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Views and Opinions.

The Benefits of Advertising.

Some years ago Mr. Israel Zangwill wrote an account of the way in which a number of journalists manufactured a character out of nothing at all. The story was as follows: About half a dozen journalists were discussing how easily some reputations were made. Eventually they decided that they would make a celebrity of some fictitious personage, the only condition being that the assumed person was never to be credited with anything other than the most blatant of commonplaces. So they set to work. Whatever they were writing they managed in some way or another to introduce the name of Mr. Blank. The references were always introduced by some such expression as, the brilliant Mr. Blank remarks, the most striking of our living writers remarks, Mr. Blank points out in his inimitable style, Mr. Blank says, with that rare combination of superb imagery and profound thought, etc. After this had gone on for some time other journalists, not wishing to appear unacquainted with Mr. Blank, began to repeat some of his alleged sayings. Gradually the habit spread, until eventually, without there being any such person existing, the name of Mr. Blank became well known to the ordinary reader, he was quoted in all sorts of connections, and the journalists had done all they set out to do. Of course, the story was only a satire, but in essence it is being done and has been done. It is an example of what may be accomplished by advertising. Tell the public the same thing often enough and the public will believe it. And once the general public believe a thing, there will be found plenty of those who live on and by the public to pretend they believe it also.

* * *

Cackle About Christ.

I was reminded of this essay of Mr. Zangwill by a paragraph in one of the daily papers announcing that on January 25 the Men's Morning Schools—whatever they may happen to be—commence a special course of study of Jesus Christ. The announcement was followed by a column of the usual kind of thing to the effect that after all these centuries there is no name so powerful as that of Jesus, none whose life will so well repay reading, etc. That kind of thing is written by the yard, and when it is not written it is preached. The preacher or writer is never very

precise, he knows that is not necessary. The people are used to hearing this kind of thing about Jesus Christ, and are impressed because they are used to hearing it. A lady once explained that she used a certain kind of soap because all the advertisements spoke so well of it. Christians are convinced that of all teachers Jesus is the best because all the advertisements say so. It never dawns upon them that they who write these advertisements are interested in the people accepting them. Nor does it occur to them to enquire precisely what benefit to them the nebulous figurehead of the New Testament Jesus is. They never reflect that when preachers speak of the life of Jesus Christ no such life exists, nothing but a few fragmentary utterances which even if accepted at their face value cannot pretend seriously to be a "life." They do not realize that they are being—if I may coin a phrase—Zangwillized. A handful of moral platitudes, usually too general to be of any use to anyone, and a miracle or two such as is common with all legendary religious figures are not enough to make a "life." There is no more a life of Jesus than there is a life of Osiris or of Adonis. There are only a series of fancy sketches drawn by a number of writers who have made "Jesus" stand for whatever they care to make of it.

The Jesus Myth.

In strict truth there is no single historical Jesus Christ, nothing but a string of figures which have borne that name. When the modern Christian talks of Jesus which one does he mean? Does he mean the miracle worker of the earliest believers? Does he mean the man who came to announce the end of the world? Does he mean Jesus the celibate, the man who walked with devils and fought with them? Does he mean Jesus the Anarchist, Jesus the Communist, Jesus the revolutionist, Jesus the respectable Socialist, Jesus the non-resister, Jesus the preacher of obedience to constituted authority, Jesus the social reformer, or Jesus the incarnate deity who taught men to have no concern with this world's affairs, but to think only of the next world with its possible alternatives of heaven or hell? As a once actual living character Jesus cannot have been all of them, as an historical name he has been them all with many more unnamed. But the fact of his being so many different persons to so many different people, the fact that people can make him what they will, is proof of his uselessness as a teacher or as a guide. What is the use of a teacher whom everyone understands in a different sense? What is the use of a guide post which sends those who read it in different directions? It is possible, of course, for a teacher to touch on so many aspects of life that one student will learn one lesson and another student a different one. But these different teachings are not contradictory; they are complimentary. In the case of Jesus the alleged teachings are in direct contradiction to one another. Jesus has not made men think as he would have them think, men have made Jesus say what they wished him to say. The Jesus of the New Testament, as

exemplified in preaching, is what Martin Luther called the gospel of James—a veritable nose of wax to be twisted this way or that as fancy or interest dictates.

* * *

The Roadside Preacher.

Putting on one side all the preacher gush and gabble about Jesus let anyone seriously ask himself what he can make of the character of Jesus as presented in the New Testament. And let him answer, not in the light of the advertisements about Jesus, but in that of a plain reading of the New Testament itself. What then emerges is a figure quite familiar in the East even to-day, but never familiar in the West, and it is therefore made the more of. The peripatetic religious teacher despising the things of this world, preaching God and the next world, and living on the alms of the people is quite familiar in the East. The roadside fakir is common in India to-day, and in him we have the nearest approach to what may have been the historical background of the New Testament "life." He is there with all the intolerance of the peasantry from which he usually springs. The New Testament Jesus is never a step intellectually in advance of the most ignorant around him. He is on a level with them as to the belief in demons, in miracles, in complete ignorance of natural laws. The other day Canon Barnes said that civilization stood in danger of being swamped by the growth of folk-beliefs of "hoary antiquity." I have said the same many a time, but these folk beliefs, the growth of which Canon Barnes laments, received the sanction of the New Testament Jesus. While I write the newspapers are publishing accounts of the Adventists in America, who are getting rid of their property and giving up their occupations because they believe the world is coming to an end on February 6. But it was Jesus who taught that the world would come to an end, and it was one of the beliefs which his followers held most tenaciously until it was disproved by experience. Canon Barnes says it is "intellectually intolerable" to believe that a piece of bread can be changed into the body of Jesus. But more than half the Christians in the world believe it to be possible, and in any case the belief is not more intellectually intolerable than many of the others associated with Jesus Christ. It is not intellectually more intolerable than the belief in a virgin birth, in a resurrection from the dead, in devils causing disease, or in blindness being cured by spitting into a man's eyes. The world does not retain these beliefs because Jesus originated them, they are very much older than he, but they have the sanction of his name for holding them, and we wonder what the Men's Morning School will make of them.

* * *

What Has Christianity Done?

What has the world really gained from Jesus? I do not mean by the question what do Christians say the world has gained—to take that answer as satisfactory is to rely upon the advertisements. Ah, they say, he taught men to love one another. It is true he is reported as saying so, but along with this went the other teaching of salvation by faith in him, which has caused more hatred than any other single teaching during the last two thousand years. Openly to teach men to hate one another is fairly harmless. Human nature is so built that it cannot carry it out on any general scale, and for any length of time. But to tell men to love one another while at the same time implanting other teachings that lead to undying hatred is a far more possible plan. It is always easy to gratify the worst in man under cover of an appeal to the best of which he is capable. And at any rate the whole course of history proves that Christians

have never ceased to distinguish themselves for the ferocity of their hatreds, and the intolerance of their character. Mohammedanism has managed to gain its followers a reputation for sobriety. Christianity has among its followers some of the most drunken peoples in the world. Buddhism, with an older history than Christianity has kept its followers splendidly and uniformly tolerant. The intolerance of Christians is a byword with all. There is still needed in communities where Christianity has reigned for centuries societies for protecting children from the brutality of their parents, for the protection of animals from the cruelty of their owners. There is not a single moral or intellectual quality which it can be said Christians possess in a marked degree. And still the gabble about Jesus goes on. And still we are told that so many millions look to him for guidance, that he is still the greatest influence in the world. It is all the soap advertisement, the Zangwill experiment over again. It would have succeeded equally well with the mythical King Arthur, or with Jack the Giant-killer, had the same policy been pursued. Modern thought has very nearly settled the belief in God, in miracles, in a special providence. It now requires a little more courage than the average publicist appears to possess to kill this myth of an ideal Jesus. There is no real Jesus. There is only a lay figure on which anyone who cared to do so has hung his own fads and his own prepossessions.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"What Christianity Costs."

DR. T. R. GLOVER is Public Orator at the University of Cambridge, but not an ordained minister of the Gospel. His father was a celebrated Baptist clergyman at Bristol, and his son, though a layman, is a zealous Baptist, and theology is evidently the subject he loves best. He is President of the Baptist Union, and in that capacity he often preaches and delivers religious addresses. On a recent Thursday afternoon he spoke at the Bloomsbury Central Mission on "What Christianity Costs," of which a full report appears in the *Christian World Pulpit* of January 15. As a sample of the truth of his subject he tells the story of an Indian whom he had met at Bangalore who was a Christian and who had the courage to have Christian family prayers with his family every day. Being himself a confirmed Baptist he felt obliged to ask his Indian friend if he had been baptized, and without a moment's hesitation the answer came, "No, he had not, he did not think it necessary." The natural inference is that it cost that Indian a great deal to be a Christian, though he lacked baptism. But Dr. Glover, believing in the importance of baptism, hastens to add:—

When I get back to the real old Church I realize that the Church was made in the old days by people who took the risk and were baptised; and I ask you to think of what it meant. You read stories of the early Church, of the martyrs; there, on Easter Sunday, the man, clad in white, renounces the Devil and his angels, that is, the gods of his fathers, the false gods, and is baptised in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He is anointed, and at that moment there is a noise without, the Governor's troops march in, and he is hauled away from his baptism; before the end of the week he is in the arena, a leopard or a lion has been let loose on him. And I can recall as I have read, and almost seen it, a whole crowd in the amphitheatre shouting hatred at him, jibing when the leopard tears him to pieces. The Church of Christ was made by men like that, who took all the risks there are for Christ.

That is an interesting as well as true story, but no peculiarity whatever attaches to it. Anaxagoras, a celebrated Greek philosopher of the Ionian school, who flourished B.C. 500, went to Athens at the age of twenty, and remained there for thirty years. In due time he became a teacher, and among his disciples and friends were the illustrious Euripides and Pericles. His religious views, to which he gave great prominence, were so offensive to the Athenian people that he was charged with impiety; and had it not been for the irresistible eloquence of Pericles in his defence he would most certainly have been put to death. The case of Socrates is another glaring instance of a great man suffering injustice at the hands of a public who utterly misunderstood and grossly misrepresented him; and he actually did drink the hemlock and die. Coming down to Christian times we find how quickly the persecuted developed into the most cruel persecutors the world has ever known. As soon as they gained sufficient power they began to practice the black art of destroying their opponents. Dark beyond description are myriads of the deeds committed by the Church in the name and for the imagined glory of its Divine Head. Is Dr. Glover really proud of the Church as he reads its history as related by such truth-loving and fair-minded men as Milman, Schaff, and others of the same stamp?

In reviewing one of Dr. Glover's books in the *British Weekly* some years ago, the late Dr. Robertson Nicoll charged the author with expressing inadequate and erroneous views as to the nature and object of the Cross. Whatever those false doctrines were it is beyond a doubt that the Cambridge Public Orator makes marvellous claims for Christ in the following passage:—

There is only one Person who really has a constructive policy, who has any light to throw on the way out of chaos, in getting all these places right, and that you know quite well is Jesus Christ. Here you have Catholic and Baptist standing side by side, but never mind us; we are only saying: What are you going to do about Jesus Christ? That is the central question. Here is Jesus Christ, what do you make of him? What are you going to do about him? There is his work unfinished. After two thousand years he is still calling people not only to be interested in him, not to think there is something in what he says, to call him clever, to shy adjectives at him, or even theological definitions; he is calling for men and women who are going all the way with him wherever it leads; whether it leads, as in his case, to a very literal cross, or as it did in the case of some of his intimate friends to burning alive, and wild beasts, or whether it leads to losing one's job, to incurring the ridicule of one's friends and relations, and the various things that are sufficient to put us off. Our message would not be complete, and it would not be true if we left out just this, that the only way out of chaos for the world and for you, the chaos inside you and outside, the only way is the unreserved following of Jesus Christ.

Now, this is mere rhetoric run wild. Dr. Glover does not inform us wherein Christ's constructive policy consists. It is all very well to tell us that the way out of chaos into order and light is by going with Jesus Christ all the way; but the fact to be faced is that for the last two thousand years Christendom has been inhabited by people who have consistently professed to be followers of the Lamb, and yet the lamblike qualities have never yet shone serenely in human life. Even to-day the Church is not made by men and women who are conspicuous examples of serenity, purity, and love, nor is it made by men and women who are wholeheartedly devoted to the mission of making the world a happier place to live in. Can anyone contemplate our exist-

ing anti-social classes without falling into despair regarding the future? Human brotherhood is as yet but an empty dream. And this deplorable state of things exists after two thousand years of Christianity. And yet Dr. Glover assures us that if we follow Christ far enough all will be well almost immediately, and that is the Gospel that has been faithfully preached throughout all the Christian centuries, with the results so well known to us all.

Dr. Glover cannot get away from the notion that the costliness of Christianity to its true professors is greater than that of any other religion in the world. He says:—

Jesus Christ asks more of men and women than any other founder of a religion in the world. There is no religion that is going to cost men and women more than the Christian religion. I think that is one of the reasons why men follow Jesus Christ, because his claims are so tremendous; asking for the whole man, his intellect, his body, his soul, his humour, his deftness of hand; every gift.

Dr. Glover does not enter into details, well knowing how absurd and impossible some of Christ's claims certainly are. Here is one: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me" (Mat. x, 37). Here is another: A man was anxious to follow Jesus, but said, "Lord suffer me first to go and bury my father; but Jesus saith unto him, Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead" (Mat. viii., 21, 22). The late Archbishop Magee used to say that there are two or three sayings in the Sermon on the Mount, which, if put into practice, would destroy social life in a few days. The truth is that if a man solemnly resolved to become a thorough-going Christian he would have to cease to be a man. Man is the highest and noblest being known to us, but when he becomes a follower of Christ he abandons his earthly citizenship and degenerates into a miserable pilgrim through the earth from one eternity into another, in the latter of which, after death, he is to dwell for ever more.

J. T. LLOYD.

Pious Peter Pans.

Open your mouth, and shut your eyes, and see what Zeus shall send you.—*Aristophanes*.

Christians send missionaries into foreign lands to teach observances which they supersede at home.—*Landor*.

WHAT should we do without the Anglican bishops? They are things of beauty and joys for ever. Their presence brings laughter to a jaded world. Wearing dresses of the sixth century, their contrast with ordinary folks brings colour and romance into life. And, like Peter Pan, they never grow up. At sixty years of age they repeat, with the solemn assurance of a parrot's recitative, the ideas they assimilated at sixteen. They are chartered libertines, too. Other men would be booted off the stage for less, but the bishops' sacred profession saves them from so sad a fate. Take, for example, the Bishop of London. From the far-off days when he left the slums of Bethnal Green for the salons of Mayfair he has provided much jocund copy for the newspapers. To the delight of sceptics, and the amazement of the devout, he has aired his views on so many subjects, from the churching of women to the Darwinian Theory. Some of his heroics ought to be commemorated in stained glass in Westminster Abbey. Future generations should admire the emblazoned figure of "Londoniensis" straddling across a gun-carriage, and, in full canonicals as a minister of the Prince of Peace, usurping the functions of a recruiting sergeant. What humility, too, there would be in a picture showing the bishop explaining to a crowded female congrega-

tion that the greater his stipend the nearer he was to the Court of Bankruptcy. Truly, if the bishop has missed the pains of martyrdom, he has added to the gaiety of Britain, and deserves a heavenly reward.

It is a beautiful idea that as the torch of humour is dropped by one bishop, it is seized immediately by another. Perhaps this is the real meaning of the Apostolic Succession. As "Londoniensis" waxes old, the Bishop of Chelmsford rises, youthfully, to the occasion. Speaking at the Islington Clerical Conference in London, he said: "We are faced with a recrudescence of Paganism," and we are living "on the edge of a precipice." Then he added:—

A great politician laughs at ideals. A sudden strike or lock-out upsets an industry. A girl commits suicide after a dance. All these things are a part of the self-same intricate situation.

Money is scarce. Unemployment seems to have become permanent. Marriage is a problem, or is postponed. The struggle for existence is fiercer than ever, and the result is immorality, immersion in pleasure, and callous materialism. The pagan gods are fighting for their own again, and they seem to be fighting with the odds in their favour.

Let us examine this statement of the Right-Reverend Father-in-God. The Bishop takes the view that Britain is going to the dogs. That is really what his jeremiad suggests, stripped of its emotionalism. The bishop takes a few highly-coloured instances, and proceeds to argue a generality from them. The Bishop's predecessors at this amusing pastime are "as thick as leaves in Volombrossa." Prophets and poets have tried their hands at it, and their methods are as far asunder as Jeremiah and Juvenal. Many of the evils complained of in those far-off days are with us still, and will be with our successors. There may be the British equivalent of the decadent and weary Roman aristocrat who rushed from the town to escape the endless round of pleasure, and returned from the country to avoid its rustic monotony. It is quite easy to reply to the Bishop of Colchester, line by line, and rectify his mistakes of omission and commission.

This country cannot go to the dogs whilst it possesses enormous natural resources, and a people capable of work. Even supposing that the worst that the Bishop dreads should happen, and the Church of England be disestablished and disendowed, still this country would be no nearer bankruptcy and ruin. Even supposing the coal royalties and ground-rents now taken by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, were transferred to the national purse, it would be a decided gain to the people of this country. If the Bench of Bishops was removed from Parliament, it would be no loss to the community, but an enormous advantage to the cause of Progress and Civilization.

The great politician is, plainly, Lord Birkenhead, and why should he not scoff at the ideals of his opponents? His frankness, so unlike the wholesale hypocrisy of so many politicians, is to be commended. Sudden railway strikes did not ruin the industry, nor vitally affect the nation. Even the police strike was a storm in a teacup, and generous treatment of the men is a capital method of preventing a renewal. A great nation, such as Britain, rises superior to such matters.

"A girl commits suicide after a dance." But hundreds of thousands of girls go to such functions, and do nothing of the kind. "Money is scarce," wails the Bishop, but it is a habit that money has always had. Unemployment is dreadful, but so it was in the "hungry forties" of the past century, and the nation survived it all.

Marriages still take place in Britain, but more and more do they take place before a civil functionary instead of a priest. As for the so-called Pagan gods, they are still on the shelves of the British Museum,

and show no signs of taking boxing lessons from Jack Dempsey or Bombardier Wells.

Prince Hamlet found something rotten in the state of Denmark, but Chelmsford's Bishop apparently finds everything rotten in Britain. Why this atrabilious accusation? The underlying reason, we think, is that the Bishop is really alarmed at the state of the Anglican Church. Like St. Paul's Cathedral, it still preserves a massive and imposing front, but its foundations are no longer secure. For instance, in the Diocese of London alone, there are half a million lapsed communicants. Nineteen City Churches are derelict, and too many other places of worship show a beggarly array of empty benches. There is a shortage of curates, and a multiplicity of bishops, the latter being more ornamental than useful. The Church's hold on education is relaxing, and to-day she controls only 25 per cent. of the elementary schools, and this with difficulty. The Church no longer influences national life to the extent she did a generation since, civil marriages, which the Church frowns at, are on the increase, and the holiest festivals of the Church are viewed with growing indifference by large numbers of the community.

Present-day Britain is not decadent, nor rotten, but the Church is both. The Christian Religion, in the last analysis, is based on the ideas of ascetic, ignorant priests, twenty centuries out of date. And the Church which seeks to emulate apostolic simplicity is simply marching back through the Middle Ages to the twilight of the Ages of Faith. Such decadents must, inevitably, be out-numbered by the wholesome, ordinary people living in this country of ours. This is not a recrudescence of Paganism, but common-sense in action. Civilization has been defined as the making of civil persons. It cannot be contended, seriously, that the making of educated citizens is helped by a priesthood in our midst which is rooted in superstition and educated in outworn ignorance. Even Christians have to learn in the world what they ought to have learned at the feet of their so-called pastors and masters. And would have learned were it not for the bigotry of the priests, who, learning nothing and forgetting nothing, despise progress in all its forms and manifestations.

MIMNERMUS.

Papini's Christ.

GIOVANNI PAPINI'S *Story of Christ* was received with rapturous applause by the religious community in this country upon its translation into English. Papini, the erstwhile opponent of religion, had, like another Saul, renounced the devil and all his works, and now lay, nay grovelled, at the foot of the Cross.

Even the daily papers—not usually given to boosting theological works—spread themselves on Papini. His portrait, which might have been mistaken for that of a brigand, if the name had not been attached, appeared everywhere, with particulars of his life and habits galore.

In the United States the reception of the work was still more effusive—as might have been expected in a country where the teaching of evolution is expressly debarred in many colleges. In a recent canvass, as to the most popular books, Papini's headed the list.

This was all very heartening to a Christian world staggering under the inroads made by modern science upon the foundations of the faith. Here apparently was the turn of the tide, the precursor of the long looked for revival of religion. Papini, the unbeliever, had actually cast away the wretched rags of reason and freethought and had written a book in ecstatic glorification of Jesus. If one infidel had renounced his rationality, others might follow his lead, the

Churches again become crowded, the picture palaces turn into little Bethels, the jazz bands join the Salvation Army, and the beauty choruses adopt Salvation bonnets. Halleluiah!

But, alas! There has been a rude awakening from this pleasant dream. Papini has been unmasked, he is a wolf in sheep's clothing disporting himself within the fold. Under the specious cloak of Christian humility he hides the villainous features of a Bolshevik. We should not be at all surprised if his real name does not turn out to be Papinsky.

This latest revelation of Bolshevik perfidy is not the discovery of some evilly disposed and disgruntled Atheist. No, it is the deliberate conclusion arrived at by a highly placed official of the Established Church, namely Prebendary A. W. Gough, who publishes his revelation to the world in the *National Review* for last December.

It is a clear proof of the workings of providence that the good Prebendary discovered the vile plot of the infamous Papinsky, we mean Papini, when he did, or we might have had Bolsheviks and Communists spouting at Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's, and, in the case of St. Paul's, at any rate, the building is not in a condition to stand any shocks. He complains of "its (Papini's *Story of Christ*) countless mis-statements of facts; its ignorance of the customs and conditions of life in New Testament days; its fanciful and disordered mysticism, and its uneven literary qualities." But this may be regarded as only the Prebendary's fun, because these are the outstanding qualities that distinguish all theological literature. No, we may be perfectly sure that no Christian, still less a Prebendary, would have attacked the work on such, to a Christian, frivolous grounds; the real reason is the last one given in the list, "the socially subversive energy which inspires it." To many, plaintively remarks the Prebendary, "it will be difficult to conceive how the Christian Religion can have this destructive turn given to it. But Papini—to the delight apparently of our Christian Socialists—achieves to do it." And this is how, according to the Prebendary, he sets about his task:—

First, he represents Christ as the essentially typical "poor man—strictly, absolutely, infinitely poor"—who "desires poverty, weds poverty, extols poverty"—who is, in fact, obsessed with a partisan enthusiasm for poverty and a fine fury against everything else. Next he presents Him as the assailant of property, determined to be the destroyer of all "rulers"; the proscriber of all the masculine and dignified virtues, and the overthrower of superior ability of every kind. His teaching is sounded out as a call to men to overthrow Society, not by using armed force but by setting themselves against "nature"—"contending against nature instead of obeying its dictates"—subverting all values of civilization and motives of progress, abolishing all punishment of crime, and exalting weakness and unworthiness to privilege and reward. All business and thrift, and material power are to be set aside in favour of a saintly régime—without soldiers, judges, police or rulers.

Certainly this programme should satisfy the anarchical figure he has invented for us. I may add that in its issue it would satisfy the Arch Foe of the Christ of the Gospels.

Fancy that! A Christianity without soldiers, judges, police, or rulers." Probably the villain would not even stop at Prebendaries, and then where should we be? Really the man ought to be condemned to be preached at by Prebendaries for the rest of his natural life, it would not be long, we cannot conceive of any worse punishment. "But what a wild perversion this presentment is!" cries the Prebendary. "Surely even 'Copec' and its Socialist bishops must feel some qualms tempering their thrills as he follows this mystical Communist?" "Do they not see," he

says, "that his doctrine is utter anti-social, mystical damnation; that such a Christ as this were no Saviour of mankind and giver of life, but rather an enemy preparing Humanity for enslavement and death?"

We have always been taught to believe that Christ was a typically poor man. His father was a carpenter. He was born in a stable. There is a familiar picture of the flight into Egypt, with Jesus on the donkey and Joseph trudging alongside with a big stick in his hand, to keep the donkey on the move with. Then, later on, we have his own express declaration that: "The Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." And his denunciations of the rich. We have read many sermons, but we have never read one in which any other view is presented. Many of them dwell at great length upon his poverty.

But our Prebendary will have none of that. He asks:—

Why this emphasis on poverty? Christ was by no means an extremely poor man or "vagabond"—as he calls Him—nor were His disciples utterly impecunious people. The Apostles had their boats and homes; two of them at least were employers of labour in their fishing business.....certain well-to-do women "ministered to Him of their substance"—which someone had worked for—and the ordinary needs of the little band, when they were in the neighbourhood of the Sea of Galilee, could be met—if their purse became exhausted—by pushing out the boats or casting a line from the shore.

No doubt the Apostles put their boats on wheels and dragged them about the country with them. Unfortunately, for this part of his argument, the worthy Prebendary, later on, to support a different point, cites the Apostle's statement: "Master, we have forsaken all and followed Thee. What shall we have therefore?" Which rather gives the argument away. As for Christ's remarks about "The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." He dismisses it as only a bit of Christ's fun; or, to use his own words: "It was a shrewd humorous touch that shook off an undesirable Scribe," and what Papini describes as his "vagabond" life, the Prebendary says, was adopted because it "accorded with His evident liking for walking."

Papini bases most of his "subversive doctrine," says the Prebendary, on the "Sermon on the Mount"; but this, he observes:—

is not a code to be generally obeyed. Any large community adopting it rigidly would destroy itself, unless some other community practising real Christian ethics and possessed of common sense, came to the rescue.....to base the policy of a nation on such instances—even to base the ordinary daily life of an individual upon them—would be no adoption of Christian ethics, but a sure way to its destruction. No nation—least of all a wealthy Empire like ours—could show itself to the world so and enjoy the disciples' immunity from violence and robbery.....If we put off the armour that has won liberty and justice and hope for many peoples, and adopt the "Copec" policy of non-resistance, we shall not be acting as disciples of Jesus Christ. We shall invite the pirates once again to sail forth from their lairs, and be taking the devil's side against the humanity for which Christ died. We shall be crucifying the Son of Man afresh.

This is only repeating the declaration of the late Bishop of Peterborough, Dr. Magee, when he said: "It is not possible for the State to carry out, in all its relations, literally, all the precepts of Christ, and the state which attempted this could not exist for a week. If it were possible to do this the result would be a perfectly intolerable tyranny." No, says the Prebendary, "the words of Christ to the British Empire as it faces the forces of decadence and militant Bolshevism is: 'He that hath a wallet, let him take it.

And he that hath no sword, let him sell his cloke to buy one.' " Our Prebendary does not say whether he is prepared to carry out this command literally; we have never seen a Prebendary armed with a sword, and when that occurs, as Cowper said of John Gilpin: " May I be there to see."

W. MANN.

(To be Concluded.)

A Budding Religion.

A SHORT time ago I had the pleasure of attending a meeting of the local Burns Society. The crowd was enthusiastic and cordial. Our service began, as was fitting, by the gathering singing a piece from the works of our hero, to wit: " Ye Banks and Braes and bonny Doon." This was rendered with rare fervour, and another pagan besides myself expressed disappointment that the word " Amen " was omitted at the close. The sacred name of Burns was repeated with affection and a bated breath suggesting the ineffable.

I remarked to the " minister " afterwards, " Here you have a new cult that is bidding fair to replace the faith in the shadowy Galilean. In two hundred years from now it is safe to predict that the reigning cult of our time will be relegated to a second place, and will be professed by such only as gave it a start in Rome nearly two thousand years ago." To this my friend seemed to assent, and replied, " Wherever the world over there are a few North Britons there are branches of the Society of Robert Burns."

One could not but reflect on the similarity of circumstances that gave rise to the two rivals: Jesus was born in a stable, Burns under the same roof as gave shelter to cows. Both were of poor parents, and each for a while followed his putative father's humble calling. They both, it seems, liked preaching better than work. Both frequented the company of lovely females and both seemed to have an affinity for Marys. It is not recorded that those of Ayr ministered to Burns of their substance as the ones of Judea did to Jesus. It was said of Jesus that " he came eating and drinking, and we know that Robbie liked a lass and liked a glass.

Both were despised largely by their contemporaries and both afterwards entered into glory. Both too, were rebels against the authorities. Jesus said, " Go and kill that fox." Burns spoke contemptuously of " the edict race," the Brunswicks. Burns was employed in the liquor business. Jesus began his mission by making wine and gave important information on bottling the stuff.

It is not certain that Jesus was married, although an obscure passage in Matthew viii., 14, seems to speak of " his wife's mother." Then there seemed to reign a regrettable looseness of morals amongst the associates of both. Scotland can scarcely be pardoned for this, as it was under the rule of the austere John Knox and his kirk. Jesus we know had for his companions the woman at the well, who had—as he de-vised—" had five husbands." " The mother of Zebedee's children " and " Mary Magdalen out of whom went seven devils," are samples.

Then, like Burns, Jesus " had pity on them that were out of the way, since he himself was touched with a feeling of their infirmities." We are told likewise how that Jesus " was tempted in all things," " yet "—the writer adds—" without sin." We are glad of this and cannot but regret that he did not foresee the rôle that posterity would assign to him because in that case his company might have been more select.

G. W.

Victoria, B.C.

Acid Drops.

It comes as a kind of comment on our " Views and Opinions " in last week's issue that the new Dean of Manchester should have been unburdening himself on the heinous offence girls commit when they use a powder puff in public. A writer in the *Evening Standard* enquires why the dignified clergy do this sort of thing? Well, what are they to do? If they talk pure theology no one is greatly interested. And there is the additional danger that if they venture on this course the stupidity of Christian doctrines will become manifest to many who do not at present realize this. If they say something really sensible on social matters they are bound to give offence to certain established interests, and that is the last thing an astute clergyman would dream of doing. All that is left is to go for some quite harmless practice, or to denounce—in general terms—some evil which all deplore, never venturing, of course, to be too precise in the direction of indicating a cure, and if they can say something startling, whether true or not does not matter, they are fairly certain of notice in the press. And as the average layman never appears to expect a clergyman to say anything that is either true or useful, everything is quite all right.

Of course, the public, particularly the newspaper section of it, is responsible for this state of affairs. Once upon a time the medicine man was a very important member of the community. He attended to the weather, he was responsible for the harvest, he cured disease, he secured men and women a comfortable place in the next world. In this way the priest built up the reputation of a great man with enormous power and unapproachable wisdom. And now that the priest does none of the things he was once supposed to do, now even though we all know that his real value is nil, and his wisdom a negligible quality, he is still enjoying the benefits of a past reputation. People continue to talk of him as though he knew more than others, as though he were better than others, and as though he is of more use to the community than others. And the parson takes full advantage of the situation. He delivers the opinions of a schoolboy with the gravity of a philosopher, and with a fourth-rate ability lays claim to first-class honours. When press and public treat these medicine men as what they really are we shall be done with the ridiculous sight of mediocrities such as the Dean of Manchester, Bishop Barnes, and others of a similar kind posing as the nation's leaders.

The Manchester I.L.P. is upset at the action of the Watch Committee in forbidding the sale of tickets for their Sunday meetings. It admits that the Committee is acting in accordance with the law, but says that " it is, in a sense, an interference with freedom of speech." Of course it is, but that is just what the law was intended for. It was intended to prevent discussions of heretical subjects. It was a typical Christian law. The Watch Committee has no special powers or privileges in the matter. A prosecution can be commenced at any time by anyone who cares to do so.

We must confess to a certain pleasure in thus finding the I.L.P. up against Christian bigotry. That body has so pandered to Christian feelings, and has been so fearful of offending Christians and their barbarous opinions, it is well that the members should recognize the kind of person they have gone out of their way to pacify. One of the local leaders said that the party is up against the position of having to fight the authorities or break the law. For so law-abiding and so respectable a body we have no doubt that the latter is a terrible alternative. But in this respect the N.S.S. has never hesitated. It has never hesitated at breaking the law, and the authorities, knowing the kind of opposition they would have to face, have declined to take action. Perhaps, also, the present situation may lead some of the I.L.P. members to realize that if they are really going to do much they will have to fight Christianity. For it is Christian super-

stitution and Christian bigotry at the back of these laws. Freethinkers have always known this, and have always fought them. And but for what Freethinkers have done such bodies as the I.L.P. would find existence much harder than they do find it.

At Manchester the cinema proprietors are asking the Watch Committee for permission to open on Sundays. As we have often pointed out this is one of the things which the Watch Committee have no power whatever to deal with. They can neither forbid or permit. It is barred by statute. What the cinema proprietors can do is to open and tell the authorities to go to the devil. And if they only had the courage to make a stand they might bring this ridiculous Sunday law to an end. But while they act as they do act the law will stand as it is, until Freethinkers have managed to put a few more nails in the coffin of Christianity.

Dr. David, Bishop of Liverpool, has discovered that congregations have been offering poor stuff to God in the matter of hymns. He states that: we have no business to be offering as praise to God anything mean or tawdry in music or in words." One tale is good until another is told. The truth would appear to be that congregations have reached the point when they are ashamed to sing the stuff that was born at a time when a man could be hanged for stealing a sheep. Against their own wills Christians progress—and we wish them luck in the process.

Commenting on the eclipse of the sun, the *Daily Herald* writes:—

No one in these islands, we take it, will be frightened, or will feel called upon by prayer or gong-banging, or magic, to save—in the manner of more primitive man—the sun from destruction by the black dragon that threatens to devour him.

If the Labour daily would cultivate this sensible attitude of mind towards the Pope and his stock-in-trade, it would find that Rome was the institution that stood in the way of a study of the science that, to again quote the *Daily Herald*, enables "the youngest schoolboy to know that 'first contact' at 2.52 will be followed by 'last contact' two hours later."

Flammarion, in a matter-of-fact style, informs us that Halley's comet appeared in 1456, three years after the capture of Constantinople by the Turks. It was taken as an omen of divine anger, and Pope Calixtus resuscitated a prayer that had fallen into disuse, the *Angelus*, and ordered that the bells should be rung each day at noon, that the faithful might join at the same hour in prayer against the Turks and the comet.

The Bishop of Birmingham (Dr. Barnes), recently addressed the Rotary Club on "The Decay of Civilization." Was it possible, he asked, to maintain a general standard of rational thought and to impose a continuance of a well-ordered civilization on the less developed human stocks. The question, he continued, could not be answered with a hasty or easy affirmative. If we bred barbarians, who, whatever their veneer of culture, had neither a patient desire to discover truth nor a willingness to accept loyally the truths discovered by others, our last state must inevitably be worse than our present. We should like the bishop to explain how it is possible in a community that is still largely saturated with Christian notions, to "maintain a standard of rational thought." His own experiences must have proved to him, with unpleasant emphasis, that about the most uncomfortable thing anyone can do in our Christian civilization is to follow his reason when it runs counter to the age-old superstitions that are enshrined in the Church. The bishop is too shrewd and too well acquainted with modern thought and science seriously to believe that "a patient desire to discover the truth" or "a willingness to accept loyally the truths discovered by others" can co-exist with the Christian religion, which places a premium upon blind, unreasoning, stub-

boru faith in certain absurdities that would really disgrace the intellect of an intelligent child. But we fear that Dr. Barnes is one of that not inconsiderable number who are prepared to pay lip service to human progress, and are prepared to slate the average uneducated citizen who believes vaguely, but at least sincerely in certain ridiculous ideas which they themselves have shed, and yet are not prepared to risk a comfortable existence by coming out openly and telling their fellows the truth. It does not require a high degree of moral courage to offer a mild criticism of the older form of the Christian faith to such a body as the Rotary Club. It would require courage to address popular audiences, and tell them quite frankly that the Bible is merely folk-lore, and the best of its ethical teachings are of very little value in the face of modern social problems.

We are always insisting in these columns that the Christian is usually prepared to identify his creed with any social movement or ideal that seems to be popular, and likely to give his religion a free advertisement. A big meeting at the Central Hall, Westminster, called as the result, it is stated in the press, "of a spontaneous movement among Christian social workers shocked by the revelations of London's housing scandal," illustrates what we are often saying. The Bishop of Southwark who presided declared that "our slums to-day are a blot upon our civilization and a scandal to our Christianity." Miss Maude Royden said that "their consciences were stirred because in this nominally Christian country it was absolutely impossible for thousands of people to know what home really meant." And other prominent Christians spoke on the same lines. Now we don't question the sincerity of these people. Some of the speakers have fine records of social work. But what we should like them to explain to us is this: What has Christianity to do with the housing shortage, or social problems generally? If by Christianity we are to understand the teachings contained in the New Testament, then it is essentially a system of ideas relating to "spiritual" things. It has no concern with human welfare in this life. It consists of certain metaphysical teachings concerning existence after death, together with detailed instructions for individual salvation. There is plenty about the salvation of the individual soul; but nothing concerning social salvation, or social progress in this world. One might as well seek to base social principles upon the *Arabian Nights Entertainments*, or *Grimms' Household Tales*, as base them upon Christianity.

The fact of the matter is that the founders of Christianity had a sublime disregard for human happiness here. They anticipated a speedy second advent, with the end of this world. And so they hated or despised the civilization into which they had been born, and the social system that gave them food and clothing and housing, and the amenities of life. Social reform and social ethics made no appeal to their warped minds. The one great thing was individual salvation. Most of their fellows were pre-destined to suffer unspeakable torments through all eternity, and the Christian's first and last task in this life was to escape that appalling fate. This life was but a kind of examination of the individual soul; and according as one did well or bad in that examination, one would enjoy eternal felicity or eternal torture. Men and women under the influence of such a baneful, selfish belief could no more busy themselves trying to make human life easier and happier than a Papuan savage could appreciate the subtleties of the Differential Calculus. One glimpses even in the New Testament the fact that Christianity was an anti-social force, a force that made for the development of an egregious selfishness, and the ultimate disruption of society. And the work of patient historians such as Lecky and Draper have made it very clear that primitive Christianity was anarchistic, and one of the forces that helped in the disruption of the Roman civilization.

If space permitted we might go down through the ages showing how always and ever Christianity has been

in essence an anti-social factor in human affairs, the cause of bitter strife, and the great bulwark of every reactionary institution that has ever cursed the world. And we suggest, therefore, to those sincere people who make a habit of thinking in idea-tight compartments, that they should really consider what social value Christianity has. Not what *they* understand individually by Christianity, but that system of ideas represented by the Bible and the creeds. Then, we think, they will be compelled either to give up their religion, or to cease to interest themselves in social reform.

When dealing with the Christian Fakir Hickson we pointed out that Jesus was not the only one that could miraculously cure disease. It depended upon the kind of disease and the amount of faith one had. Now we see that some people are getting cured through contact with the tomb of Lenin. We do not know what those Bishops who are backing the Hickson and Jesus combination will make of it, but we are not in the least surprised. If we could only work up enough faith in people suffering from the right kind of ailment we would undertake to cure as many as either Lenin or Jesus with some back numbers of the *Freethinker*. We are the last person in the world to question the power of faith—given the right conditions.

From India a reader sends us a copy of an advertisement of the Sarvavi Jaya Kavachi talisman. It is accompanied by testimonials from people who have been cured of malaria and influenza, and have secured situations, etc. They run Hickson very close, and the talisman is very much more comprehensive in its effects. Perhaps this and the case of Lenin, along with the people who carry a potato about in their pockets for the cure of rheumatism, are also examples of the truth that you do not kill superstition by getting rid of one of its forms. There is a type of mind that will have some superstition or other, and the man who understands this ceases to wonder at certain people running after spooks, or reasoning against one branch of the Christian Church as a prelude to joining another one.

Seven bishops sitting in solemn conclave have now finally decided that Bishop William Montgomery Browne, of the American Episcopal Church, is a heretic, and have formally and irrevocably cast him out. We take it there is no question of his heresy (readers of his *Communism and Christianity* will have no doubts on this head) and we do not imagine that the verdict will cause Bishop Browne to sleep less o' nights. Bishop Browne put up a very spirited defence, his aim being, not to prove that his views were in accord with orthodox Christian teaching, but that he had a right to interpret the Christian religion—or as much of it as he cared about in his own way. And that way left nothing of genuine Christianity worth bothering over. From what we saw of the reply to the charge of heresy Bishop Browne's aim appears to have been to compel the Church to recognize his own views as being consonant with his still remaining a Bishop, and thus shock the orthodox and divide the Church, or by its pronouncement ostracise as many men of education and intelligence as are left to it. As the trial was widely noted in America, and Bishop Browne saw to it that full reports of the trial were available to all, we should imagine that the Church authorities are by this time sorry they did not leave Bishop Montgomery Browne alone. They have only served to advertise the absurdity of their views, and the widespread nature of the beliefs which the Court condemned. It should be said that Bishop Browne has neither preached in the Church nor drawn a salary from the Church for years. He gave up officiating when he ceased to believe. Had he been built on the lines of an ordinary parson, he would have gone on disbelieving—in private. That is one of the beauties of all trials for heresy. It can only punish those who are honest enough to let their heresy be known. The rogue and the liar are unaffected. It is small wonder that honesty and intelligence are diminishing quantities in all the Churches. They reap as they have sown.

During an examination of a witness at Clerkenwell, Judge Parfitt said: "Heaven knows what has taken possession of people's minds since the war; they don't seem to follow the simplest things." With publicists like the Bishop of London and Gipsy Smith, the modern level of intelligence would naturally be reflected in cross-word puzzles, and the above judicial statement is a mine of information on the stupidity of looking at effects and shutting the eyes to causes.

We are getting on. The *Daily Mail*, in announcing the eclipse of the sun on January 24, gives Biblical references from the Books of Kings 2, xx., 2, Jeremiah xv., 9; Ezekiel xxxii., 7; Amos viii., 9; Matthew xxvii., 45. The sonorous language of the Bible in the references are as impressive as legal documents—in sound, but when their meaning is examined it is a different pair of shoes. If one may judge the progress of mankind by the atmosphere of words, let him read the references quoted, and place by their side the following bald, scientific statement: "In North America the eclipse will be total. A naval airship will be used to obtain astronomical data." In the meantime, priests must bite their finger-nails in rage that they cannot make the announcement with the usual formula: "Thus saith the Lord."

The Dean of Durham has been drawn into a controversy, and it is amusing to notice his efforts to justify his salary of £3,000 per year. In an argument with the N.U.R., we have no doubt that he will raise sufficient side issues to conceal the real ones. He can sufficiently and conclusively have his hash settled by being asked to go on strike together with his whole army—the result would not make any difference to the baking of one loaf of bread; or the shutting of one railway carriage door. In fact, it would be a strike with domes of silence on it—nobody would notice it, and he could give £2,750 to the poor.

Chronology, through Sir Arthur Keith, flings a brick at the reckonings of those who start from Genesis. Lecturing at the College of Surgeons he told his audience of the finding of a skull in a limestone kopje in Barotse-land. This skull proved the existence of a race of men dating back to the Pleistocene period—at least more than 100,000 years ago. In reporting this, the Press unconsciously shorten the period of waiting for the burial of the Christian religion.

In the *Romance of Empire*, Sir Phillip Gibbs relates a story about the Maoris who were beaten in one battle because, through the "Christianising" they had received, they retired from their entrenchments on the Sabbath to hold a religious service. They were attacked on the Lord's Day by Christians and suffered defeat. The romance in this story will take a lot of finding, and, after this eminent writer's first-hand knowledge of the last war, we think, in justice to himself, and for the sake of humanity, he ought to leave romance to the "pictures."

Mr. Burrows, who is assistant controller and director of programmes to the B.B.C., has recently published an interesting little book on wireless (*The Story of Broadcasting*. By A. R. Burrows. Cassell, 3s. 6d.). He touches interestingly on many subjects connected with wireless, and makes one curious suggestion. Is it possible that by wireless means we may be able to render spirit forms visible—if they exist—by a process of reversal from some ultra-visual plane on to a visual one. X-rays can render tangible, visible matter practically invisible, so why not the reverse process? Well, it is an interesting speculation, which Mr. H. G. Wells might work out in another scientific romance. And since according to the spiritualist—both Christian and non-Christian—this world is swarming more thickly with spirits than it is with disease germs, there should be no difficulty in capturing a few specimens. Perhaps even we might get a few angels, and some of the patriarchs.

The National Secular Society.

THE Funds of the National Secular Society are now legally controlled by Trust Deed, and those who wish to benefit the Society by gift or bequest may do so with complete confidence that any money so received will be properly administered and expended.

The following form of bequest is sufficient for anyone who desires to benefit the Society by will:—

I hereby give and bequeath (*Here insert particulars of legacy*), free of all death duties, to the Trustees of the National Secular Society for all or any of the purposes of the Trust Deed of the said Society, and I direct that a receipt signed by two of the trustees of the said Society shall be a good discharge to my executors for the said legacy.

Any information concerning the Trust Deed and its administration may be had on application.

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.

D. H. D.—Very many similar letters have been sent to the B.B.C. But up to the present they have not had the slightest effect. The clergy appear to have captured that as an instrument of propaganda. The lesson appears to be that of keeping on making Freethinkers, and also to get them when made to let their opinions be as widely known as possible.

W. A. ELVIDGE—"Simon Simple" already has the whole of Bolingbroke's works. Thanks for offer.

H. R. WRIGHT.—We do not know of any proof that Southey was at any time of his life an Atheist.

S. DOBSON.—We are pleased to learn that Mr. Willis has so good an audience at his Birmingham meeting, and that the outlook for the rest of the season is decidedly good.

A. LONGFORD.—We cannot advise any special method of approaching Christians. Much must depend upon the kind of person one is dealing with. Ridicule does the trick with one, a severe argument with another. But you would probably find a pamphlet such as Ingersoll's *What is it Worth?* of use with most. Mr. Cohen's *Essays on Free-thinking* deals with several of the points you raise.

A. FRASER.—We must take the will for the deed, although for your sake we should have been glad to have received better tidings.

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

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

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.

A good report of Mr. Whitehead's recent lectures in Weston-super-Mare appears in the *Weston-super-Mare Gazette*. The writer of the report notes the good attendance and the spirited discussion that took place after each lecture. Freethought is making its presence felt in Weston, and, we presume, as a counterblast to the meetings that have been held a course of lectures on "What Secularists ought to Know" is to be delivered at one of the Churches. This is an obvious reply to Mr. Cohen's title, "What Christians Ought to Know," and we venture to suggest that the best place to tell Secularists these things would be at one of the Freethought meetings. Freethinkers are always pleased to know anything that can be known, and as Mr. Cohen will be visiting the town shortly there will be an opportunity for some of the local clergy to distinguish themselves.

Many of our readers will be interested in a meeting which is to take place at the Queen's Hall on Friday, February 6. The announcement of the meeting is headed "Dare Doctors Think?" and is intended as a protest against the opposition to those qualified medical men who do not agree with established medical practices, but who are often made to suffer for their heresy. The circular advertising the meeting says that while religious tyranny is happily a thing of the past, medical tyranny is growing. The latter statement may be true without its making the first one so. Unfortunately there is a great deal of religious tyranny in this country, although it is not of the open kind that once prevailed. And as there are large numbers of medical men who do not say what they know to be true about the Churches and about religion because of the effect it would have on their practice, they will be quite able to judge of the truth of what has been said.

We are as much opposed to a medical tyranny as we are to tyranny in any other form, and if medical science is to retain its high traditions there should be perfect liberty within its ranks. There can be little doubt that the recent case against Dr. Hadwen at Gloucester ought never to have been brought, and a doctor, with the consent of the patient, should be permitted to pursue whatever treatment he thinks best, without being exposed to obloquy by his brother practitioners. It is only in this way that we can be sure of the best being done, and unorthodox ideas getting fair play. We see that Dr. Hadwen is to be one of the speakers at the Queen's Hall meeting, and Mr. H. G. Chancellor is to occupy the chair. Admission is free, but there are seats at 1s. and 2s. 6d.

The Glasgow Branch will meet to-day (February 1) at 6.30 in No. 2 Room, City Hall. The speaker will be Mr. Hale, who will take for his subject "Education; a Programme for the forthcoming Election." Judging from recent letters which have appeared in some of the Scotch papers the education question is likely to become more acute on the other side of the border than it is at present.

We are glad to hear that Mr. Corrigan had good meetings in Manchester on Sunday last. On Saturday, January 31, the Branch will be holding a children's party at 3 o'clock, and a social for the elders, with a dance, at 7. Old and young will be catered for, and a large attendance is expected.

Apropos of a recent note in these columns, Mr. A. Frazer, Box 32, Carmangay, Alberta, Ca., would be pleased to welcome any Freethinkers in his neighbourhood.

There is no answer to prayer, and there is no revelation of any kind except through nature, whose forces seem to be self-existent and eternal.—Mrs. Clara M. Bisbee.

Ethics.

II.

A DISCOURSE FOR NURSES AND CHILDREN—Continued.

YOU may remember, nurse, that in our last friendly chat I promised to return to a consideration of the use of the word "foundation" as applied to ethics, intimating that its use in such a connection was misleading. The difficulty arises in its metaphorical application. Now, a material foundation has one quality, and one quality only, and that is to support whatever kind of edifice is reared upon it. Of course the word is used in many secondary senses, as when we speak of a person being the founder of an institution. In this case the institution is said to rest, and rest for ever upon the person's initiative, and the meaning is perfectly clear. And just as the foundation of a building is absolutely indispensable to its stability and security, so its figurative use in this case helps to illustrate the dependence of the institution upon the original labours of its founders. Now, Arthur Lynch out of quite a number of alleged foundations of ethics selects three as being the principal ones—the authoritative, the empirical, and the scientific—which in itself shows the inappropriateness of such a term. I have known of the phenomenon of a man having a double chin, but I never heard of a building having three foundations. And when we come to examine these different bases of ethics we find that none of them is indispensable to a system of morality. Colonel Lynch speaks of the first two as having "no value," which only shows what I am trying to point out, that they cannot in any sense be regarded as foundations. And whatever it is that these philosophers have at the back of their mind in their search for sanctions, it is certainly something that has no resemblance to a foundation.

Have you ever noticed, nurse, that often when you have given up the search for something that was lost, you stumble upon the blessed thing accidentally. In the same way you often stumble upon important truths when you are not looking for them. As a case in point, there is an article in the *Freethinker* of January 11, by C. Clayton Dove, which contains a truth that is worthy of special emphasis. The writer's subject is not ethics, but "Will"; but the light it throws upon the subjective side of ethics is more illuminating than the disquisitions of all the philosophers. He says:—

Man always acts from desire.

And I believe that a full realization of the significance of this important statement would, in itself, constitute a philosophic education. I have had it in mind since I began these articles to pen briefly a philosophy of human nature from the standpoint of desire, because it is the keynote to all our motives and to all our actions. And if you will bear the above truth in mind, nurse, and remember that objectively ethics is a knowledge of the nature and the consequences of voluntary human actions, you will have a fair working knowledge of the subject of morality.

Another thing I want to point out, nurse, is this someone has said:—

Evil is wrought for want of thought,
As well as want of heart.

But whether a thing is done unwittingly, or of set purpose does not affect its moral consequences. Take the case of our good friend, Arthur Lynch, who in page 287 of his *Ethics*, speaks of the "bloody sacrificial rites" connected with the Car of Juggernaut. We must give him credit for not wishing to bear false

witness against his neighbour, but all the same he is guilty of repeating a vile missionary slander, invented to bring into disrepute a non-Christian religion. There never were any such rites either sanctioned or practiced in connection with the Juggernaut festival. A complete refutation of this vile missionary lie will be found in Dr. Moncure Conway's *My Visit to the Wise Men of the East*. And if ever a further edition of the *Ethics* is called for, I hope Colonel Lynch will see that the offensive reference is expunged, and make what reparation he can for the circulation of such a falsehood. You will see from this, nurse, how important truth and knowledge are to right speech and conduct. Get this into your mind—Evil is wrought for want of thought as well as want of heart.

It is quite a commonplace that history repeats itself, but it is rather interesting to note the occasions and circumstances of the repetition. When Kant had destroyed the Deity, he was so dissatisfied with his performance that he created another dummy in his place. And so Arthur Lynch, after having repudiated as of "no value" the authoritative or religious basis of ethics, reinstates the religious doctrine of the immortality of the soul as a fundamental. This is what he says:—

Out of a discussion of the principles of ethics, the question may not seem to arise necessarily of the immortality of the soul. Yet I think that our conceptions of ethics will become greatly modified according to the view we take whether this life be the be-all and end-all of our conscious existence, or whether it be but a pause between two infinities or a preparation for a life or lives to come.

The same thought was very tersely and vigorously expressed by Burns, when he said:—

The fear o' hell's the hangman's whip
To keep the wretch in order.

But if Colonel Lynch has faith in the opinion expressed, I feel certain that Burns did not believe the fear o' hell had any such restraining influence, but was simply giving expression to a crude, fostered belief. Surely no man was ever less influenced by the fear o' hell than Burns himself. Besides, the history of Scotland contradicts any such contention. It is well known that in the ages of faith, when the fear o' hell had the strongest hold upon the imagination of the masses, the licentiousness and immorality of the populace of Scotland was bestial beyond modern belief. I think it is Cotter Morrison who has amassed a convincing array of evidence upon the subject. If the contention were true, the average Scotsman to-day, with the fear o' hell a negligible quantity in his beliefs, would be morally worse than his forbears who had the fear o' hell dinned into their ears morning, noon, and night, week-days and Sundays. The fear o' hell and the hope of heaven enter very remotely, if at all, into the motives and conduct of human life.

He further says:—

That the question is important for morals is already settled by the fact that nearly all the systems of ethics that have ever had authority among men have reposed upon that belief as the central article of their faith.

This seems to me to be curious logic. In the first place, there are other important questions beside that of immortality which have always been considered as essential in ethico-religious systems. The God-idea is one of them. Among others are the Trinity, the Resurrection, and our old friend the Infallibility of the Pope. But the fact that men have reposed their faith upon certain doctrines is no evidence that these are important to morals. Indeed, they have all tended to detach men's thoughts from the legitimate subject-matter of ethical questions, and retarded the progress of morality.

It is sad to think, nurse, that after forty years' wanderings in the wilderness of philosophic sterility, instead of sighting the promised land, a person should only behold—a mirage.

But these philosophers make me feel tired, nurse, and I will take another rest.

JOSEPH BRUCE.

About Ben Adhem.

IF there is any recollection of my childhood that arouses within me feelings of undiminished satisfaction, it is the fact that my favourite poem was that splendidly characteristic one of Leigh Hunt's: *About Ben Adhem*. I can still remember the delight with which I first read that poem. I should be about eight years old, and all that was noble in my little soul was strangely drawn towards the gentle Ben Adhem. From that day there dawned within me that love of humanity that is purely human in its origin, and which transcends all creeds; that passion that contemplates the tragedy of human existence and turns its back impatiently on Gods and religious dogmas. O with what pride I look back upon that wee bairn that was myself; that bairn with ink-stained fingers and the blue eyes in which was reflected the wonder and glory of the world. "Puir wee bairn"—you little knew what was in store for you; you could not guess the vicissitudes that the years would bring. I still see you standing there reciting—with a strange passion, that you but dimly understood, stirring within your puny breast—the noble lines of Hunt; and I blow a kiss to you down the avenues of time. How thankful I am that the sordidness of mortal life has not tarnished that youthful passion: shew me the man who can sincerely say, "Write me as one who loves his fellow-men," and it matters not his creed, it matters not what bloody, monstrous superstition he pays lip-service to, and though I do not cease to hate his creed—he is my friend.

Autres temps autres mœurs—it is a far cry from the peaceful, noble setting of Leigh Hunt's poem to the sordid conditions under which modern visitors from beyond manifest themselves. I hardly know what Leigh Hunt would make of it all. That he would be shocked immeasurably I do not doubt. In fact if he had to write his poem to-day I think it would read something like this:—

ABOUT BEN ADHEM UP-TO-DATE

(With profound apologies to the shade of Leigh Hunt.)

About Ben Adhem—who deals in cast-off clo's,
Awoke one night from a deep repose,
And saw, within the gloom around his bed
A figure clothed in white. Being well-read
In Psychic literature
And matters occult, you may well be sure
The sight did not fill About with alarm;
No inner fear disturbed his outward calm.
So to the spirit in the room he cried,
"Speak friend, and say who comes from t'other side
To visit once again the haunts of men,
And bring a psychic message to old Ben."
The spirit answered, "I must beg your pardon
For such a late intrusion, dear Ben Adhem;
My visit is a welcome one, I trust,
I felt I simply had to come or bust.
For since I shed the flesh life seems so vain,
And as I knew you well on the earth-plane,
I thought I'd come, our friendship to renew
(I'm sorry that I can't 'have one' with you)
And tell you of the wonders that await you
When Allah thinks the time ripe to translate you."
"But who are you?" cried About. "Come, no spoof,
I only take my spirits *under proof*."
"My name?" replied the spirit. "Why, I'm Dan,
I used to keep the books for your old man;
I've often seen him since he passed away,
We had a drink together yesterday."

"What! drinks in spirit land among the spooks?
That just confirms what Lodge says in his books.
And—pardon a tradesman's deep solicitude—
Do you wear clothes or are you in the nude?"
"We've clothes the same as you," the shade replied.
"And have you cast-off clothes shops?" About cried.
"Not so," replied the shade. "Across the chasm
Our clothes are mostly made from ectoplasm;
It's funny sort of stuff, all wet and sticky—
You ought to see yer father in his dicky!
The clothes in spirit land are never bought,
We *think* of clothes, and we're wrapt up in thought!
The women are the funniest you'll find,
Their fashions change each time they change their mind!"
This information caused Ben great dejection,
It seemed to spoil his hope of resurrection:
O vain the years he'd laboured at his trade,
If clothes in spirit-land weren't tailor-made!
Besides' he'd read in Doyle's *New Revelation*,
That spirits oft pursue their old vocation.
"Speak, friend, once more," he cried, "And tell me true,
Who's the blinking liar—Doyle or you?"
The shade made no reply, for day was dawning.
The doctor ordered Ben away next morning!

VINCENT J. HANDS.

The Schools of a Revolution.

(Continued from page 54.)

V.

WHILST the *arrondissements* were working at educational reforms on their own account, the Commune had decided to reorganize the various Commissions. The complementary elections of April 16 which were necessary to fill the vacancies of members who had resigned, had mainly brought this about. On April 21 these elections occasioned a change in the Commission of Education, when the services of two members, Urbain and Demay,¹ were dispensed with, their places being filled by Dr. Édouard Vaillant, who was nominated Delegate for Education, and Gustave Courbet, the famous artist, who came as Delegate of Fine Arts.² Édouard Vaillant (1840-1915) was a learned student, and one of the best men of the Commune. Educated at Paris, he took his *baccalauréat* at seventeen, and his *doctorat* (science) at twenty-five years of age. After several terms at the *École de Médecine* he went to the Universities of Heidelberg, Vienna, and Tübingen, to complete his studies, and at the outbreak of war with Prussia he returned to Paris, eventually becoming a Blanquist and a member of the *Internationale*.

Lissagaray, the great historian of the Commune, is very severe upon the Commission of Education, and complains that it practically did nothing, and that "it has not left a line to bear witness for it in the future." For all this, Lissagaray blames Vaillant, which is unjust, since the latter could scarcely be held responsible for the first month of the Commune, since he was not appointed delegate until April 21. Lissagaray also complains that *one thousand francs only* was all that was allowed by the Commune for education from March 1 until April 30, and a like sum from May 1 to the end. This is quite incorrect. This was the sum allocated for the *administration only*. Departments had special grants. The Fine Arts, for instance, was allowed six thousand francs, and one *arrondissement*, we know, had some eight thousand francs deposited for educational purposes.³

Yet, it may be readily admitted that prior to the appointment of Vaillant, the Commission had done next to nothing, and no programme had been decided upon, or at any rate issued. No sooner, however,

¹ J.O., April 22.

² J.O., April 23.

³ *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*. 1871-2. *Gazette des Tribunaux*.

had Vaillant been appointed delegate than affairs began to assume an aspect of motion. The administration, which had previously been conducted between the Commission sitting at the Hôtel de Ville and the officials at the Ministry of Education, was now centralized in the latter, and placed in the charge of an official named Pépin.⁴

The new delegate, whilst he doubtless approved of the great strides made by the *arrondissements* in their efforts at reorganization, saw that it was absolutely essential that all reform and reorganization should be conducted in a uniform and regular way. He therefore notified the *arrondissements* that no nominations or appointments of any kind would be considered definite or official, unless they carried his sanction and authority, and he invited the district officials to place themselves in communication with him in these matters, and in all that concerned education. The detailed reports of the state of the schools, which had previously been asked of the directors, but without success, were now demanded from the *arrondissement* officials. All persons who had studied the question of education both *intégrale* and *professionnelle*, were invited to communicate their projects to the delegate.⁵ On April 28, the primary and infant schools which had insufficient teachers, had their staff augmented and a sub-commission was appointed for the "organization of primary and professional education on a uniform model in the various *arrondissements*..... and to hasten everywhere.....the transformation of religious into secular education."⁶ This sub-commission comprised five members: Eugène André, J. Rama, E. Dacosta, J. Manier, and R. Sanglier, all of them well known educationists and *révoltés*. André was a professor of mathematics at the *École Turgot* and the author of a *Cours d'arithmétique* (1867-8). Both Rama and Manier, as we have seen, were delegates of the society for *l'éducation nouvelle*. Dacosta was afterwards known for his books on education, whilst Sanglier was a popular *chansonnier*.

VI.

Curriculum reforms of any kind were out of question until the schools were in the hands of lay teachers, who would be responsible, not to a congregation as the church teachers were, but to the body politic, in this case, the Commune. Secular education had therefore to be the basic reform. Even apart from the educational aspect of the question, this was bound to become one of the chief planks in the Communard platform. The proletariat in France viewed the church and the priests as mere instruments of class domination, and the most designing enemy of the social republic.¹

In the *Manifesto of the Committee of the Arrondissements of Paris*, issued in March, it was laid down:—

The autonomy of the Commune guarantees liberty to its citizens.....the spread of entirely secular education, conciliating liberty of conscience, the interests and rights of the children, with the rights and liberties of the head of the family.

Finally, the first of the decrees of the Commune said:—

Considering that the first principles of the French Republic is Liberty: That liberty of conscience is the first of all liberties; That the Budget of Worship is contrary to this principle, inasmuch as it is imposed on the citizens against their will; That the

⁴ *J.O.*, April 23.

⁵ *J.O.*, April 23.

⁶ *J.O.*, April 29.

¹ The Communard press was distinctly anti-clerical, and indeed, most of the members of the Commune were philosophic Atheists, and all were Freethinkers of some shade or other.

clergy have been the accomplice of monarchy against liberty.

Decree:—The separation of church and State. The suppression of the Budget of Worship.

The sequence of all this was secular education, and the sub-committee nominated on April 28 was charged with this reform. Meanwhile, as we have seen, secular education had been established independently in several *arrondissements*—the 3rd, 4th, 8th, 11th, 17th, 18th, and 20th. On May 11, the delegate informed the *arrondissements* that religious education would shortly disappear from all the schools. Some of the schools, however, still retained "reminders" of the old system in the form of crucifixes, Madonnas, and such-like symbols. Teachers were asked to remove these objects, which were to be sent with an inventory to the Delegate of Domains.²

Three days later, the *arrondissement* officials were requested to furnish the Delegate of Education with a statement of the *personnel* actually teaching in their schools (both lay and church).³ This revealed the fact that some schools were refusing the orders of the Commune for the establishment of secular education. The matter was immediately placed in the hands of the Commission of Public Safety, which approved of the "stamping out" of the resistance to secular education, and the arrest of the recalcitrants. The *arrondissement* officials and the Delegate of Police were instructed to act rapidly and energetically in this particular.⁴ Finally, the Commune Executive decided that, if within forty-eight hours any school was found to be held by church teachers contrary to the law, the names of the responsible members of the *arrondissements* would be published in the *Journal Officiel*.⁵

To insure a vigorous supervision of its reforms, all the inspectors (of the *ancien régime*) for primary schools were dismissed. Under the Commune this duty would be carried out by the Commission of Education and specially authorised persons.⁶ The Commission held the view that examinations by inspectors were of no value, since they did not have the intimate knowledge of the circumstances of particular schools, classes, subjects, and pupils, Vaillant said that the proper person to hold an examination was the teacher.⁷

It was also found that some of the schools and other educational institutes were being used for other purposes than education. Some had been handed over to the military authorities, whilst others were utilized as headquarters of various societies for meetings, etc.⁸ The delegate instructed the *arrondissement* officials to give the necessary orders to have these institutions for education restored to their proper purpose without delay.⁹

HENRY GEORGE FARMER.

(To be Continued.)

Let accidents happen to such as are liable to the impression, and those that feel misfortune may complain of it if they please. As for me, let what will come, I can receive no damage by it, unless I think it a calamity; and it is in my power to think it none if I have a mind to it.—*Marcus Aurelius*.

² *J.O.*, May 11.

³ *J.O.*, May 14.

⁴ *J.O.*, May 16.

⁵ *J.O.*, May 19.

⁶ *J.O.*, May 14.

⁷ Edouard Vaillant's Letters.

⁸ Both the *Musée du Luxembourg* and the *Conservatoire de Musique* had been occupied in this way, one as an ambulance station and the other as the headquarters of a Federation of Theatrical Artistes.

⁹ *J.O.*, May 11.

The Apostasy of Peter.

THE Four Evangelists agree that Jesus foretold the apostasy of Peter, and that Peter fulfilled the prediction of Jesus; but they vary greatly as to the circumstances of both the prophecy and the event.

1. *The Prediction.*—Matthew and Mark say that this took place on the way to the Mount of Olives, after the Last Supper; whilst Luke and John say that it occurred at the supper itself.

Matthew and Mark declare that, after predicting the infidelity of all his disciples, Jesus specially instanced the faithlessness of Peter, because the latter had protested his faithfulness; whereas Luke and John represent Jesus as predicting the disloyalty of no one but Peter, and as speaking in a way likely to excite the resentment of this apostle, for making him odious before the rest.

Matthew, Luke, and John assert that Jesus said Peter would deny him thrice ere the cock should crow; and the first two add subsequently that, after thrice denying Jesus, Peter heard the cock and recalled the prophecy; but Mark affirms that Jesus said Peter would deny him thrice before the cock crew twice, and he adds subsequently that Peter denied Jesus both before and after the first crow, but that he did not recall the prediction till the second crow. It is vain to pretend that the word "twice" may be supplied to the other three narratives without causing disturbance, and that its absence therefrom is due to an oversight. For, Luke distinctly affirms that Jesus said, "I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, until thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me"; whilst John with equal emphasis declares that Jesus, addressing Peter, said, "The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice." Hence the terms of the prophecy as reported by Mark, flatly contradict the terms of the same as reported by Luke and John.

2. *The Event.*—The persons to whom Peter denied his knowledge of Jesus were, according to Matthew, (1) a maid, (2) another maid, (3) sundry bystanders; according to Mark, (1) a maid, (2) the same maid again, (3) sundry bystanders; according to Luke, (1) a maid, (2) a man, (3) another man; and according to John (1) a maid, (2) sundry bystanders, (3) a manservant of the high priest. Thus, whilst agreeing that Peter denied Jesus three times, the four evangelists disagree about the identity of the persons to whom the respective denials were given; and in this way they make them considerably more than the alleged three. This fact becomes very obvious when the instances are examined. Peter is said to have denied Jesus in two distinct places, namely, in the court of the high priest, and in the porch of the high priest. The sequence of the denials on each spot appears to have been as follows:—

1. Peter denied Jesus in the high priest's court,
 - (1) to the door maid on being admitted (John);
 - (2) to a maid when warming himself at the fire (Mark);
 - (3) to sundry persons by the fire (John);
 - (4) to a man (Luke);
 - (5) to another man one hour later (Luke);
 - (6) to a manservant of the high priest (John);
2. Peter denied Jesus in the high priest's porch,
 - (1) to the maid from the court (Mark);
 - (2) to a different maid (Matthew);
 - (3) to sundry bystanders a little later (Matthew and Mark).

According to the above analysis, Peter, instead of denying Jesus three times, denied him nine times. It is however possible that the door-maid mentioned

by the fourth evangelist, and the maid at the fire specified by the synoptists, are identical; that the high priest's servant whom John cites is one of the two men whom Luke instances; and that the group of persons which John puts by the fire, includes the first or the second of the two men figuring in Luke's account. But, even if these explanations are valid, six distinct denials still remain, to wit, three in the court, and three in the porch. The former three are (1) to a maid, (2) to a man, and (3) to another man one hour later; whilst the latter three are (1) to the maid of the court when in the porch, (2) to another maid in the porch, and (3) to sundry bystanders shortly afterwards.

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

Correspondence.

THE LATE WILLIAM ARCHER.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—My copy of Volume I. of *Progress*, that more than half forgotten but wholly admirable magazine edited by G. W. Foote, was once the property of J. M. Wheeler.

The contents-pages are annotated by the first owner with the real names of the contributors, which were, of course, well known to him. It may interest Freethinkers to learn that the late William Archer wrote for the fearless and aggressive Atheist Foote over the pseudonym of "Norman Britton." The magazine ran from 1883 until 1887, and is very well worth reprinting in its entirety.

I have not seen any mention anywhere of Archer in connection with an organ of militant Atheism; and this footnote to the History of Freethought ought not to be lost.

VICTOR B. NEUBURG.

EPISCOPAL JUDGMENT.

SIR,—The Bishop of Chelmsford says Paganism was very wicked. It would seem necessary to warn our brother in Christ of the danger to his immortal soul, which we do thus:—

"Oh judge not that ye be not judged!"

The Lord from Heaven proclaimed.

The Lord from Chelmsford History smudged,

And nations' fame defamed.

Now, what will Chelmsford have to say

When he is asked on Judgment Day,

"Did you my precepts honour—yea or nay?"

J. G. FINLAY.

THE LEGITIMATION BILL.

SIR,—In the reviews in the Press of Mr. Arthur Lambton's book, *My Story*, just published, it is stated that the Legitimation Bill, which was passed by the House of Commons last year, and amended by the House of Lords, was passed into law, and that legitimation by subsequent marriage has thus become law. Unfortunately that is not the case; the Labour Government went to the country before the Bill, with, or without, the emendations was again passed by the House of Commons, and all outstanding Bills were automatically killed by the fall of the Government.

This Bill will be brought up again when the House of Commons re-assembles. Those who are interested in justice to all children are asked to urge their Members of Parliament to support this long overdue measure of reform.

The Proviso to exclude certain children, which was inserted in the House of Lords, and which delayed the passage of the Bill into law, must come out if this is to be a complete measure of justice.

M. L. SEATON-TIEMAN.

If we are zealous for law and order, let us prize, as the best safeguard of law and order, civil and religious freedom.—*Macaulay*.

British Museum Additions.

SEVERAL interesting and valuable additions have recently been made to the exhibits in the Egyptian Department of the British Museum. One of the most important is a stone statuette of a priestess or princess of the Sumerian period, from Babylonia, a presentation from the National Art-Collections Fund. The date is roughly about 2800 B.C. The figure is 10 inches high. The eyes were originally inlaid, and the woman is represented in a fringed gown; her coiffure is elaborate, and the face is full of expression. It is the finest example of the early Babylonian art of the kind which has yet been found.

Another acquisition is the gift of the Egypt Exploration Society and comes from its excavations at Tell Amarna, which were carried on by Professor Griffith and Mr. F. G. Newton. It is a stone stele, or monumental slab, with a representation of King Amenhotep III. of the Eighteenth Dynasty, who reigned from about 1412 to 1376 B.C. He was the father of the heretic King Akhenaten, who was the predecessor of Tutankhamen. The stele gives a portrait of the King, who is represented lolling on a chair, his corpulent body showing very clearly beneath his thin garments, one arm hanging over his knee. Most Egyptian sculpture is very stiff, but this is an example of the free style in art which was introduced by the heretical King. Behind the King stands Queen Tiye, the mother of the heretic.

A third object, which has been purchased with the help of some friends of the British Museum, is a bowl of pale blue faience, about 6 inches across, with representations in relief of deer, wild fowl, and fish, in bands round the inside of the bowl. The outside shows lily petals also in relief. This is a very fine example of the art of the Saite period in Egypt and dates back to about 3000 B.C.

Two ancient Egyptian candlesticks of pottery, dating from the time of the Pyramid builders, about 3000 B.C., are presented by Mr. Burchell. Ancient Egyptian candlesticks are very rare, almost the only other specimens known being those found in the tomb of Tutankhamen.—*Times*.

North London Branch N.S.S.

While friends from South London come over here to hear the debates at the St. Pancras Reform Club, it is a little surprising to find such a sparse attendance of our North London members. Last Sunday the debate between Mr. C. Batchelor and Mr. Cutner was keen, interesting and lively, and deserved a much larger audience. To-night (February 1) Mrs. C. B. S. Hodson, F.L.S., sometime tutor of Lady Margaret Hall and a well-known Eugenist, will deliver a lecture on "Heredity." We hope to see every seat filled.—K.

OPPOSING ORACLES.

On the Sunday after first coming into residence (at Oxford University) I attended both the morning and the afternoon University sermons at St. Mary's with all the zeal and innocence of a "freshman." In the morning the preacher was Mark Pattison. He concluded his sermon with the words: "It will be an ill day for the Church of England when dogma and authority gain the upper hand and reason is denied its rightful place as the corner-stone of all religion." In the afternoon Liddon began his sermon with the words: "Dogma and authority, authority and dogma—these two form the key-stone in the arch of our holy faith." Liddon subsequently told me that the coincidence, or rather contradiction, of words was purely accidental; but what was an innocent freshman to believe? I have ever since sympathised with the remark of the University bedell: "I have heard every University sermon that has been preached in this church for the last fifty years, and, thank God, I am still a Christian."—*Rev. A. H. Sayce, "Reminiscences."*

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.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (160 Great Portland Street, W.): 8, Mr. Greengrass, a Lecture. The Discussion Circle meets every Thursday at 8 at "The Castle," Shouldham Street, W.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7, Mrs. C. B. S. Hodson, F.L.S., "What are the Scientific Evidences for Human Heredity?"

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham Road): 7, Mr. E. Baker, "What is Life?"

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Mr. William Platt, "Shakespeare and the People."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit., "The Education of Taste."

OUTDOOR.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Speakers: Messrs. Baker, Constable, Hanson, Hart, and Keeling.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, "What the Housing Question means to Women."

BIRTH CONTROL.

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Secularism teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

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