine of the Atonement then it must accept all the consequences that this involves.

W. EDWARD MEADS.