

HANDS OFF THE CHILD.

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Views and Opinions.

Hands Off the Child.

SOME very hard things have been said about the Bolshevik rule in Russia by the press, with exactly how much truth it is impossible to say. But it has been left for the *Christian World* to discover something so good about it that it is actually held up for the Churches of this country to copy. And the one instance in which Russia is held up as clearly right, is the one instance in which it is clearly wrong. It is in connection with the treatment of the child. This is not, be it noted, in connection with the feeding, or the clothing, or the general education of the child, but solely in connection with filling the child's head with cut and dried opinions about things; in other words, using the child as a mere instrument of propaganda. Discussing the question of the religion of the child, the *Christian World* says, in its issue for March 10, "The Churches might take a lesson from the Soviet as to the vital importance of getting hold of the children if they are to command the loyalty and service of the coming generation." The object here is brutally frank. It is not to see that the child grows up mentally strong and physically healthy, nor to take care that it develops into a clear thinking, right living citizen. The main purpose is that the Church shall be able to command the service and loyalty of the coming generation. Children are to be trained with that before them as an ideal. The *Christian World* may not admire the Soviet generally, but it does admire the plan of fitting the child with a set of ready-made ideas, and so training it that it shall not think of even questioning them.

* * *

Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

We are not at all surprised at the counsel, but we are left wondering what on earth the Soviet or anyone else has to teach the Church in this respect? For the Church has never lost sight of the necessity for capturing the child if it is to command the adult. It is as keen about this to-day as ever. True, it does

not do it so effectively as it once did, but it does the best it can, and the discussions on education in Christian gatherings show that it does not give up hope of doing more. Perhaps, however, it is not the mere control of the child, which the *Christian World* holds up as something to be praised, but the manipulation of the child's mind through the capture of the machinery of the State by pure force that excites its envy. And here the *Christian World* is certainly on quite familiar religious ground. For whenever it could the Christian Church has used the machinery of the State to enforce its teaching, not merely with reference to the child, but with regard to the adult as well. For centuries it used the power of the State to see that only one kind of education was available, to endow its doctrines, and to prevent criticism. It still does so. The strictest of the Free Churches does not hesitate to use the power of the State to keep religion in the schools, to enforce Sabbatarianism, and even in so recent a case as that of broadcasting, to use money levied on all to cast abroad the religion of some, and to steadfastly deny all criticisms of religion a hearing. There is really nothing new in what the Soviet has done. It is playing the game the churches have always played, and the fact that in Russia it is now being played against the churches, instead of for them, makes no difference whatever so far as the principle of the thing is concerned.

* * *

Making Automaton.

While the social environment was of the kind that offered no open opposition to Christian teaching, the Church never bothered about the education of the child. With an environment saturated in superstition there was nothing for the church to fear. With the growth of modern scientific thought, Christianity began to jar upon the educated mind, and the manufacturing of believers by narcotising the child mind became a part of the policy of the Christian churches. And for about six generations the Churches have regarded the child as material for propaganda. So today does the Soviet; so, in fact, do a great many others. In this respect the Conservative is at one with the Communist, the Jew is at one with the Gentile, the Christian with very many non-Christians. None of them appear to treat the child as possessing a mind to be trained, so much as one having a brain to be stuffed with prepared material. They agree, not upon a demonstrated truth, but upon an easily proved error. For I deny altogether that the child should be used as an instrument of propaganda for this or that party, or for this or that sect. Duty to the child, duty to the best interests of the race, no more consists in cramming the child's head with definite political theories, or with definite anti-Christian teachings than it does in stuffing them

full of Christian doctrines. It is no defence at all to say that one believes the teachings forced upon the child to be the truth. That is an argument which fits all; and, as all cannot be right, it follows that all except one must be in error, and perhaps all may be so. It means also that not merely may the child be taught something as true that is false, but it is being so trained as to destroy its power of discriminating between what is true and what is false. It was one of the standing complaints against the Jesuit system of instruction that it began by robbing the child of all individuality, and ended by making the adult a blind and submissive servant of a religious order. And the charge against the Christian Church as a whole is not that it taught people what it knew to be false—although even that would be true of many individual cases, but that it forced upon the young a definite set of teachings, and forbade contradiction or criticism, and so paralysed, so far as it could, the capacity for independent thinking. It is the kind of educational policy pursued, not the nature of the things taught, that offers the real ground for criticism and condemnation. It is possible to possess the truth, but to possess it so stupidly that it is of no value to anyone.

* * *

A Plea for the Child.

My plea, as against the advice of the *Christian World*, and against all who see in the child little more than a mere peg upon which to hang the perpetuation of their own opinions, is one for the individuality of the child. If I may quote from a pamphlet of my own, published some years ago:—

It is curious that in all the discussions that proceed with reference to religious education, very little is heard on this head. We hear much of the rights of the State, the rights of the parent, the rights of the teacher, but only very occasionally, and in a casual manner, do we hear anything of the rights of the child. In the quarrel between adults the child has, so to speak, been mislaid. We have been so concerned discussing who shall control education that we have forgotten what it is we are educating. We select the teaching that will satisfy adults, and neglect the more important question as to the teaching most suitable and beneficial for the child. Perhaps when we are alive to the fact that there is a child involved in the question, a saner view may obtain. At present there is much to justify the bitter witticism that all adults are in a conspiracy against the welfare and the freedom of the child.

This was written with special reference to the teaching of religion to children, whether by the State or by private individuals. But it obviously applies to a larger field. It is true of every attempt, whether by Christian or non-Christian, to take one's own views, resting as they do upon at least disputable social or other theories, and teach them to children, in the same way and in the same spirit they were once taught to repeat the Westminster Confession. It is not of first-rate importance *what* children are taught, it is of overwhelming consequence *how* they are taught; for on that issue depends whether we are training useful and *creative* citizens, or a number of mouthers of ill-understood doctrines.

* * *

New Presbyter and Old Priest.

So I am waiting to see generally recognised the important principle that it is wrong to use the schools for propaganda, whether the things propagated be of a political or a religious character. And in this respect I no more admire the methods of the Russian Soviet than I do those of the Christian Church. They

are at one in their aims, and if I did not condemn both I could not reasonably condemn either. I can neither appreciate nor understand the mind of the parent who wishes his child to grow up a mere copy of himself. It is a monstrous egotism disguised by a pretence of care for the welfare of the child. There is here no genuine concern for the welfare of the child; what is operative is a desire for the perpetuation of one's own opinions through the medium of the child. And I am really not so certain that, even with the best of us, social and mental development have attained such dimensions as to make that a desirable object. At any rate, whether the opinions we have in view are religious, political, or social, it is little short of monstrous that we should treat the schools as no more than mediums for their transmission. The hope of the future lies in our helping to raise a generation that shall be sane and informed critics of life, not the mere mouthpieces of inherited and established ideas. "Hands off the child" is a capital war-cry when fighting the priests, and it is not less good even though the priest drops his theology and applies the same policy in the name of some other set of ideas. CHAPMAN COHEN.

Free Church Council.

THE thirty-second Assembly of the National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches was held this year at Birmingham during the second week in the month of March. The president was the Rev. W. Conrad Balmer, minister of the Bridlington United Methodist Church. The general subject for discussion was "Christianity and the World's Life." According to the report in the *Times* of March 9, "The revision of the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England occupied a surprisingly large part of the first session, and was at the background of everything else." More astonishing still, a resolution is to be moved appointing a "watching committee," whose duty it will be to advise the executive as to whether any action may be desirable. At this first session Professor Carnegie Simpson, of Westminster Presbyterian College, Cambridge, spoke, and a long passage in his paper on "The Evangelical as the larger view of Christianity," was devoted to a controversial consideration of the Anglican Prayer Book. In the *Times* report he is represented as saying:—

The Evangelical, as distinct from the so-called Catholic view, is the larger and more comprehensive view of Christianity. Evangelicalism, so far from being narrow in its range and limited in its outlook, (1) makes a bigger offer and presents a more adequate and Christlike system of salvation for the souls of men than the Catholic system does; (2) has a more complete view of the whole Church as a sacerdotal society; (3) has a less limited conception of the universal Church; and (4) has a wider and better idea of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

From these purely sectarian propositions nothing was easier or more tempting than to slide into an active support of the corresponding views held by one of the parties in the Church of England. In his address this Presbyterian divine stood side by side with his Evangelical brethren in the Anglican Communion, for whom he distinctly held a brief, in the unfolding of which he proceeded thus:—

Why is "reservation of the sacrament" so important to our Anglo-Catholic friends? Because they say the Lord is present in the consecrated elements, which can be reserved, and under which he can be adored. I refrain from saying anything of a controversial nature upon the error and danger of this view.

That was essentially disingenuous on Dr. Carnegie-Simpson's part. Was he not aware of the fact that he could not have said anything more controversial about a partisan view than to call it at once an error and a danger? Besides, this Free Churchman did not accurately state the Anglo-Catholic interpretation of the Eucharist. On the sacramental table lie the elements, bread and wine; but the moment the officiating priest utters the words of consecration a mighty miracle is performed; the bread and wine cease to be what they still appear to be, but are transubstantiated into the body and blood of the slain Redeemer. Now, the miracle endures, and the body and blood of Christ may be reserved in a certain spot, and those permitted to gaze on him may and will enjoy a sacramental feast. We contend that this view is not one whit more irrational and absurd than the Evangelical belief in the real presence of Christ, without any miracle.

To us, of course, all views of the Lord's Supper, which attach any real value to it, are equally superstitious and untrue. Both the Evangelicals and the Anglo-Catholics build their antagonistic theories upon the sand of fancy and not upon the rock of fact. The Eucharist, in all its essential elements, is a Pagan feast, adopted and adapted by Christian propagandists, and of necessity public interest in it is steadily dying down.

At the conclusion of Dr. Simpson's address the Bishop of Birmingham appeared to extend his heartiest welcome to the Free Church Council. In his speech, as reported in the *Daily Mail*, Dr. Barnes said:

To the masses of the people the New Testament is virtually unknown. The young people of University standing are Modernists because Modernism is in the air. Much of the scholarship behind the revision of the Prayer Book is that which flourished at the end of the Victorian era, when most of the bishops received their education. Such scholarship is not adequate to-day. The infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke cannot have assigned to them the same authority as the Sermon on the Mount. The fourth Gospel is a post-Pauline meditation on the life of Christ, and not a history.

We must disengage the teaching of Christ—the religious no less than the social teaching—from the views of St. Paul, for though the apostle was often inspired, he was sometimes, as in some of his sex teaching, a mistaken child of his age. We must hold fast to the great simple truths which lie at the heart of the Gospel. Then we need not fear the consequences of that critical scholarship, which, whether we like it or not, will permanently change the way in which the New Testament will be approached by educated Christians.

That was a great and most important statement, though, no doubt, there were scores of Free Churchmen present who almost wholly disagreed with it, and also despite the fact that his lordship did not speak in the name of his whole diocese, but in that of the Modernist section of it. Modernism is doubtless in the air, and Modernism is really a kind of half-way house between Catholicism and Secularism. It is a most significant fact that most adherents of the Church of England are on a road that inevitably leads either to a totally blind faith, or to a well-reasoned-out no-faith.

Strangely enough, Dr. Scott Lidgett read a paper entitled "The Sovereignty of Christ in the World's Life," and more strangely still, while both the *Christian World* and the *British Weekly* of March 10 refer to this paper in terms of highest praise, neither seems able to supply a clear idea as to what its central teaching was. We are told that he achieved "a plunge into the philosophic ocean, and that he fell foul of the Bishop of Durham for expressing the

opinion that economic factors dominate the social situation, but so far as the reports show he never uttered a single word in defence and illustration of the truth of the title of his paper; and in the name of all the wonders how could he have asserted the reality of what is conspicuously non-existent? The sovereignty of Christ has never been a fact at any time or anywhere, and is doomed never to become one.

In the *Times* of March 9, the president's address was summarized in the following terms:

Religion has always seemed to be in a state of decay to its contemporaries, but for 1,900 years there has been a Church bearing Christ's name and seeking to perpetuate his spirit. It has called men together and taught them to pray to the All-Father; it has insisted that every man is of infinite worth, and that the love of God is for all; it has testified against oppression, and pleaded for justice; it has pointed to the Fountain for sin and uncleanness; it has comforted sad hearts and kept alive hope; it has inspired great movements and championed great causes.

That is not the actual Church whose history we know, but an ideal Church which has never had a history, since it exists alone in the imagination of those who portray it. The actual Church, instead of loving and doing its utmost to conciliate and win over its enemies, has always persecuted and put them to death wholesale; it has oppressed the poor and robbed the rich; it has kept individuals and nations in subjection by painting before them the unspeakable horrors and tortures inflicted upon the damned in hell, and encouraged prompt obedience by picturing the transcendent thrills of bliss and joy that would be theirs for ever in heaven. The truth is that the Church he describes has never been seen on sea or land. And yet, in spite of his idealization of the Church, he is compelled to admit that the Kingdom of God is still to come. He said: "It is sheer folly to pray, 'Thy Kingdom come' unless we send men and women to Parliament who will give the Kingdom a chance to come. Prayers must be carried to the polling station." He also said: "Abolish the Church to-day, destroy it root and branch—the work it has done, the services it has rendered in the name of the Lord, would still be there, for it is in the life of the nation, in the throb of its heart, in its institutions and laws and spirit. I do not believe the Church has existed for nineteen centuries to come to a standstill and be defeated in the twentieth." That is how ministers generally talk whatever the facts may be. That is Mr. Balmer's optimism at the Free Church Assembly in Birmingham, to which he holds on although he knows the facts are against him. Year after year Sunday is being increasingly secularized before his very eyes. He deplores the fact most profoundly, but it is undeniable, for "the Sabbath calm of the village is gone, and the sound of church bells has been drowned in the hooting of motor cars." Sunday sports are now being permitted in many of our public parks, and church attendance is steadily on the decline.

According to the President of the Free Church Council no triumph of Christianity is now practicable without the aid of Parliament, or without the offering up of earnest prayers at the polling stations. We are familiar with the adage that people cannot be made sober by acts of Parliament, and we are equally convinced that they cannot be made Christians by that method either. God seems to have retired from the business altogether, and as a consequence Christianity is going the way of all other religions. The Kingdom of God is setting for ever, but already the Kingdom of Man is seen rising in the East, and it is coming nearer and nearer with the healing of all nations in its wings.

J. T. LLOYD.

Whitman Once More.

As if day had cloven the skies
At dreaming midnight o'er the western wave
Men started, staggering with a glad surprise,
Under the lightning of thine unfamiliar eyes.
—Shelley.

I would rather have written "Salamambo" than have built the Brooklyn bridge. It was more difficult, and it will last longer.—Edgar Saltus.

SEVENTY years ago an obscure American author was dismissed from a very modest Government position because he had written an outspoken book of verse, entitled "Leaves of Grass." What would Walt Whitman have said could he have foreseen that his little book, which brought him so much trouble, would be treasured by posterity; that even amid the awful distractions of a world-war the centenary of his birth would be celebrated; and that he would be hailed as the most notable among the men who laboured to lay the foundations of a purely national literature for America, and as the representative poet of Democracy?

Emerson's tribute to the value of *Leaves of Grass* is an historic utterance. "I find it," said the great Bostonian, "the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed. I greet you at the beginning of a great career." The tribute was a prophecy. Three generations later all the auspices seem in favour of Whitman's permanence in American literature. It is the old story of the fate of pioneers. First, the neglect of his own countrymen, tempered by abuse; then the recognition by a few of the keener minds and brighter intelligencies; and finally, the slow emergence into appreciation as a singer of Democracy. For not only were Whitman's ideas unconventional, but his work is unlike the work of any other poets. It was not the freak of a little man trying to attract attention by being eccentric at all costs, but the sincere attempts of a big man to describe life as he saw it. If Whitman had merely rearranged the old poetic materials, such a departure would be in no sense remarkable. He set himself the Herculean task of dealing with life in the nineteenth century without any regard to convention or tradition. His cultured contemporaries were content to carve cherry stones, and did it very well; but this self-educated man elected to hew granite, and made himself a great name in the process.

The making of such a writer is of importance, and the publication of newly discovered writings by Whitman, consisting of essays, literary and dramatic criticism, stories, and other work associated with his editorship of the *Brooklyn Eagle* during the years 1846-47, gives the clue. There can be no doubt that it was Whitman's journalistic training which sharpened his interest in humanity. He had naturally a keen sympathy in life, and all human activity interested him; but it is no less true that, in his capacity of journalist, he was brought into contact with many phases of life which would have escaped him had he viewed life from a study window like so many authors.

This wide interest is the key to those poems of his in which he seems to catalogue human occupations; merely naming the singing of the stevedores, the raftsmen sounding their bugles, the Arabs turning to the East. Moreover, by his genius, Whitman roused in other men this tireless sympathy. This universal charity, which was his natural gift, was reinforced with emotion, sometimes startling, as in his significant words, addressed to a prostitute: "Not

till the sun excludes you do I exclude you." Nor is this all, for in the poems on slavery and war Whitman rises to the occasion, and the claims of humanity are eternal in his songs. "You celebrate bygones," Whitman says defiantly, "I project the history of the future." And it will be long ere the Great Republic of the West will be able to realise the dreams of an emancipated race portrayed with such vividness in Whitman's poems. For the present-day American thinks more of the loss of his glass of beer than he does of the loss of his liberty.

Whitman wrote too much, and his reputation is endangered by the excess of what he published, but his best work is of the real gold of literature. It contains a novel view of modern life, and a daring insistence of the claims of masculine life. Unlike tens of thousands of poets, he has little interest in women. Where he does refer to them it is usually as the mothers of future American heroes. The adult man in nature is the principal figure in Whitman's poetry. That is the burden of so many of his songs. It is the cry of a disgusted son of modern civilization throwing off the chains of servitude, and returning to Nature and the simple life. And there, in the sound of the sea, lying at ease, through the transparent summer morning, on the soft, pure grass, the exile meditates on his own bodily condition, and on that of millions of his fellow-men.

For that, in the last analysis, is really the one subject of Walt Whitman. His detachment from convention and tradition is truly wonderful. He is without sentimentality in the directions in which most other persons are, or think they are, sentimental. It is from memories of a sweet-scented and untrammelled communion with Nature that all the freshness of Whitman's happiest poetry sprang. Here he gained that equanimity, that serenity of mind, which is so attractive a feature of his verse. Let us accept Walt Whitman for what he gives, for his prodigious candour, his zest in life, the undeniable beauty and originality of his strange unshackled rhapsody.

MIMNERMUS.

Ballade of Our Final Sleep.

I.

Well, yes, of course; we have to die one day,
For Death will call upon us soon or late;
In the long run he always gets his way,
And his arrival is as sure as Fate.
Of his sad victim will his friends relate,
When he has gone, like most of us, to hell,
What time they of his many virtues prate,
"After life's fitful fever he sleeps well."

II.

But when I go, with face all ashen-gray,
To meet Saint Peter, warden of the gate,
I at his feet this humble plaint will lay,
Whilst he surveys my almost empty slate,
And with Saint Michael holds a tête-à-tête,
"Let men of me in sober truth this tell,"
"Now are his troubles ceased, erewhile so great,"
"After life's fitful fever he sleeps well."

Envoi.

Prince, when like other sinners you must pay,
And in the lake of fery brimstone yell,
Perchance upon your tombstone men will say,
"After life's fitful fever he sleeps well."

BAYARD SIMMONS.

The Messianic Parables.

FOR ages the Jews were obsessed with the idea that a descendant of their great King David would subdue "the nations," as they termed the rest of mankind, and would rule those peoples with "a rod of iron." This future conqueror was given the title of "Messiah," which means "the anointed one," and of which "Christ" is the Greek equivalent.

As time advanced, however, the educated part of the Jews, having come to appreciate with more accuracy the strength of "the nations," abandoned the idea that the Messiah would be a man, and came to think that he would be one of "the Holy Ones," or, one of "the sons of God," referred to in the Scriptures. Hence, although they thought that he would operate on earth, they expected that he would come from heaven.

The earliest surviving presentment of this opinion is to be found in the Book of Daniel, which purports to have been written by a man whom King Nebuchadnezzar carried away to Babylon in the year B.C. 605, but which modern research has proved to be the work of some unknown person flourishing, or withering, under the tyranny of Antiochus Epiphanes who died B.C. 164. In that book, the author, speaking of a vision, tells how "there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man," and how "there was given unto him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him."¹ In the Apocalypses of the last century B.C. and of the first century A.D. there are various references to the heavenly origin and tremendous functions of the Messiah. In some cases he appears as the leader of an angelic host to overcome "the nations" who in spite of repeated warnings still oppress Israel. In others he appears, after a series of divine visitations have subdued their resistance. Sometimes he comes to judge the living and the dead; always to rule for a determinate or indeterminate period. With his coming is invariably connected the instauration of the divine kingdom. The more critical events became for the Jewish people, the stronger grew their faith in a Messianic intervention. Some looked for it on account of political servitude; some on account of moral degeneracy. The deeper thinkers who perceived the relation of ethics and politics expected it on both accounts.

Among the heralds of the Messiah was John, son of the priest Zacharias. He cried, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand";² and he predicted the speedy advent of one who should exercise the two-fold function of judge and executioner. In preparation for these dread events he baptized all who hearkened to his words. One of John's followers was Jesus of Nazareth, who came to him with the crowds for baptism. When John was cast into prison, Jesus took up John's cry; and began his ministry by proclaiming, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."³ The little of John's teaching which, thanks to the evangelists and Josephus, still survives, is purely moral; but Josephus says, that Herod's motive in arresting John was the fear lest he should use his great influence over the people to excite a revolt.⁴

As regards Jesus, he is reported to have employed language of an insurrectionary nature, saying, for instance, "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword."⁵

"I came to cast fire upon the earth; and what will I if it is already kindled."⁶ Moreover, on the night of his arrest, he bid his apostles take money, adding, "He that hath none, let him sell his cloke, and buy a sword."⁷

It is quite obvious that when Christianity began to draw the attention of the Roman authorities, the Christians would feel the necessity of suppressing, as far as they could, anything that John or Jesus had taught which might induce the Romans to take them and their followers for seditious persons. John appears at first to have identified his "coming-man" with the cloud-man of Daniel; but afterwards he must have admitted the possibility that the expected one might be of earthly origin, for, when he heard in prison about the exploits of Jesus, he sent to him, asking, "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?"⁸

Consistency is not to be awaited from prophets. Jesus himself manifested up to his end an uncertainty as to whether Messianic intervention would start on earth, or whether it would have to come from heaven; and he was prepared for either of these eventualities, inclining to one or to the other in harmony with the appearance of circumstances as interpreted by the proclivities of his temperament. Jesus is said to have taught his views of the Messiah partly in sayings and partly in parables, these two illustrating each other by turn. The Messianic parables are difficult to classify in respect to their contents; but in another respect they may be divided under two heads, namely, those which introduce the Messiah without any nearer indication of his identity, and those which plainly introduce Jesus as the Messiah. All the Synoptists, as their writings show, were fully convinced not only that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, but also that he foretold his sufferings, his death, and his resurrection. This belief prevailed for ages throughout Christendom; and it still prevails among orthodox Christians. But, there are to-day many heretics, and a yet greater number of infidels, who hold it impossible for Jesus to have made that claim and uttered those predictions. The heretics dislike to think that Jesus talked of coming back in the clouds; whilst the infidels say that his Messianic claims and correlative prophecies are simply inventions made by his followers after they had come to believe in his resurrection and its mystical effects. All these three classes are influenced by prejudice.

The first class assumes the perfect truth of the Gospels, and the second assumes the perfect wisdom of Jesus; whilst the third, taking the normal man under normal conditions, applies this criterion to Jesus, leaving out of account the abnormality of his mind and circumstances.

The Gospels supply ample evidence that Jesus was of a vain, excitable, imaginative, and devotional temperament; that he was deeply read in the Hebrew Scriptures, and that he was beloved by the multitudes, but hated by the authorities. Thus it does not seem at all strange that such a person, after having accepted the Messianic teaching of John the Baptist, and proclaimed it in his turn, should at last take himself for the Messiah; whilst it appears equally natural that, in view of the power and the ways of his enemies, he should have foreseen his arrest, condemnation, and execution; aye, even the circumstances attending those events. The above opinion is based upon facts recorded by the evangelists. What follows depends in part upon a theory suggested by

¹ vii. 13, 14.

² Matthew iii. 2.

³ Matthew iv. 17.

⁴ Matthew xviii. 5.

⁵ Matthew x. 34.

⁶ Luke xii. 49.

⁷ Luke xxii. 36.

⁸ Matthew xi. 3; Luke vii. 19.

the same facts. John the Baptist, whatever his original views were, came to think that the Messiah might begin his activity by coming forth as a man among men. For Matthew and Luke say that the conduct of Jesus made John send from his prison to ask him if he were the Messiah. This is not surprising, for many people still believed that the Messiah would be a man called to his office by the Almighty. Hence, when Jesus came to regard himself as the Messiah, he may at first have thought that he was appointed to set up the Messianic kingdom in his life-time with divine assistance. Then, when the popularity that had encouraged him in this belief began to decline, and there appeared no sign of God's intervention on his behalf, he may have begun to conceive his Messianic destiny under another form, and to think that he would have to suffer death for the sins of his people before coming to rule over them as the Messiah. This thought would of course involve the belief in his resurrection.

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

(To be Continued.)

Acid Drops.

Having other occupations over the week-end and on Monday, Mr. Cohen wrote his "Views and Opinions" rather earlier than usual. They were written without reference to the introduction of the Seditious and Blasphemous Teaching to Children Bill into the House of Commons, although the notes have a very obvious bearing upon the general question. So far as this particular Bill is concerned, however, there can hardly be two opinions among those who are able to take a non-party and non-sectarian view of public affairs. It is stupid, it is malevolent, and if it becomes law it requires all decent-minded people to go on their way and ignore it. The *Freethinker* has in it, week after week, that which the introducers of the Bill would regard as blasphemy, but we need hardly say that we do not intend either altering the character of this paper, or to refrain from selling it to customers under sixteen. It will be sold to anyone of any age who comes and asks for it. Even Sir William Joynson Hicks would be supplied with copies without question, for although he is over sixteen, so far as birthday anniversaries are concerned, we have our doubts in other and important respects.

The Bill aims at making it an offence to sell to any person under sixteen any publication containing blasphemous or seditious matter, or to have in one's possession for sale or distribution documents of that character. And the promoters of the Bill make it fairly clear that they would regard as seditious an advocacy of Republicanism, or any fundamental alteration in the structure of the State—things which are not seditious under the existing law. They kindly explain that while you may teach certain things to adults you may not teach them to anyone under sixteen. They are to be carefully trained in the opinions of Sir William Joynson Hicks and company, and if those who call themselves reformers submit to this kind of thing they will submit to anything.

Ostensibly, the Bill is concerned with the teachings given in Socialist and Communist Sunday schools. Mrs. Phillipson tried to make the members' flesh creep by adopting the familiar device of referring to the teaching of sexual immorality to children, of such a bad character that she dared not quote it. We would believe that any body of men were engaged in teaching sexual immorality to children only when we saw it. At any rate, we should require more than Mrs. Phillipson's word for it. The Socialist members were chiefly concerned in trying to prove that their teaching was quite Christian, which was neither here nor there, and which, in

substance, concedes the case of those who brought in the Bill. "Jix" made the brilliant contribution to the debate, that he was not objecting to anything, even though it were taught in Socialist schools, that was consistent with Christianity. Captain Holt, the introducer of the Bill, quoted this horrible teaching, which he called atrocious blasphemy:—

Christ on the cross is so ridiculous that one despairs at the hold that this superstition has on the minds of the working classes.

We do not know whether this is a genuine quotation or not, and we do not care. But we do say very deliberately that the whole doctrine of the crucifixion, in either its historical or moral aspects is both ridiculous and repulsive. That members of the House of Commons do not think it to be so, must be attributed to the fact of their having been "doped" with Christian teaching since childhood. If the Bill becomes law they would be protected by the Act, since, religiously, they can hardly be regarded as above sixteen years of age.

The capacity of these people to act as legislators may be gauged from the fact that while they object to certain teachings concerning the State and Religion being forced on children, they have no objection whatever to other teachings concerning the State and Religion being forced upon them. The only qualification is that they must agree with what is taught. As to the Socialists, and others, we have only to point out that they are now feeling some of the effects of their being too timid to speak out the truth concerning religion and religious rule, and their hesitancy to go all out for the abolition of the blasphemy laws. If all had been more concerned about genuine freedom of opinion, careless of what the opinions were, the public mind by to-day might have been so educated as to make even the introduction of a Bill such as this one an impossibility. Perhaps it may drive some of them to recognise the importance of organized Freethought in the community; and also that they cannot forever remain silent concerning religion without paying a price for their timidity.

A reader of a daily paper makes a suggestion that is worth while elaborating a little. Cannot we keep Lent, he says, by giving up bad temper and other evil dispositions. We can be agreeable and friendly to all without renouncing smoking, etc. To this we add that our Christian friends might renounce: slandering of Atheism and Freethinkers, speaking evilly about sectarian opponents, libelling of the younger generation, seeing evil in quite wholesome Sunday recreation, enforcing stupid kill-joy prohibitions, forcing a Christian service upon many thousands of unwilling wireless enthusiasts, and disturbing the Sabbath peace by raucous yelling and hymn-singing. These truly Christian pleasures are, we know, very dear to godly minds. That being so, to renounce such pleasures during Lent ought to be the first duty of every spiritually-minded man and woman. The greater the enjoyment from them the greater the glory achieved by renunciation. And the world would be all the sweeter if such Lenten habit were made a permanent one.

Sir Robert Baden-Powell's views on card-playing and gambling are interesting. Summarized, they run thus: He never plays cards because he has so many more useful things to do to occupy his time. He never could play cards for money because, for one thing, he never had so much money that he could afford to lose it in a game; and also, he always felt that he could not take a friend's money simply because he happened to have a luckier card in his hand than had his friend. He thinks it is a dirty way of money-making. If you want money, he says, earn it. If you want to give away money, give it to those who need it, or who deserve it, but not to those who will waste it over luck at cards. If you are always busy doing something worth while, you will have no time for card-playing. The sheer common-sense of all this is in sharp contrast with the usual torrent of slop

that comes from the unco' guid. Their condemnation does more harm than good. It defeats its own end. It gives to gambling a glamour that is very attractive to a certain type of mind eager for a little cheap excitement. The pious, however, always did go the wrong way to work in combating stupid or harmful pastimes. They made the same silly blunder over the drink evil. But, then, they always have been making blunders when dealing with human nature. And the chief cause of this is that their minds are obsessed with childish dogmas affirming the viciousness of mankind, and its need for being "saved."

Gandhi, the Indian Nationalist leader, advises Christians to begin to practise their religion "without adulterating or toning it down." Heaven forbid! The nineteen hundred years' record of Christians putting into practice their nightmare creed doesn't make pretty reading. Mr. Gandhi, we fancy, is either unacquainted with that record or else mis-reads it. Such adulterating or toning down as can be noted, has come about through pressure from outside enlightened opinion and criticism. Progressive minds are, therefore, not at all anxious for what has so far been achieved, to be dumped on the scrap-heap, for it would be thus dumped if Christians seriously adopted Mr. Gandhi's advice.

The Bishop of Birmingham writes to the Free Churches: "In doctrine, there is little division between us. Though we are separated by differences of organization, our respective theologians and divines share in a common task." They do; they're all interested in the dope traffic, and busily engaged in serving out the "Opium of the People."

The Rev. Dr. Poole says: "We want charming Christians, but we do want them to be intelligent." The doctor's two wants are rather ambitious ones. Evidently he has noticed a scarcity of both charming and intelligent Christians. It does seem a pity his wants are not likely to be gratified. May we suggest that the mould of Christianity doesn't cast the type of Christian he appears anxious to find? Another good man with a want is the Rev. F. C. Spurr. He thinks the Free Churches want a new race of Christian apologists. We should say that what the Churches want first is a case that able and intelligent men will think worth while devoting apologetic energy to.

"This is an age of increasing difficulty for the ministry," says the Rev. Dr. Simpson. Sometimes we wonder whether it is worth while. The good man seems a little down in the dumps. Has he been missing his Kruschens?

A newspaper reader has a wonderful recipe for filling the churches. All the parsons need do is to make the service more attractive. They are advised to cut out dry sermons, adopt community singing, select hymns that people like, and have only a five-minute sermon. Only a five-minute sermon! That is not long enough to persuade sinners their soul needs saving, and to put the fear of God into them. And the kind of service which doesn't give the parson an opportunity for doing that, isn't much good to the churches.

The Howard League, aided by the Society of Friends, has been drawing up a charter seeking to put into a kind of code the minimum rights granted by some Governments to their prisoners. The League hopes to get the League of Nations to adopt the charter, and that eventually all nations will adopt it. The charter suggests that prisoners should have the right to be tried within six months of their arrest, and to be represented by lawyers in all serious charges; that their prisons should be well ventilated, and their food good. Children and young people, it is urged, should be separate from older prisoners, and women should be attended by women warders.

Torture should be forbidden. Corporal punishment should be applied only by sentence after conviction. These are not very revolutionary proposals. And that, after nineteen centuries of Christian dominance over Western thought they should be suggested as necessary is a poor testimony to the wonderful humanity the Christian creed is alleged to engender.

The Sunday schools have suffered a loss of 70,000 members in four years. A Mr. John H. Freeborough is deeply concerned about it, and is anxious to discover the cause. The parents of the children of to-day, he says, were mostly scholars in the Sunday School. Yet why is it that they are so little interested that they exercise no compulsion as regards the attendance of their children? The question, one would think, doesn't require much answering. Parents no longer believe in the Faith that their fathers drilled into them so carefully in youth. They not only doubt its truth, but also regard it as useless. And they see no point in having their children primed with what to themselves has proved valueless. These be sad facts for Christians to face. But the blessed consolation and courage of their Faith will no doubt provide them with fortitude, and keep them from lapsing into pessimism, even if it cannot produce a remedy.

Are art, light, and beauty contrary to the teaching of the New Testament, or a violation of Baptist principles? asks a reader of the *Baptist Times*. Our young people, he says, are asking these questions. He appears to imagine that if the Baptist Church will forget its Puritan dislike for art, light, and beauty the young people will flock back to the church. We are afraid they will want something more than these things to attract them. They require first of all to be convinced that the Church's dogmas are not really so silly as they sound to enlightened modern ears.

The Christian creed breeds modesty, if nothing else. The Rev. James Saxton, of Middlesbrough, who described himself as a United Wesleyan Primitive Methodist, told the Free Church Council: "If we let the Sabbath go, then the Church is doomed; and if the Church is doomed, then England will be ruined." In other words, the good egotist wishes us to believe that the prosperity of England depends upon her possessing a horde of reverend parasites, who disseminate ideas germinated in the brains of semi-barbarous Eastern shepherds. There's nothing like having a good opinion of one's value to the nation. But the parson is about the only man who can get people to take him at his own valuation, and provide him with food and clothing for rendering fictitious service. Still, there is one thing we have noted. An increasing number of persons are growing tired of paying the parsonic insurance agent fees for insuring themselves against the imaginary risk of Godly damnation. That, of course, is most regrettable. Such people, as the Rev. Mr. Saxton would agree, are decidedly unpatriotic. They haven't stopped to think that the Church may be ruined by their conduct, and if the Church is doomed, old England will crash.

At the Birmingham Wesleyan Mission there has been a tremendous amount of good fun. So good was it that a pious reporter writes: "The more I hear of such good fun the more I marvel at the mentality of those who think men of faith are gloomy kill-joys." Here is the "fun" that aroused loud and long laughter. A Baptist minister, the Rev. F. C. Spurr, refers to the three successive superintendents of the Mission as "three bare-faced men"; and the Rev. Mr. Wiseman retorts, "We need a Spurr sometimes." That is the kind of wit and humour and good fun you can hear any day when passing a Council school playground. It is essentially adolescent in flavour and quality. It is certainly well suited to the mentality of the men of faith who try to convince the man of adult intelligence that they are not gloomy kill-joys.

The Rev. W. Y. Fullerton objects to the expression "so-called," used by certain papers when referring to Feng, the Christian Chinese general. Feng, he says, might be considered an Old Testament Christian, or an un instructed Christian; but a Christian he certainly is. We are pleased to note this statement. There is in certain quarters a fashion nowadays of referring to Old Testament beliefs as being not Christian. Again, Biblical crudities are being either quietly shelved or re-interpreted, and the result of the manipulation foisted on an uncritical public as the Christian religion. Free-thinkers, too, are sometimes twitted with combating beliefs that Christians do not hold.

We have several times suggested that the epidemic of newspaper articles on religion was not entirely accidental. It would, indeed, have been strange if at the very time when the Churches were at their wits' end to get the public to evince an interest in religion, the newspapers, so keenly interested in exploiting every passing phase of public feeling, should suddenly have thrown open their columns to discussions on that topic. Our suggestion that this was all part of a religious advertising campaign, engineered by the Churches, with the connivance of the papers, appears to get support from a statement made the other day by the English Bishop of Tokyo. He explained that they secured a column, or half a column, in the news portion of a paper, and inserted an article on religion, paid for at advertisement rates. Of course, the readers were not told that it was an advertisement. That would have spoiled everything. So we are left wondering what kind of payment or inducement was given the editors—or proprietors, for editors of the ordinary newspapers count for nothing nowadays—for the booming of religion in the various articles which have appeared.

Meanwhile, may we suggest to the Bishop of Tokyo that when he returns to his diocese he explains to the Japanese how to reconcile the existence of a good and wise God with the recent earthquake, and the appalling loss of life.

Bishop Barnes welcomed delegates of the Free Church Council to Birmingham on March 8, and had things to say about the Bible that must have startled some of them, and which, but for freethought work, would have lost him his post. He said the scholarship of many of the Bishops belonged to the Victorian era and was out of date. "The infancy narratives cannot have the same authority attached to them as the sermon on the mount," although the only reason for this, we fancy, is that the Bishop accepts one and not the other. The fourth Gospel, he added, is a post-Pauline meditation, and not a history, and though Paul was often inspired, "he was sometimes, as in some of his sex teaching, a mistaken child of his age."

But if Paul was not inspired with regard to his teaching about the important subject of the position of woman in the family, why should he have been inspired with regard to other things? In what way was he less the child of his age in the one direction than in the other? As a matter of fact, it is unfair to the better part of the age in which he lived to speak of him as its child. He was not a child of the age with regard to its better intellectual, moral, and social aspects. There were many Greek and Roman writers who were miles above him in culture and outlook. He was a child of the more ignorant superstitionists of the age, and that was all. One cannot conceive a Greek or Roman writer arguing that if there was no resurrection from the dead then decent conduct was of no value, or the scientific and philosophic ones upholding his crude theories of demons and angels.

"The first essential for the ministry," says the Rev. Dr. Selbie, is that a man should be called of God." How this humbug of the parson being called by God is kept up! It begins with the savage, and it keeps on till to-day. "The parson," says Dr. Selbie, takes up his

work only because of "Divine impulse and command," when he knows as well as we do that it is as much a profession, chosen because of the "plums" that are hoped for, as is choice of other professions. Of course, every man who enters the ministry, says he has been called by God, and those who admit him listen to the yarn with a grave face. Perhaps that is one of the tests as to fitness. For when a man can make the statement, and others listen to it, with perfectly solemn faces, it is clear that they are able to carry out all the humbug of the profession without laughing in the faces of their dupes.

Really, when one looks at the clergy, we should not like to slander God Almighty so greatly as to say that he is responsible for the parsons who serve him. And, after all, one ought to be fair. We have no word from God that he did select them. The parsons are the only ones who say as much, and there is no opportunity of testing their word. One would like to get God's word as to whether he is really responsible for the selection of the present-day clergy. We like to be fair, even to gods. And no man has a right to impeach the judgment of God in the way Dr. Selbie does, without proof.

Considering that our hospitals are not yet cleared of men suffering from wounds received in the last war, that £58,000,000 has been voted for the Navy, that publications of our accidents are not desirable, we cannot whoop with the *Daily News* over the League of Nations' report on the White Slave Traffic. This paper states of the report that it is "something that should rouse the whole civilized world to action against this iniquitous commerce." If first things were taken first in Europe, it might be asked how much is paid yearly for the propagation of superstition—plain and fancy, and what is received for it.

We have no doubt that experts on the revision of the Prayer Book will be able to satisfactorily explain the earthquake in Japan with a death roll of 2,500.

Dr. Garvie, addressing the National Free Church Council, appears to be apprehensive of woman's competition. He stated that the equality of the sexes did not mean that women were to try to do everything that men did. We hope that the learned doctor does not think women incapable of doing as well as men in the pulpit.

With delightful innocence the *Daily News* reports the activities of the Presbyterian Pastors' Club in Wolverhampton. In sheer desperation this club announces as an inducement to visitors that there are "no hymns, no prayers, no address, and no interference." The Wolverhampton Free Church ministers thoroughly, we are informed, approved of the determined attempt which is being made to grapple with the question of how best to keep young people from the streets on Sunday night. First, by pressure and other means, there are only two forms of relaxation on Sunday night—the place of worship and the public house. Then comes along this gallant body for dealing with an effect that it has helped to create. We suggest that the Wolverhampton Free Church ministers will be doing as much good by baying the moon, ploughing the sands, or sifting the wind, as trying to have it both ways on the day specially preserved for special interests. And as far as common-sense people can see, there is no difference between walking the streets on Sunday night and any other night in the week.

The utterances of the Bishop of London in New Zealand are just as silly as those that he makes in England. He would not, he said, convict an old woman of committing a sin who had five shillings on the Derby; it was when betting and gambling became an industry that it was the most corrupting of vices. We wonder if this high and mighty self-appointed judge will ever say anything approaching common-sense by accident—he appears to fail miserably by design—or instinct.

The "Freethinker" Endowment Trust.

THE date borne by this issue of the *Freethinker* is the one given for the close of this special appeal. 1926 was a bad year for most people, and all things considered, we have little of which to complain concerning the subscriptions to hand. A much larger number might have subscribed, but the responsibility for their not having done so is theirs. The opportunity was given, and it is for each to say how far he or she will respond to it.

We have still a long way to go to get what is required to complete the Fund, and when we re-open the matter in the autumn we shall all have to put our shoulders to the wheel to get what is wanted by the end of the year. The trustees will, of course, be ready to receive donations at any time, and these will be duly acknowledged in the columns of the *Freethinker*.

All that remains is, in the name of the trustees, to thank those who have responded so well to the appeal made, and particularly those who have promised regular donations until the Fund is complete.

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO DATE.

Previously acknowledged, £1,020 1s. 8d. In Memory of Sir Hiram Maxim, £100; John's Grandpa, £2 10s.; B. Lee, 5s.; E. Kirton, £1; E. Truelove, 10s.; G. A. Harris, £1; O. Baumgarten, 10s.; D. Mapp, £1; R. B. Pelton, 10s.; E. L. Bishop (5th sub.), 1s.; R. Morton Reid, £1 1s.; J. Robinson, 2s.; R. T. Rees, 7s. 6d.; O. Underwood, 5s.; G. Thomas, 5s.; A. Wilson, 10s.; Rustic, 10s.; V. H. S. (9th and 10th subs.), £1 5s.; E. Langrage (Sussex), £1; J. Thackray, 2s. 6d. Total ... £1,132 15 8

Acknowledged, 1925-6	£3,901 4 10
GRAND TOTAL	£5,034 0 6

In addition, we hold the promise of Mr. P. G. Peabody to subscribe £1,000, provided the total reaches £7,000 by December 31, 1927, and towards this we have £200 promised by Mr. H. Jessop, £150 by Mr. C. Bush, and £100 by Mr. W. J. W. Easterbrook—all three, trustees. It will be seen that what remains to be done is to raise another £1,500. And after what has been done, that should be well within our compass.

CHAPMAN COHEN

To Correspondents.

Those subscribers who receive their copy of the "Freethinker" in a GREEN WRAPPER will please take it that the renewal of their subscription is due. They will also oblige, if they do not want us to continue sending the paper, by notifying us to that effect.

W. COLLINS.—We note your correction in the report of Mr. Rosetti's lecture, but the difference between "offers" and "offered" is not enough to alter the meaning of the sentence.

J. TULLIN.—We were not aware that the acoustics of the Pendleton Town Hall were in any way defective. It is certainly a drawback when members of the audience hear only with difficulty. The speaker should be made acquainted with the fact before he goes on the platform. Then he might do something to retrieve the situation.

J. R. DUNCAN.—We are sending on your letter to the writer.

E. TRUELOVE.—Agreed. If all who should help would do so, how easy it would be. We do not suppose that these non-helpers realize that in not helping they are leaving their share to be done by others.

JOHN'S GRANDPA.—In time. Patience and persistency are the qualities that tell in Freethought work.

R. REYNOLDS.—Thanks for articles. We may deal with them later. But Mr. Joad has not yet managed to understand what Materialism really is. He is quite a century behindhand in this matter, although quite able to impress others who are in a still greater fog than himself on that subject.

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

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

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.

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

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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

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

Sugar Plums.

There was a good attendance at the Portman Rooms on Sunday last to listen to Mr. Cohen on "Science and a Future Life." The hall, although not crowded, was comfortably filled, and everyone present, save one, appeared to be enjoying what was said. Mr. Cohen, in response to a request sent, devoted a large part of his address to Spiritualism, and his method of dealing with it was evidently new to many of his listeners. At the conclusion of the lecture there were a number of questions, but none of a very striking character.

The Portman Rooms is very centrally situated, the hall in which the meeting is held is comfortable, well lit, and tastefully decorated. We feel certain that with regular meetings in this locality there would be a steady increase in the number of those attending, and in the influence of the propaganda. Mr. Campbell Everden occupied the chair, and carried out his duties with dignity and efficiency. He made a strong appeal for support for both the general movement and for the West London Branch of the N.S.S., which it is hoped to form shortly. We sincerely hope that his appeal will meet with the success it deserves. There is ample scope in the West of London for Freethought work, and this Branch of the Society should have a large membership. To-day (March 20) Mr. Cohen delivers his concluding lecture, on "The Psychology of Belief."

Mr. Harold Lancaster writes us from Glasgow, that in December last he called the attention of the editor of *John Bull* to the fact that while he was continually calling the attention of his readers to the misleading character of certain advertisements concerning emigration, he yet permitted the Salvation Army to advertise a certainty of employment, "exceptional facilities," etc. He pointed to the well-known money-getting facilities of the Salvation Army, and suggested the need for enquiries. The editor replied that the guarantee given by the paper as to the genuineness of advertisements referred to trade advertisements only, but promised to look into the matter. But the advertisement of the Salvation Army is as much a trade advertisement as that of any of the ordinary shipping or emigration agencies. Anyway, one may assume that the editor's enquiries were made, and the replies were not satis-

factory, for since then the advertisement has not appeared. It is a pity that *John Bull*, considering its fondness for exposing scandals, did not publish the results of its investigations. But British papers will not expose misleading or swindling advertisements when issued by large religious organizations. It is another thing when the advertiser is an individual. He is then safe game.

Mr. Cohen has arranged to visit Liverpool for a special lecture on Sunday, April 10. He will speak in the Picton Hall, and those friends who have written him asking for lectures in the City, may now have an opportunity of lending a hand in making the meeting well known. Judging from previous attendances the hall should be crowded out if the meeting is properly advertised. A large number of advertising slips are being prepared, and if friends would undertake a house-to-house distribution in likely districts much good would be done. Will those who can and will help send in their names to Mr. W. McKelvie, 29 Claremont Road, Seaforth. There will be a number of reserved seats at one shilling each, and application for these should be made to the above address. By request, Mr. Cohen is taking for his subject, "Does Modern Science Support Religion?"

On Sunday next (March 27) Mr. Cohen will deliver two lectures in Plymouth. Local friends will please note.

From Protoplasm to Man.

(Concluded from page 155.)

THE Cainozoic Age, which followed the Mesozoic, and which may have extended over a period of 25,000,000 years, is known as the Age of grass, mammals, and land forests.

There is not much evidence to show that true mammals existed in the Mesozoic Age; but there can be little doubt that the only land creatures that survived into the Cainozoic Age were small mammals, or semi-mammalian creatures.

The important distinction, between mammals and the more primitive reptilian animals, is that the females nourish their young, and protect them until they are able to fend for themselves. They possess a "mothering instinct," whereas the reptiles lay their eggs and leave them to hatch in the sun, the young receiving very little protection from the parents.

The "mothering instinct" is the result of evolution; because, the greater this instinct, the greater the chance for the survival of the particular species in question. The creature that, at this period, had evolved into a true mammal, or most nearly so, and had developed the "mothering instinct" to the highest degree, would doubtlessly be the ancestor of man. It would be owing to the fact that our ancestral species had already begun to cuddle and shelter their young that they would be able to survive the catastrophic close of the Mesozoic Age. On the other hand, the young of the less developed reptilian creatures would perish almost at birth; or else their eggs would be addled and would not hatch.

The fossilized eggs of some of the Saurians that were recently found in the Gobi desert were about 18 inches long.

The Cainozoic Age has been subdivided into five main epochs, namely: the Eocene, Oligocene, Miocene, Pliocene, and Pleistocene; and some of these are subdivided into a number of lesser epochs.

The first, the Eocene, meaning the dawning of recent life, is subdivided into Early and Later Eocene.

The Early Eocene Age, or Epoch, was almost devoid of life; but the meagre mammalian life, which had survived from the obscurity of the Mesozoic Age,

was slowly spreading, evolving, and increasing in size, at the same time. Modern vegetation, such as dry-land forests, and green grass, was spreading over the Earth. The animals were all very small; and there is no visible trace of the progenitors of man in those rocks.

The Eocene was a long and equable period of some millions of years duration; and, during the Later Eocene, the animals had increased greatly in size and number; many having become quite formidable types. The Titanotheres, a species of rhinoceros, grew to an enormous size; often 18 feet in length. And yet in these rocks we find no trace of man, or the "Missing Link." But we are getting "hot on the trail," because, in the strata of the next epoch, the Oligocene, roughly chipped stones, called Eoliths, have been found. And if, during a vast epoch, man, used only roughly chipped stones, there must have been an equally long, or perhaps longer epoch, in which man would pick up stones and sticks and use them.

We can clearly visualise the sub-man of the Later Eocene, picking up stones and flinging them at his enemies; or wrenching a rough stick or limb from a tree and using it for offensive and defensive purposes.

In the Oligocene Age, although we find the first traces of man in the roughly chipped Eoliths, there are still not fossil remains to which scientists can definitely point as being those of man; although there is an abundance of the remains of apes, monkeys, horses, and other animals.

In the Miocene Age, which followed, there was a great crumpling up of the earth's surface; the Alps, Himalayas, and other great mountain ranges, came into existence. That was the last Age in which there were more species of extinct animals than exist at present. And yet, during that long Age, man only continued to chip stones roughly; although he left his mark quite unmistakably in many parts of the world. Still, it is doubtful whether he had arrived at a stage where he could tie a knot, or connect a stone with a handle.

What was the ancestral man, or sub-man, of the Miocene Age like? We can form a number of conclusions from facts that cannot be reasonably disputed. The first outstanding fact is that many of the Eoliths are so heavy and unwieldy that modern man would be quite unable to manipulate them efficiently.

It is evident that our Miocene ancestor must have been a terrible antagonist in combat. He must have been of the size and force of the gorilla; with an absolutely deadly grip by which he could throttle any of the smaller animals; and with a strength which would enable him to shatter the skull of any of the more formidable beasts, by a terrific blow with a heavy Eolith.

The Eoliths also indicate that the ancestral sub-man was not, like the arboreal apes, much addicted to climbing trees, but, rather, that his habitat was, mainly, rocky and precipitous declivities.

If we endeavoured to locate the exact position of Miocene man in the chain of evolution, we would say that he occupied a place just half-way between the anthropoid apes and the lowest types of savages existing to-day.

As yet, fossil remains have not been found which can definitely be identified as those of Miocene man; although the recently discovered fossil remains in South Africa were at first believed to be the actual "missing link."

The most important difference between man and anthropoid apes is that the aperture, through which the spinal column enters the cranium, is at the bottom of the skull in man; and almost at the back of the skull in apes.

It was reported that the opening in the cranium of the South African fossil was half-way between that of modern man and that of the great apes; which would be in exact agreement with the theory of evolution.

Other Miocene remains, found mostly in Asia, are the *Dryopithecus*, a creature with a very human-like skull. If it was not the ancestor of man, or, perhaps more correctly, the sub-man, it must have been very closely related to him. There were also some varieties of apes that were very closely related to man.

But in the rocks of the Pliocene Age which follows, and in which small chipped flints first begin to make their appearance, there is to be found an abundance of the remains of the *Pithecanthropus Erectus*; which certainly may have been the true ancestor of man, or the sub-man; although many pseudo-scientific writers, especially those of religious bias, have endeavoured to prove the contrary.

But, whether the *Pithecanthropus Erectus* was, or was not, the ancestor of man matters little; because the true man must have been very similar.

Finally, we come to the last epoch of the Cainozoic Age, called the Pleistocene. This epoch is estimated to have lasted 500,000 years. The greater part of it is also known as the Early Palaeolithic Age. The majority of the species that lived in this Age exist until the present time; and the rocks abound in records that cannot be mistaken, or misunderstood.

During this period there were four glacial epochs. Four times the ice barriers crept southward towards the equator, until half the Northern Hemisphere was covered in glacial ice that piled up against the great mountain barriers of the Alps, Himalayas, and Pyrenees. Then each time the ice receded, inch by inch, year after year, but always after each glacial epoch man advanced a little, took one step forward, stood a little more erectly.

It took a hundred thousand years to perfect the unpolished beaked flint and tie it to a stick; and then, in the next interglacial epoch, it required another hundred thousand years to acquire the skill to polish the flint. And, again, it took still another hundred thousand years to make a hole through the polished flint and insert a handle.

At this point, the Palaeolithic epoch gives place to the Neolithic; but, during the whole of the Palaeolithic Age, remains have not been left which have been, willingly and universally, accepted as those of the true ancestral man.

But, the same people, who have laughed loudest at the *Pithecanthropus Erectus*, who have ridiculed the Heidelberg jaw, known as *Homo Heidelbergensis*, and the Piltdown skull, known as *Eoanthropus*, or the dawn man, and who were even prepared to cast doubt on the Neanderthal man, were quite ready to foist on the gullible public the Biblical tale of the Garden of Eden as solemn truth; and to endeavour to persuade them that man, perfected and fully equipped, mentally and physically, was turned loose on the world some eight or ten thousand years ago by an all-powerful Deity.

It is only when we arrive at the Neolithic Age, which follows the fourth glacial epoch, that we find an abundance of the remains of *Homo Sapiens*, remains which are, unmistakably and unquestionably, human remains.

Even then the evolution of man proceeded exceedingly slow. It required twenty or twenty-five thousand years for Neolithic man to begin to cultivate land, to use domestic animals, and to begin to make written inscriptions.

With the first written inscriptions, prehistoric man begins to give way to historic man; and, from that

time to the present, the evolution of man has been accelerating and gaining momentum, with occasional spurts and occasional retrograde movements, until, within the last century or two, man has made gigantic strides in science and inventions; and has also progressed, in only a slightly less sensational degree, both mentally and morally.

If man continues to advance in the same sensational manner as at present, it is almost inconceivable to what heights he may ultimately climb.

What are the lessons that we should learn from the facts of evolution?

Having traced the ascent of man from remotest time, having observed the source whence he comes, we ask, "whither goes he?" Is he a helpless pawn on the chess-board of Time? Or, can he help himself? Can he, to any extent, shape his own destiny? Why does man advance? Or, why does he remain stationary? Why does he sometimes even retrocede?

If we look back across the silent ages of antiquity, across a thousand million years, and visualise the pageant of life throughout that long and ever-changing panorama, we shall look in vain for one glimpse of anything resulting from any supernatural power, for one act, or one whisper, of an omnipotent God.

There is one lesson that is plainly discernible; the commingling of races and nations means human advancement. On the other hand, a race that becomes isolated from the outer world stagnates and remains stationary. The struggle for existence is the primary factor in all advancement, in the evolution of all living creatures.

Australasia was cut off from the rest of the world at a remote period; probably after the fourth, and last, glacial epoch. All the animals that remained there were of a peaceful nature. There was nothing comparable with the lion, the tiger, the cobra, or the rattlesnake.

And what do we find? The Australian, or Australasian aborigines, generally speaking, were of almost the lowest type of savage in the world. They needed no clothing, no shelter. Food was not difficult to obtain. Even the birds had no necessity to fly, and many of them lost the use of their wings. The Emu and many other large birds, now extinct, had long ago become quite unable to fly.

The various great civilisations of the past grew up around the natural meeting places of the nations, such as the mouth of the Nile, the coast of the Mediterranean, and the valley of the Euphrates.

China was, at one time, the meeting point of many nations, and became the most advanced country in the world; but when the great Chinese wall was erected, rigidly shutting out all outsiders, China ceased to advance, and remained stagnant and stationary for a thousand years.

England made great strides only when she became a maritime nation; and, lately, Japan has begun to follow in her footsteps.

Every country in the world has poured its tribute of knowledge into the melting-pot of America.

Remove the artificial barriers of language, religion, and frontiers, and man will advance.

Every time that man makes any considerable advance, the gods perish and their temples crumble; and new gods, with slightly improved characters, are substituted for the old.

The ignorance of a people may be gauged by the extent of the powers which it attributes to its gods. As man's knowledge and enlightenment increase, the gods must dwindle and fade away; because "God" means "the sum total of human ignorance."

ONA MELTON.

Strange Tales.

A PORTION of the history of Abraham, the father of the faithful, has been broadcast recently on a Sunday night. May I go further, and suggest that several scenes from his career be filmed in the interest of British pictures?

That little affair when the trail was blazed at Sodom would satisfy the most sensational.

Abram was a good man—for the most part. It is difficult to be entirely free from guile; but Abe did his best. For centuries, it has been counted to him for righteousness that he left Ur of the Chaldees and trekked south, "not knowing whither he went." It was an act of faith on his part—same as one might say of Peary, or Scott, or Amundsen, or about Columbus, or stout Cortez who, "with eagle eye," first looked from a peak in Darien.

In the ancient times, Jahveh took a more personal interest in his followers. It was possible to arrange a private interview. You could deal with him first hand. Perhaps it was because priests were scarcer. There were not enough to go round. At the building of Babel, for instance, Jahveh came down and discussed the situation. Frankly, the people were in danger of invading his kingdom. If they kept on long enough they might have sufficient bricks to reach Sirius. It would never do. Therefore the original language was broken up; divided up among the nations.

Heaven seems further off now than it did when I was a boy.

What a pleasant picture that is when Abraham received the heavenly messengers on the plain of Mamre! The old gentleman—he had almost reached the century—was resting in his tent, during the heat of the day, when he noticed three men. They were either the Trinity or its representatives. In any case they had come on important business. Sarah, in her nineties, was to have a child.

No wonder Abram went "all out" in the way of hospitality. Sarah prepared three measures of fine meal, while her old man killed the fatted calf, and a youth dressed it. The calf was tender and good, and the menu comprised butter and milk. The picnic took place under the old chestnut tree.

Sarah was dubious about the possibility of her offspring. She was really past her best, and she laughed at the notion. Abram had also smiled when he was told before, but he had the good sense to bow himself to the ground, disguising his merriment.

The three strangers, however, were vexed at Sarah's hilarity, and exclaimed "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" This was a clincher, and Sarah had to be satisfied.

Sarah, herself, hardly deserved this consideration, when we remember her dealings with Hagar. As she herself, had proved barren up to ninety, she advised her Sheik to increase the population by means of Hagar. That is why Ishmael arrived, who was afterwards turned adrift with his mother and nearly famished in the wilderness. No wonder his hand was against every man. He could have little respect for Sarah.

At least twice Abram tried to palm off Sarah as his sister. This was to save his own skin. He generally made a "good deal." His stock of camels and oxen was augmented, and he had quite a lot of asses in his train.

He did very well in that little expedition against Chedorlaomer. A man with a name like that was capable of anything, as Voltaire said of Habbakuk. "Ched" got more than he bargained for when Abram donned his war-paint. Result, more asses.

Lot was really a bad Lot. He had every chance,

but he mixed up with those disreputable Sodomites, and was only saved by the skin of his teeth. Lot and his daughter have a lot to answer for. They were responsible for the Moabites and the children of Ammon.

Lot's wife was, like most women, notoriously inquisitive. Like Eurydice, in a similar tale, she must needs look back on the great fire. Consequence—a fossil. There has never been, since, a scarcity of a useful condiment in that region. Ladies take heed!

On the whole Abram had a good time. He always kept his eye on the main chance. Apparently liberal, he somehow managed to score with his generosity. He very nearly broke the entail on Mount Moriah; but he made amends by the romantic wooing of young Rebekah. Jahveh helped him in this, as usual, for she was brought out to water the camels and the asses at the right moment. Courting is a pleasant pastime, assisted by Jehovah. No comely girl can refuse.

Abram died at the age of 175. He had a good innings. Isaac and Ishmael were both at the funeral at the cave of Machpelah.

ALAN TYNDAL.

Books and Life.

MR. H. L. MENCKEN has taken to heart the saying that "reverence is fatal to literature." In his *Americana*, 1926 (Hopkinson, 7s. 6d. net), he has gathered from the world's press a collection of imbecilities, which, when they are printed separately in the various newspapers, are not noticeable to any great extent. In the bulk, however, as Mr. Mencken presents them in his book, they make one sit up and take notice, and realise that the millennium will not be this year or next. They provide good hearty laughs which are the only antidotes known for foolishness, as there is no satisfaction in proving people to be what they are. The author has swept his searchlight over the world, and also that part of the United Kingdom known as Ireland, where he discovered the spread of the New Morality in Portadown, Ulster. At this place, the Rev. W. P. Nicholson is reported as having appeared in the pulpit with his trousers rolled up to his knees, and his arms and chest bare, just to show girls how they appear when they wear short, sleeveless, low-neck frocks. In Japan he chronicles the miraculous effect of missionary effort among the heathen with the report of a Japanese girl's life being saved. Her admirer, whom she had refused, plunged a dagger towards her heart, but she was not injured, as she was carrying a Bible in her kimono. America receives the lash, and a reading of the various reports confirms the opinion that there are people at large in a more backward stage than Fundamentalists. From the *Ruisley Graphic* we learn that boys are forbidden in McPherson to play marbles because it teaches them gambling. No! the new Jerusalem is not here now, nor will it appear next year.

At four for a shilling—the price of new laid eggs—we came across a mild antidote to the disease in America chronicled by Mr. H. L. Mencken. In the Ten Cent Pocket Series, edited by E. Haldeman-Julius, we acquired *The Significance of Georg Brandes*, *The Humour and Wisdom of Abraham Lincoln*, *My Fellow-Traveler*, by Maxim Gorki, and *A Guide to Spinoza*, by Will Durant, Ph.D. Originally issued as a Ten Cent. Series, evidently England has bought them up, or, they have been sent as a propitiatory gift for the light comedy of Tennessee. In size, they are about five inches by three and a-half, and the net has been cast far and wide, for there are many volumes included for which the Englishman will look in vain for their equal at the price. The late Georg Brandes paid up to the hilt for his determination to lift literature above the level of an academic gown, and for his efforts to be one of the first Europeans. The shadow of Abraham Lincoln still haunts the atmosphere where the destiny of nations is decided—and this is concrete evidence of the only immortality we know. The world would not be an intolerable place

if, at present, it possessed fifty like him. *My Fellow-Traveller* shows Gorki in a curious light—his slavery to a Georgian prince who exploits the writer—although the author is aware of it—and allows it, through one of the virtues so nobly sung by Chaucer—pity. Mr. Will Durant vigorously praises Spinoza—a figure in history that is a question mark. In *Faith, Ancient and New*, an article by Mr. F. J. Gould, that recently appeared in this journal, the writer stirs the question by asking one, "Why do men and women who live without the doctrine of God work for the good of the world?" A tentative answer would be, "Because of man's loyalty to his own species." Perhaps a Russian proverb will be as near the mark as our own: "Everyone is a brother to another against his own will." And, to bring this paragraph to a close, and in praise of the spirit of Spinoza to be found in the judge, we record the following for the benefit of Freethinkers who allow their opponents to state the case for Freethought. A counsel, in order to illustrate his argument, said: "May I put it this way, my lord? If I saw you going into a public-house—" "Coming in," corrected the judge; "if you saw me coming into the public-house."

Blake, that erratic genius, wrote that truth conveyed in allegory was the highest form of art. Æsop's Fables have found readers of all ages, and the fables of La Fontaine have more than a speaking acquaintance with endurance for all time. A volume of Krylov's *Russian Fables* (published by Jonathan Cape, 30 Bedford Square, W.C., 7s. 6d. net) has a distinct flavour of the oppression that flourished in Russia under the reign of Nicholas I, and the author was forced to use his wits to circumvent the miasma of autocracy. He portrays the official world in characters of beasts of prey. The translator, Sir Bernard Pares, has given his work a certain raciness, and barebone simplicity, that carry the reader along to the moral. With the wriggling and squirming at present of ecclesiastical interests, the fable entitled "Fox" is in the nature of being prophetic:—

To see this fable's point, I think you will not fail.
A hair just here or there the fox need not bewail,
If only he can keep his tail.

A glance through our own provincial newspapers will show the reader that they are well established in the process of the particular fox keeping his tail, and that we are only on the fringe of the period that counts culture in other terms than those of an elaborate report of the opening of a Wesleyan Bazaar, or the "hallowing" of a cathedral. The publishers of these stories for young and old are to be congratulated on their courage, and we trust that the response will be such that they will render other little-known Russian works accessible to those English people who do not think it a coincidence that they are like the peoples of other nations.

What a curious figure is Rousseau! What a bundle of contradictions! Yet what power of condensation he had! His few words on Atheism do not equal those of Bacon; he sets out an imaginary picture of what Atheism means and proceeds to demolish it. Not many readers will need to have pointed out the fallacy in his description of the atheist, who by his attitude to the great question, cannot enjoy and comprehend the beauties of Nature. The great French writer seems more at home with truth in *Emile*, and, in brilliant brevity, he gives a counsel of perfection to those who quarrel with a feather bed: "while tilling the earth we are shaking up our mattresses." In this easy manner of simplifying he is rivalled by Emerson. A vivid phrase of the American philosopher gives us a two-eyed view of a question in "Farming." Writing of the farmer he states: "The sunstroke which knocks him down brings his corn up." And, in revisiting *The Story of My Heart*, we find Jefferies, the Nature lover, answering Rousseau: "Those who have been in an open boat at sea, without water, have proved the mercies of the sun; and of the deity, who did not give them one drop of rain, dying in misery under the same rays that smile so beautifully on the flowers." Here as elsewhere Jefferies has two eyes, but the demands of faith require no more equipment than that of Cyclops.

WILLIAM REPTON.

Govan's Demand for Secularism.

SOME people have the notion that Govan is a place where the whole population is Red, sees Red, votes Red, and lives Red. Instead of which it is a grey, grimy sort of place for the most part, where great ocean liners have been built and where more will be built in the near future. True, it has voted "Red" very consistently for some time; but that seems to have made little difference. When the "Twelfth"—of July, not August—comes round, there are only Orange and Green to be seen. Saint William of the Boyne displaces more modern Saints in the hearts of the people, and incidentally, causes a reversion to more primitive conduct. Govan has about 25 churches, numberless mission halls, Gospel shops, and of course, the Salvation Army. We must not forget the Army; they don't forget us, even at a mile's distance. But, with all the religion, militant and otherwise, there is a desire among the youthful churchgoers to hear something other than *Gospel* truth. Some months ago the Glasgow Secular Society was invited by the Young People's Union attached to a Congregational Church to send someone to tell them about Secularism. Needless to say, the invitation was accepted, and Mr. Win. H. MacEwan was sent down. A Police Court missionary was put up to lead the opposition, but not being prepared for Mr. MacEwan's onslaught, he must have wished himself somewhere else before the finish. Even the elderly clergyman who moved the vote of thanks—he had been *such* a bad lad till he found Jesus—was constrained to admire the knowledge of the Scriptures shown by the lecturer.

Mr. MacEwan again represented the society recently at St. Kieran's Church Literary Society, and spoke on "Can man by searching find out God?" (As one who has heard Mr. MacEwan often, the present writer would like to ask him why his best performances are reserved for the Kirk folk and not for his "ain folk"?) Opposition here was poor; poor indeed. One man didn't think there was much in Spencer's theories! He thought blood sports such as fox and otter-hunting were useful in so far as they provided employment for a large number of people. But his ramblings were as nothing when compared with those of an elderly Scotch draper, who told of selling a pair of blankets to an old woman who paid for them; then said she got the blankets because she prayed to God from Sunday to Thursday.

There is no doubt that Mr. MacEwan's visits to Govan have stirred up interest and made some of the young people think.

Some of us now know why Govan needs 25 churches, etc., etc. Perhaps some day we will hear Govan asking if it is getting value for the money it spends. May that day be soon!

AUTOLYCUS.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—In the comments which you made in your issue of February 6, you make a reference to myself which I purposely ignore. Your innuendo, however, that Ferrer was a victim of the Catholic Church demands more serious attention. The execution of Ferrer was carried out in accordance with Spanish law after a lengthy and careful trial. But for my present purpose it is sufficient to emphasize that H.H. the Pope sent a telegram to H.M. the King of Spain pleading that Ferrer should not be executed, and this despite the fact that Ferrer had been a most virulent opponent of the Church in all places and on every possible occasion.

Apart from that it cannot be denied that during the time he lived in Spain he was practically never molested by the Government or the Church, although, as Archer says: "There is no doubt that his teaching was not merely anti-clerical, but anti-religious."

No impartial person can doubt that Ferrer was not merely a Rationalist or an idealist dreamer, but an active revolutionary. In 1905 he wrote to Leopoldina Bonnard: "... So long as our ideas are markedly revolutionary it matters nothing. . . For the present,

we will content ourselves with introducing ideas of destruction into brains." In 1885, some twenty years before, he emigrated to Paris because, as he stated in an article which he contributed to *Espoca Nueva*, June 16, 1906: "I had compromised myself in the rising of Santa Coloma." Nor were his methods beyond reproach. Pupils that came to him for lessons in Spanish were subjected to being imbued with his ideas. Before he could get one lady into his toils he says he had to wait two years before starting or permeating her with his propaganda. He was ultimately rewarded by a legacy of the annual income he had actually asked her to leave him.

The scene in Barcelona in 1909 must have been revolting to anyone with the least human feelings. For three days there was rioting and pillage. Armed bands traversed the streets intent on destruction. Over 50 schools and ecclesiastical buildings were burned, and an attempt made to proclaim a revolution. This was his work, and that was the offence for which he was executed, *viz.*, what we should term treason.

His prudence was apparent even in the work of directing the movement. In a letter to Dr. Odon de Buen, he asks: "Do not, I beg, make use of my name, which must be kept in the dark. Nevertheless, and about this I will have a talk with you, I am always ready to help forward the coming of the Republic." His presence and complicity in the rising at Barcelona and district was sworn to by nineteen witnesses. He was in request by the revolutionaries at Masnou, and they were told that Ferrer could not come "because his presence was required in Barcelona on more important matters."

There has seldom been a case in which the proof of treason was more overwhelming, and for that, in my opinion, he was rightly executed. But, in any case, it was a political issue, and one that affected the Spanish Government qua; it had no connection with the beliefs or disbeliefs of Ferrer. W. P. MARA, Hon. Sec.

Westminster Catholic Federation.

A DISCLAIMER.

Sir,—Entirely comprehensible, at such a busy time, was the omission to send me a proof of my article, "A Secularist's Paternoster" for correction.

But I am sure you will kindly allow me a little space to disclaim the consequent alterations of my MS (in punctuation, etc.), for which I am not in any way responsible. F. E. MACAULAY.

Society News.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH.

Councillor Batchelor's interesting address on Socialism and Religion was listened to attentively by a small but very alert audience, and a brisk discussion followed, in which we were pleased to note several ladies took part.

To-night, Mr. E. G. Smith, of the National Society for Lunacy Reform will open a discussion on the Abolition of Capital Punishment. Though the abolition of capital punishment is one of the immediate practical objects of the N.S.S., some of our members are not absolutely convinced that it would be a good thing. We hope all the unconvinced will make a point of attending and expressing their views, which will materially add to the interest and usefulness of the meeting.—K. B. K.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY.

A large audience gathered to hear Mr. D. S. Currie lecture on "The Making of an Atheist," on Sunday last. There seemed to be many details of an autobiographical nature, with many "pawky" remarks interspersed. Part of the speaker's youth was spent in the Salvation Army, and his humorous picture of the penitent form and the manner of being "led" there was well received. One of his stories of the "Army" deserve a wider audience.

To-night (March 20) there is a debate between Mr. J. R. Raeburn (affirmative) and Mr. W. Munro Thom (negative) on "Is Evolution True?"—E. H.

SHOTTS BRANCH.

On Sunday last we had with us Mr. F. Mann, of Glasgow, who gave an interesting address on "Was Jesus Christ a Socialist?" Mr. Mann was in great form, and there were many interesting questions following the address. Three new members were made as a result of the meeting. Our lecturer next Sunday is Mr. W. H. McEwen, of Glasgow. Subject, "The Meaning of Secularism."—C. H.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (101 Tottenham Court Road): 7.30, Mr. E. C. Saphin, "Pagan Purgatory." Thursday, March 24, 7.30, Mr. L. Botting, a Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.5): 7.30, Mr. E. G. Smith (National Society for Lunacy Reform), "Should Capital Punishment be Abolished?"

PORTMAN ROOMS, 59 Baker Street, W.1 (entrance Dorset Street): 7.0, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "The Psychology of Belief." Admission free.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11.0, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit., "Is Believing a Bad Habit?"

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (30 Brixton Road, S.W.): 7.0., Discussion; opened by Mr. A. G. Lovell.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7.0, Harry Snell, M.P., "British Guiana: Its Problems and Peoples."

OUTDOOR.

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): 11.30 and 3.0, Messrs. Botting and Hart.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Brassworkers' Hall, 70 Lionel Street): 7.0, a Lecture by Charles Gaskell Higginson, M.A., M.D., "A Nineteenth Century Teacher—John Henry Bridges." Doors open 6.30. Collection. Questions and discussion cordially invited.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY, Branch of the N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, "A" Door, Albion Street): 6.30, a Public Debate, "Is Evolution True?" Affirm., Mr. J. R. Raeburn; neg., Mr. W. Thom. Questions. Silver Collection.

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY—A Grand Carnival Dance will be held at the Queen's Gate Hall, 40a Harrington Road (near South Kensington Station), Thursday, March 31, 7.30 until 11.30. Admission by ticket, price 2s. To be obtained of Mr. J. Jones, 9 Victoria Grove, Kensington, W.8 All Freethinkers cordially invited.

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