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Views and Opinions.

Fooling the Children.

The Bishop of Manchester has gained the warm approval of the *Christian World*. I need hardly say that this is because he made use of an argument that was quite Christian and wholly unsound. When two Christian leaders disagree, it is possible for one of them to be in the right; but when they agree, it is safe to assume that they are very likely to be wrong. On this occasion the Bishop of Manchester had been addressing the Diocesan Conference on the Christian Sunday, and in common with other merchants whose business falling off, he deeply regretted the neglect of Sunday worship. He did not say that the world was the worse for this, but from the point of view of a parson it will not do. It is, he says, "part of the indispensable method of the whole life of the Church," the setting aside things as specially dedicated and consecrated to religion. With that we quite agree. It is part of the life of religion to divorce it as far as possible from contemporary life, because if it is once linked up with them, people will bring the habits of mind that serve them in other directions to bear upon religion. And if that is done there will soon be no religion left. It is one of the characteristic features of religion in a civilized country that it habitually, almost instinctively, harks back to habits, to tricks of language, to forms of dress, that belong to the past. No man uses the language of everyday life when he is offering up prayers, he is advised that he must approach religion, or enter Church in a "reverential" frame of mind. Religion must be taught the child before it is old enough to understand what is being done with it, and a "religious atmosphere" must be created for its benefit. And all this means to the scientific sociologist is that if religion is to live it must be kept secure from the influence of the life and thought of to-day, and maintained in an environment which is as near as possible that of another culture period.

Let's Pretend.

Dr. Temple's plea to keep Sunday was not addressed to adults—except so far as it was necessary to address them in order to get hold of the children. He appears to have recognized that, so far as adults considered by and for themselves are concerned, the game is up. His great desire is to see children taught the value of Sunday as a day apart from other days. But, again, it will not do to use the compulsion that was once in vogue. The day has gone when this Christian form of persuasion will be effective. Even Christian parents are beginning to realize that some better plan of training children may be found than that of bullying and forcing them to become copies of themselves. The rights of the child is not a Christian conception, but it is beginning to gain ground rapidly. So a more insidious form of coercion is advised. "Only if the whole circle of the child's adult acquaintances, family and friends, observe Sunday and go to Church as a matter of course, will the child unquestioningly accept Sunday as normal and reasonable." That, observes the *Christian World*, is psychologically sound. We agree as to that. If the child sees its whole circle of adult acquaintances doing a particular thing it will accept it and imitate them. That was once the case, and the poor, little beggars, when their healthy human instincts got the better of their religious training and they indulged in a surreptitious game on the Sabbath, felt themselves to be terrible sinners, and in dread of the hell fire with which their parents darkened their days and terrified their minds. Certainly the plan is psychologically sound, but is morally damnable, and it is sociologically ruinous. It is teaching a child to regard as a deadly sin something that is quite harmless, and even beneficial, and it is preventing it developing a frame of mind upon which its future usefulness as a citizen will depend. If successful, it may keep people at Church, and that is the only thing that matters. Once upon a time good, religious people sacrificed children as part of the ritual for benefiting the tribe. We do not now burn them, but we have not got beyond mutilating them in the interests of the Church.

* * *

Humbug.

Observe that the adults are to keep Sunday, not because they feel they need it themselves, but in order to persuade the children that they think it is something of extreme value. I do not think that anything like the whole of a child's adult acquaintances would keep up the dreary farce, nor would the children of to-day be long in detecting the miserable imposture if they did. If children are brought up in a healthy way they are not fooled quite so easily as Bishop Temple appears to think they are. And if they are allowed reasonable freedom in the home they would not be long in letting the adults know they

saw through the farce. To be at all successful, it would mean that children would have to be kept from looking out of doors on Sunday (or they might see how other children spent Sunday), and driven to and from Church in closed carriages with the blinds down. The *Christian World* says that the important thing is not to play the hypocrite, and talk about the duty of Sunday observance, while disclosing to the children your own boredom in face of the duty of Church attendance. That seems quite a Christian way of putting it, for all it amounts to is, "Do not let the children find you out." It is a plea for a more finished form of humbug. Parents are to go to Church because they wish to see the children go, not because they wish to go themselves, and they are to pretend it is a pleasure, while all the time they feel it to be a confounded nuisance. If this is not hypocrisy what is? Or, perhaps, hypocrisy is too dignified a word. It is just a specimen of good old-fashioned religious humbug.

A Game of Deception.

But the advice, after all, is only carrying into a particular sphere what is a very common rule. Last week we cited some expressions from the diary of A. C. Benson, in which that well-known novelist confessed himself to be an Agnostic. I do not know, but I venture to make the assumption that Benson kept his opinions to himself about religion on exactly the same principle that underlies the advice of Bishop Temple. That principle is to pretend to believe for the sake of the example you are setting others. Do not confess your disbelief in Christianity, or it may encourage others to be equally honest and straightforward, and in a world where intellectual honesty rules, the reign of Christianity would be very short indeed. A large proportion of the better educated and the more thoughtful intellects of the country are acting in the same way. Jones is pretending to believe in Christianity for the sake of setting a good example to Smith, and Smith is pretending to believe only because he thinks that without religious belief Jones would change for the worse. Each covers himself with hypocrisy in order to protect the other, when all they do is to inoculate themselves with the virus of intellectual insincerity. And, in truth, what the average Christian leader asks nowadays is not sincerity so much as for silence. They are past the stage of expecting men of education to sincerely believe their creed, all they say is: "For God's sake do not avow your disbelief! If you do it will encourage others to avow their disbelief, and, if that is done, the last rope by which the Christian craft clings to civilized moorings will be cut." It would be better, of course, if people actually did believe, but if they do not and will keep silent, the adult, like the child, on finding none of its acquaintances are open unbelievers, may continue silent also. And in a world of hypocrisy there is still a chance for the Christian clergy. After all, Bishop Temple is only asking adults to do with relation to a particular Christian item, and with reference to deceiving children, what so many adults already do in relation to each other. If Bishop Temple were a Dean Swift one might assume that he is levelling a deadly satire at his fellow believers. But as no one will accuse him of being a Swift, we are reluctantly compelled to take it that he means exactly what he says. We do not like to so insult him, but we see no way out of it.

The Dying Creed.

Says the *Christian World*:—

The argument for Christian people seems to be this. If you surrender Sunday you condemn your children to grow up in a world wherein the voice of religion will grow fainter and fainter, wherein

the visible face of religion will become increasingly dim and vague. A crowded cinema and a half-empty church; is it fair to present inexperienced young people with the task of squaring that phenomenon with the high language of the pulpit about the majesty and victoriousness of Christianity?

What a confession of hopelessness and defeat! Note that the world in which the children are growing up is a world where Christianity is already established, and in that world religion grows fainter and fainter. The cinema fills, and the Church empties. The victorious Church that cannot hold its own against a cinema show is to impose itself upon the child by the adults agreeing to play a part, and to pretend that they enjoy Church-going! Could there be required or found a stronger argument in proof of the statement that the modern environment is dead against the Christian belief, and that it is not merely the individual unbeliever that Christianity has to fight, but the force of civilization? If religion sprang from the life of to-day, if it voiced the ideas, the sentiments, the aspirations of to-day, there would be no need of these artificial arrangements by which the clergy hope to gain for their creed a new lease of life. The whole problem of training the child to believe in Christianity is a modern one. It never existed so long as the environment remained at the low culture stage which offered nothing that went directly against the Christian belief. But that was before the era of popular science, popular education, and the democratizing of knowledge. When these things came the faith in Christianity began to decline. It is kept alive to-day mainly because people who know will not speak out. They remain silent and so fool each other. Bishop Temple now asks them to put into operation the same plan with regard to the children. He does not say you must believe, he hardly says you ought to believe. All he says is, pretend to believe. If you will do this, he pleads, you may fool the children as you are fooling each other. And if we can fool the children of the present generation, we may succeed in rearing a new lot of clients for our institutions. The old war cry of the Christian some fifty years ago was "Collar the Kids." To-day, Bishop Temple substitutes the policy of "kidding" them.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Heavenly Citizenship.

THE apostle, Paul, indulges in many curious claims on behalf of the followers of Christ. For him there existed only two classes in the world, namely, Christians and Pagans, indicated by the terms the Church and the World. Christians were imitators of himself, as he was of his risen and exalted Master. Non-Christians walked after the flesh, and were "the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is perdition, whose god is the belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." Thus, you see, in Paul's estimation, they lacked all fine qualities and exhibited only wicked ones. But Christians he idealized into paragons of excellence or perfection. In Philippians iii. 20, he speaks of himself and fellow disciples in the following proud words: "For our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." Recently, Dr. Charles Gore, formerly Bishop of Oxford, chose that verse as the text of a sermon, which he preached in Westminster Abbey, and which was published in the *Christian World Pulpit* of November 18. As is well known, Bishop Gore is a leader of the Catholic Party in the Anglican Church, who has taken a conspicuous part in promoting social reforms. Ortho-

doxy finds in him an exceptionally capable advocate. Speaking of the great apostle, he says:—

When St. Paul was a Pharisaic Jew he had known very well what it was to have a citizenship on this earth. In Jerusalem, the city on the Judean Hill, was the seat of judgment, and there was preserved and thence issued forth that great tradition which was rooted in the sacred law. Everything in St. Paul's being responded to that claim of the great tradition. His citizenship was on earth, and it was bounded by the limits of the race of Israel. Not that there was not a wider vision vouchsafed at times to prophets and psalmists. There is that wonderful 87th Psalm. There the psalmist sees even the most hostile nations all united in the fellowship of Israel.

That was a dream that never came true, though it was fondly cherished for many generations. Now, curiously enough, the Bishop observes that in consequence of the non-fulfilment of that national dream St. Paul lost his earthly citizenship. Surely that statement is false, for, even as an apostle of Christ, we find him constantly glorying in the fact that he was a citizen of Rome, and as long as that was the case, he certainly had a citizenship which was on earth, and as the Bishop candidly admits, "he was proud of his imperial citizenship." But, for some reason or other, his Roman citizenship was not sufficient for him. He craved for something more, something better and more enduring, and he claimed to have found it in Christ. But Christ had ascended into heaven, where he sat on his Father's right hand. Therefore he came to the conclusion that his citizenship was now in heaven, where Christ was.

This, also, was nothing but an empty dream, pleasant and joy-giving enough while it lasted, no doubt, but the note of reality is entirely lacking. We know that Christ is a purely imaginary being, created by the Church, and even heaven, like hell, is a figment of the fancy, and yet Bishop Gore treats both as objectively real. Of heaven he speaks thus:—

People sometimes say that to the ancients and to the whole Christian Church of that period, and to St. Paul, heaven was a place somewhere above the skies, and that, as we cannot hold that idea of heaven, so we cannot use their language or hold their faith in the same sense. But that is a mistake. No doubt the majority of mankind, and I dare say it is true of the majority of mankind to-day, do somehow think of heaven as a place above the skies. But St. Paul knew better; otherwise he could not have said that we Christians were already seated with Christ in the heavens. No, St. Paul knew that he would not get to heaven by going up in a balloon, somewhere up into the vast inane beyond. Heaven is something which, because it transcends our present experience, can only be spoken of in metaphors. But it is something better than a geographical district. It is there where Jesus is; in the glory of God, but still in the fullness of human sympathy.

Such a passage could not have been uttered except by a man who possessed not the slightest knowledge of heaven either as a place or state. It is all a matter of useless speculation or blind belief. The Bishop says that the majority of mankind believe this or that about heaven, but the truth is that the majority of the population in Christendom have flung religion down the wind, and care absolutely nothing about religious beliefs. Most of them are good citizens of this world, but of no other, nor have they the least desire to believe in or to belong to any other.

Thus heaven is indeed a transcendent sphere, which exists only for those who believe in it. Nobody knows anything at all about it; yet the Bishop assures us that "there, in that transcendent sphere,

Jesus lives, in the glory of God, but still very man, and there are the unseen hosts; and there that gradually gathered assembly of just men made perfect." The Bishop believes all this simply because he finds it coolly written down in the Bible by men fully as ignorant as himself. He rejects the Mohammedan conception of heaven simply because he was not brought up in a Mohammedan country and carefully trained in the Mohammedan faith. That is the sole reason why he is a Christian rather than a Mohammedan, Hinduist, or Buddhist, and it is on the same ground, he adds "that our citizenship is in heaven, whence also we look for the coming of Jesus, for the fulfilment, when God shall come into his own, when earth and heaven shall be no more separate but one, when all men shall see that God only is God, and his righteousness only is triumphant." But is he quite sure that Atheism shall disappear from the earth? At present there is no sign whatever of such an eventuality, for Atheism is decidedly on the increase, and people are turning their backs upon religion in ever-growing numbers, and the religious revival so confidently predicted once more by the divines is not yet visible on the most distant horizon.

Dr. Gore cherishes the conviction that the Christian spirit, which once won the world and then lost it, is destined soon to repeat the conquest. He says:—

The Church on earth is the representative of the Kingdom of God—that wider thing. It is by its light to let me see what the Kingdom of God—righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost—means. In the early days it did express this on the whole with a noble worthiness. It cost men much to be Christians. For a good many centuries after the beginning they were boycotted, they were estranged from their friends; they were liable to violent persecution and death. It cost men much to become Christians. Therefore the average moral level of the Christian Church on earth was kept high, relatively very high, and it was the witness of Christian living which won the conscience of the world.

It is an inexcusable fallacy to assert that Christian living was ever of an exceptionally high and noble order. We know what Paul thought of the moral character of his Corinthian converts, and the Galatians were just as bad, if not worse. We also know that later the Christians were notorious haters of Paganism and bitter denouncers of individual Pagans. The moral teaching of Pagan philosophers was in the highest degree excellent. They declared that it was the duty of every one to render service to all his fellow-beings. The Stoics said: "To the very end of life we will be in action, we will not cease to labour for the common weal, to help individuals, to give aid even to our enemies." Tertullian, a Christian father of the second century, looked down with contempt upon the notion that it is a man's duty to live for this country, empire, and State, declaring that no one is born for another, because every-one dies for himself alone. The early Christians did not sufficiently realize that they were citizens exclusively of this world, and that it was their duty to help and serve one another on this earth.

J. T. LLOYD.

But of all wrong there is none more heinous than that of those who when they deceive us most grossly, so do it as to seem good men.—*Cicero*.

The happiness of the times being extraordinary, when it was lawful to think what you wished, and to say what you thought.—*Tacitus*.

The Pulpit Voice.

For Hecuba!

What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba?

—*Shakespeare, Hamlet.*

Why should our life be in any respect provincial?

—*Thoreau.*

AMONG the questions considered at the Church of England Assembly was a proposal to make elocution and voice production a part of the Priestly training. This should make the wordly-minded persons smile, and the less wordly-minded grieve. For the mere consideration of such a mundane matter shows that men of talent are no longer seeking careers in the service of the Established Church. Once this Church could boast of her orators, her writers, and even her statesmen, but now there appears to be a dire dearth of all these. There are about 20,000 priests of the Established Church, but few, indeed, possess personalities which arrest attention. Of these few, some, like the Bishop of London and the cleric, known familiarly as "Woodbine Willie," cause more laughter than respect. As for pulpit orators, they appear to have vanished as completely as the snows of yesteryear.

In clerical circles the gift of Demosthenes was not always conspicuous by its absence. Oratory was the secret of Newman's immense influence, as it was, in a smaller degree, of Farrar and Magee. Among Free Churchmen the same thing was true. Morley, Punshon, Spurgeon, Parker, Newman Hall, John Clifford, to mention but a few, relied upon the persuasive powers of speech. Nature had endowed all these men with singularly attractive voices of which study and training had made instruments of power. Above all, these men possessed personality, that intangible thing that makes a man of interest to his fellow-men.

At the present day, the complaint is made that clergymen adopt the sing-song intonation, which was so cleverly caricatured by Penley, the comedian, in the farcical "Private Secretary," and which has been imitated ever since upon the music-hall stage. Everybody is familiar with the style. The average clergyman, wishing to repeat such a sentence as "He that has ears to hear, let him hear," renders it as "He that has jaws to jaw, let him jaw." Considering how much priests of all kinds depend on the human voice for their success, it is a proof of Christian stubbornness that the occupants of the pews are not driven to drink, or drugs, or both.

The suggestion that elocution and voice production should form a recognized part of every curate's education is belated. A short time since, the Archbishop of Canterbury pointed out that too many of the sermons were far too poor in quality and wanting in appeal. It is notorious that sermons always had a soporific quality only slightly inferior to that of ether or chloroform. Hence, it is quite clear, that to speak with the alleged tongues of angels would be valueless, provided that the subject-matter was only hysterical nonsense. To say such a thing is not an exaggeration, for the average sermon is simply a feeble rehash of what has been said millions of times. Generally, the clergy are hopelessly out of touch with modern conditions, and very like the young curate, who preached before an East-end working-class congregation on the live topic: "The influence of Neo-Platonism on the Scholars of the Renaissance," a subject which had gained him some paltry distinction in his training career at a university.

The real fact is that the conscience of the nation is rising above the crudities and barbarities associated with the Christian Religion. In the so-called

Agnes of Faith the priest was educated, and the congregation was nearly as unsophisticated as the negroes of Carolina. To-day all this is altered, and the priest is seen to be educated only in the patter of his profession. He may have a smattering of dead languages, but of the living world around him he is out of touch. Even his sing-song voice is not a dialect, but a disease of language, the merest affectation of speech.

The Liturgy of the Established Church contains noble passages, but the fine writing only partially conceals the antiquated ideas on which it is based. To modern women, the Anglican Church's teaching of the superiority of man is obnoxious. To Democrats, this Church's slavish devotion to Royalty is an offence, as is the continued existence of a priestly caste apart from ordinary men and women. And the whole teaching of the New Testament is based on quietism, which Nietzsche has pointed out, is simply a slave-philosophy and unsuited to a free and progressive people. Indeed, Priestcraft and Kingcraft are as closely united as a porous plaster and the human skin. It is, perhaps, better that such ideas were mumbled, rather than spoken clearly, by priests, for clarity of speech might lead the more speedily to their being found out. The Roman Catholic Church hides these archaic ideas under the obscurity of a dead language, a trick which is also used by the medical profession.

It is not long since that much was heard of the shortage of candidates for the priesthood, not only of the Established Church, but also of the leading Nonconformist bodies. Practically all the great denominations are experiencing an extreme difficulty in getting an adequate supply of priests, and those they get are not of the same type which helped them to success in past times. Intellectual and economic causes have both had their share in producing this position of affairs, but the effeminacy and decadence of the present race of the "sons of God" is undeniable.

Neither the graces of elocution nor the wiles of rhetoric can put the clock back. What Shakespeare said of the jest's prosperity holds good of weightier matters than humour. The priest's speech is only acceptable provided that the congregation believe what he says. This is an age of intellectual unrest and of unbelief, and even believers are bewildered by the multiplicity of oracles. Some leave their prayers and turn to planchettes for consolation. Others, made of sterner stuff, begin that relentless questioning which ends in scepticism. The most accomplished pulpit orator could make little headway against such odds. Had he the voice of Henry Ainley and the presence of Matheson Lang it would not serve to make the account of Ezekiel's banquet less unsavoury. The bare truth is that the priests are beginning to be found out, and one of the results is that the ministry itself has declined upon a period of muddle-headed mediocrity, a pitiful end to a once-powerful Church.

MIMNERMUS.

There is always hope when people are forced to listen to both sides.—*John Stuart Mill.*

Too often in time past religion has brought forth criminal and shameful actions.—*Lucretius.*

A Dictatorship is a confession of political incapacity and sloth in the governed.—*Signor Nititi (former Italian Premier).*

The Making of the Gospels.

VIII.

(Continued from page 731.)

In concocting narratives of suitable events for their Lord's public ministry, the Gospel-makers, in many cases, derived assistance from various passages in the Old Testament. The following may be taken as samples:—

A WOULD-BE FOLLOWER.

An incident recorded in the mythical history of the prophet Elijah suggested a similar incident in the equally mythical history of Jesus Christ.

ELIJAH (1 Kings xix. 19-20).—Elisha the son of Shaphat, *who was ploughing*.....left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again; for what have I done to thee?

JESUS (Luke ix. 61-62).—And another also said, I will follow thee, Lord; but first suffer me to bid farewell to them that are at my house. But Jesus said unto him, No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Upon the fatuity and unreason displayed by these two personages in the circumstances related, it is unnecessary to comment.

JESUS GREATER THAN THE TEMPLE.

A priestly writer in the Old Testament made King Solomon say, in effect, that the God of the Hebrews was of too exalted a nature to inhabit the newly-made temple (2 Chron. vi. 18). In accordance with this declaration, one of the Gospel-makers made his fictitious Jesus say of himself: "But I say unto you that one greater than the temple is here" (Matt. xii. 6).

DAVID'S LORD.

The opening words of Psalm cx.—"The Lord saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool"—were understood by the primitive Christians as a prediction, written by David, respecting Jesus Christ—the passage signifying "the Lord God said unto David's Lord [*i.e.*, the Lord Jesus], Sit thou on my right hand," etc. So certain were the Gospel-makers of this interpretation that they represented Jesus as puzzling the Pharisees with the passage, and, of course, confounding them (Matt. xxii.; Mark xii.; Luke xx.).

Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, What think ye of the Messiah? whose son is he? They say unto him, David's. He saith unto them, How then doth David in the spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I put thine enemies underneath thy feet? If David then calleth him Lord, how is he his son? And no one was able to answer him a word (Matt. xxii. 41-46).

Now we know, as a matter of fact, that Psalm cx. was *not* written by David, and that the words quoted simply meant "The Lord [Yahveh] said unto my lord [the king], Place yourself under my protection, and I will make you victorious over all your enemies." There is no puzzle in the statement at all. Yet, according to the Gospels, not only were the Pharisees silenced, but "neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions."

In the same way the passage in Psalm cxviii.—"the stone which the builders rejected," etc.—was interpreted as referring to Jesus, and that glorified individual was made to quote it as such (Matt. xxi. 42-45).

THE PUBLIC ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.

A passage in the Book of Zechariah describing a Jewish king returning from victory, was twisted by the Gospel-makers into a prediction relating to Jesus Christ. The passage reads:—

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy king cometh unto thee: he is just, and having victory; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass (Zech. ix. 9).

This passage presents two examples of the parallelism peculiar to Hebrew poetry, which consists of the repetition of the same idea in slightly different words, the second sentence often supplementing or completing the first. Thus, "Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem" is a repetition of "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion." Similarly, the phrase "upon a colt the foal of an ass" is but a varied form of "upon an ass." Only one animal was, of course, meant—a young he-ass. Furthermore, whether the connecting word of the parallelism be translated "and" or "even" the meaning remains unaltered. Thus, in the example, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors," the same "gates" or "doors" are referred to. The Gospel-maker, however, took Zechariah to mean an ass *and* a colt. Bearing this fact in mind, it is not surprising that in the story invented to fulfil the "prophecy" Jesus was represented as sending his disciples to loose and bring to him an ass *and* a colt; nor that the disciples went as directed and returned with both, "and put on them their garments, and he sat thereon," and in this mountebank fashion rode into Jerusalem (Matt. xxi. 2-7). In Luke's later and revised account only one ass is mentioned; but there cannot be the smallest doubt that it was the misunderstood parallelism in Zechariah which suggested the silly story of Jesus sending his disciples to fetch him "an ass and a colt."

The rejoicing of the multitude and the cutting down of trees by the way, as well as the so-called "cleansing of the temple" by Jesus, were further suggested by a paragraph in the Second Book of Maccabees recording an historical "cleansing of the temple" by Judas Maccabæus.

2 Macc. x. 5-7.—Now on the same day that the sanctuary was profaned by aliens, upon that very day [three years later] did it come to pass that the cleansing of the sanctuary was made.....Wherefore, bearing wands wreathed with leaves, and fair boughs, and palms also, they offered up hymns of thanksgiving to Him that had prosperously brought to pass the cleansing of his own place.

The two passages cited from Zechariah and 2 Maccabees are the only foundation for the Gospel story of Jesus riding into Jerusalem as a king (and on an ass), of the acclamation of the populace, and of the "cleansing" of the temple. The following is the Gospel-maker's fabricated narrative:—

John xii. 12-13.—On the morrow a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took the branches of the palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried out, Hosanna: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Matt. xxi. 8-13.—And the most part of the multitude spread their garments in the way; and others cut branches from the trees.....And the multitudes.....cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord...and Jesus entered into the temple, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves; and he saith unto them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer: but ye make it a den of robbers.

In the days of Judas Maccabæus the temple had

been polluted by idolatrous worship and the sacrifice of swine, and it was considered necessary to purify it for the worship of Yahveh. In the time of Jesus there was nothing in connection with it that required "cleansing," so that individual was represented as overthrowing tables of money, driving out people who sold doves, and upsetting all existing arrangements for sacrifice with impunity.

The words put in the mouths of the imaginary people who shouted on the way—"Hosanna" (save now), etc.—were copied from Psalm cxviii. 25-26. The words placed in the mouth of Jesus when ejecting the people from the temple (Matt. xxi. 13; Mark xi. 17; Luke xix. 46) were taken from the books of Isaiah and Jeremiah.

Isaiah lvi. 7.—For mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all peoples.

Jer. vii. 11.—Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold I, even I, have seen it, saith the Lord.

The first passage Jesus is made to cite as a quotation; the second is given as his own words. It was, doubtless, the statement that the Lord had "seen it" which caused the Gospel-maker to put the saying in the mouth of his own Lord.

The reply of Jesus to the Pharisees, when asked to stop the shouting of his disciples who headed the procession, was suggested by a passage from Habakkuk.

Hab. ii. 11.—For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it.

Luke xix. 40.—And he answered and said, I tell you that if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out.

Only the words italicised in the latter passage were derived from the former. It was the Gospel-maker's method, as we have already seen, to select a few words without any regard to the context. From his point of view anything ascribed to the Lord in the Old Testament Scriptures might legitimately be attributed to the Lord Jesus in the Gospels.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

Charity and the State Subsidy of Religious Bodies.

THE taxpayer is painfully aware that the effect of the imposition of a tax on income is to divert to the State coffers a proportion of the yield of all the investments he possesses. Should the State, by conferring exemption, forgo its share in the investment income arising to any body of persons, the deficiency is made good by the simple expedient of increasing the rate of taxation applicable to those not exempted. Exemption must therefore be regarded as a State subsidy with this peculiarity: it is a grant of public money to be expended without public control.

Exemption shall be granted—so runs the Income Tax Act—in respect of any income arising to a trust for charitable purposes. As the Act failed to define "charity" the defect was made good by Lord Macnaughten, in a House of Lords decision, in the following terms: "'Charity' in its legal sense comprises four principal divisions: trusts for the relief of poverty, trusts for the advancement of education, trusts for the advancement of religion, and trusts for other purposes beneficial to the community not falling under any of the preceding heads."

The definition is a very wide one based on an Elizabethan statute having nothing whatever to do with taxation. As might be expected, the application of such a definition to a taxing statute has the

most alarming results. This was realized by Gladstone, who, in 1863, introduced into the Customs and Inland Revenue Bill of that year a clause repealing charitable exemption. He pointed out that the effect of the exemption was to grant the largest subsidies where they were least wanted; the wealthy charities obtained large grants by reason of their large investment income; the poorer charities got little or nothing. Large numbers of charities too, were not beneficial to the community. But Gladstone had to admit failure. The vested "charitable" interests put up such a strong opposition that he was forced to delete the clause from the Bill. So recently as in 1920, the Board of Inland Revenue suggested to the Royal Commission, then engaged in an enquiry into the Income Tax, that relief in respect of charitable exemption should be confined to charities for the relief of poverty or physical distress, but the effect of the suggestion was largely destroyed by the personal expression of opinion by the then Chief Inspector of Taxes, who was "aghast at leaving the religious bodies out." Readers of the *Freethinker* have more reason to be "aghast" at the effect of leaving the religious bodies in.

"Trusts for the advancement of religion" runs the definition. The phrase can mean anything! Jones gets an idea that there is a man in the moon and starts a church for moon-worshippers. Automatically the subsidy extends to cover the investment income of the new church and the State supplies good money for the propagation of Jones' faith. Brown is certain that Jones is wrong, and starts a society for the extermination of the moon-worshippers—conversion of the moon-worshippers to the true faith, is the way Brown puts it—and the State makes every taxpayer pay more to subsidise Brown.

What a game it is! We pay to convert Jews to the Christian faith, and *vice versa*. We pay to make Catholics Protestants and Protestant Catholics; to convince those who believe there is one God, that there are three; and those who believe that there are three, that there is one only. Nobody knows in which direction religion is advancing, so that all religious bodies can claim to be for the "advancement" of religion and the taxpayer pays. Being compelled to back every runner in the religious stakes he cannot expect to do anything else but to pay.

G. J. F.

A Freethought Meeting.

If one attended a hall to listen to an address by an avowed Freethinker, one would hardly go there expecting to hear the Christian religion extolled to the skies. Yet some such expectation appears to have been present in the mind of a certain pious journalist who recently went to hear Professor Hu-Shih, Professor of Philosophy in Peking University. Our Christian friend found the discourse "very unsatisfactory." The Professor, it appears, confined himself to stating his rationalistic principles. He declared his belief that China and the West can only co-operate in the development of mankind by accepting a philosophy based on materialistic principles. He stated that all Eastern religions—and the journalist assumed Christianity was included—had suppressed the desire for knowledge in the hearts of adherents. The Professor therefore declared he would have none of them, but espoused rationalism as being based on equality and liberty. The pious hearer thinks it very strange that a professor of philosophy "should fail to realize that the Christian faith is a rational one, and that two of its essentials are liberty and equality." What the pious one appears unable to grasp is the simple fact that the Professor has rejected the Christian creed because its brand of rationality, liberty, and equality does not come up to his ideal of what such things should be.

Acid Drops.

Mr. L. V. Rogers, ex-Secretary of the Southend Free Church Council, is leaving Southend. His soul is lacerated by seeing the hour of Divine Service trampled on by the opening of Sunday golf clubs and the playing of the bands. He suspects that God is allowing Southend to fill up the cup of wickedness, and then he will attend to it. So Mr. Rogers is leaving because he believes that God has said to him: "It is enough; leave the town to me." Evidently something awful is in preparation, and God has warned his servant, Rogers, to clear out, as the one faithful follower he has in that wicked town. Now, if Mr. Rogers can only convince the local property holders that the hour of the Lord is at hand, they might be willing to sell their holdings at knock-out prices. We wonder!

Disease should be regarded as a crime, declares Sir Arbutnot Lane. And how should the creator who designed disease as a necessary part of his scheme of things be regarded—as an arch-criminal?

The Rev. F. L. Wiseman says that the thought of Great Britain is undergoing a change from the individual to the community. We agree, but that is a measure of the extent to which we have passed from the Christian point of view. For the whole teaching of Christianity is that of individual salvation. Save your soul, what is the good of anything if there is no future life in which the individual can receive reward, has been the teaching of Christianity throughout the ages. And the result is seen in the mixture of conceit, impudence, and arrogance that meets us with so many of the Christian clergy. And all expressed under a mask of humility and self-depreciation that places hypocrisy upon the edifice as its religious coping stone.

The Liberal Church of Denver has appointed the Rev. W. Confins as "Bishop of Righteous Hell." He is the first bishop of hell that we remember reading of, and we are quite sure that he will have a large congregation should he ever visit his diocese. And when he gets there he will probably mix in much better company than ever he did in Denver.

Reaping in the Lord's vineyard is hard work, but it has its compensations. The Rev. Dr. A. Boyd Scott, minister of Lansdowne Church, Glasgow, has received a cheque for £1,050 and a bureau from the congregation to mark the semi-jubilee of his ministry. "Blessed are the poor," said Jesus. The reverend gentleman's congregation are evidently anxious that their pastor shall not be classed among the category of the "blesseds."

Let us get back with renewed confidence to the old supports. It is the Rev. L. Hubert Simpson who feels the need to "get back." Seemingly, good Christian people have been giving the old supports the go-by through lack of confidence in them. We are not surprised at that. The old supports have shown signs of wear and tear for a considerable time now. Freethought criticism has done its work well. The confidence of many Christians is shaken; and even the beautiful new coats of "modern interpretation" paint haven't restored that confidence. Hence the reverend gentleman's plaintive exhortation. These be sad times for the parsons.

This ought to please Mr. H. G. Wells. The scene is Kingswood Wesleyan College, Bath. The Prince of Wales is there to open new buildings and to unveil a brass memorial tablet. And last, but not exactly least, is the Deputy Chaplain-General to the Forces, wearing the robes of his office, and "adorned with a long row of glittering medals and decorations," such as is befitting to a humble follower of the Prince of Peace. In

"clear and ringing tones" he addresses the honoured guest in this wise:—

When, greatly daring, I presented the humble petition of the Governors that you would honour the School with a visit, I was overwhelmed by the readiness you displayed to meet our wishes.

and so on, *ad nauseum*. This feudal-minded parson deserves another glittering decoration.

It is perhaps worth while noting that the *Times*, although it takes up more than a column in reviewing the diary of the late Arthur Christopher Benson, makes no reference whatever to the disclosures therein of the writer's disbelief in religion. Perhaps it thought it would never do to point out that the son of an Archbishop was actually a Freethinker. And perhaps it is only to be expected that the son of an Archbishop would confess his heresy only to his diary, and leave it for his literary executors to make the discovery. We have often had occasion to point out the evil influence of Christianity on character. This may be taken as both an illustration and a justification.

"I always feel that the victory was God-given—snatched, as it were, from the very jaws of defeat." Thus, the Rev. J. H. Bateson, in a Brigadier-General's uniform, preaching an Armistice sermon in Wesley's Chapel. We should have a considerably better opinion of this Wesleyan parson's God had he given the victory on August 4th, 1914, instead of waiting until a million British soldiers were killed, 2,121,906 were wounded, 42,374 had contracted tuberculosis, and until 160,000 wives had lost their husbands, and 300,000 children their fathers. But perhaps it doesn't do to judge "Our Father's" wisdom by earthly or human standards. Who is the miserable Freethinker that he should find fault with Deity? The Allied Christians are satisfied. They know their prayers were answered, and that if another war comes the Lord God of Battles will respond again with another "snatched" victory. What more ought a Christian to expect?

Dr. F. W. Norwood said, at Manchester: "It is well that flashes of insight should be followed by confessions of ignorance." Later, he added, that he believed religion was the most progressive science in the world. "It begins a Doxology at the point where Science stops." Religion, we presume, begins its Doxology when the time arrives for "confessions of ignorance."

The reverend gentleman also said that he believed people had tried too much to base religion upon the definable and the expressible. The secret of religious unity, he thought, might be in the undefinable and the remote. This must be one of Dr. Norwood's "flashes of insight." We doubt if he can claim any originality for it, though. The Roman Catholic Church discovered the "secret" long ago. And this is, give the people plenty of mystery and the undefinable. They love mystery, and their common interest in it begets unity. The reverend gentleman appears to be edging Rome-ward all unbeknown to himself.

There is not going to be a drinking-saloon every hundred yards in the Kingdom of Heaven. The Rev. Dr. Grenfell, of Labrador, is quite sure of that. Yet we are assured by equally pious Spiritualist leaders—and on first-class evidence, too—that in the "other world" the departed enjoy whiskey and cigars. As we presume the spirits retain their earthly convivial instincts, it is but reasonable to believe that places are provided for serving out the liquor. Hence there is likely to be something akin to saloon-bars where the spirits can drink each other's health and discuss the latest earth news, as they did in days gone by. The two conflicting statements about Heaven are really a little confusing, since both parties claim to have first-hand information. We suggest

that our Spiritualist friends would help matters if they could get evidence of there being two Heavens—one for drinkers, and one for teetotalers. Information such as that might save many a perplexed Christian from drifting into Atheism.

We now have the definite demands of the Church of England with regard to education. It asks that in all schools, supported by the State, religious instruction shall be an integral part of the instruction given, that religious observances shall have a regular part in the curriculum, that the instruction shall be given by those who are qualified to give it and who believe what they teach, there must be advisory committees formed from local religious bodies, and the local authorities should be empowered to contribute to the building of, or build denominational schools. That is all, but it is evident that if these people get their way, religion will be more strongly and more definitely established in the schools than it has ever been.

The persistency of the Churches in this matter ought to arouse attention. Because Freethinkers are not daily lugged off to prison, and because a very small number of the clergy are modifying their orthodox teaching, it appears to be thought by some that the time for drastic fighting against Christianity has passed. Above all, the kind of thing outlined above should serve as a spur to all who do not believe in the State endowment of religion to withdraw their children from all forms of religious instruction. We should like to see these people get together in every town and agree to withdraw their children. We know what is usually said about the manner in which children who are so withdrawn suffer, and we are ready to believe that there is very little in the shape of spiteful and petty persecution, to which the average Christian will not stoop when his religious feelings are aroused. All the more need for concerted action, which would serve to prevent this persecution taking place.

The S.P.C.K. publish *The Achievements of Christianity*. The book seems to us incomplete. Some of the finest achievements known to Christian history are missing. There is no mention of the torture and slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Jews, the butchery of thousands of innocent old women as witches, the persecution of unbelievers, the clerical opposition to most social reforms, the subjection of women, the condoning of slave-holding, and the inhuman treatment of offenders against the law. These are but a few achievements out of many that might have found a place in the book. Possibly it was modesty that led to their omission. But there is surely a limit to which this should go. When modesty runs to excess it becomes a vice.

Those who love the Sunday School do not fear Atheism, but they do fear the monumental indifference with which they are faced to-day. This is the opinion of Mr. A. Ward, headmaster of the Central Boys' School, at Blackburn. We hope this pious gentleman has studied the replies to the Rev. F. C. Spurr's questionnaire, eliciting the attitude of modern youth toward religion. To a man with his eyes open, the fact should be apparent that the replies of the indifferents are not unconnected with the spread of that Atheism which all good Bible punchers are said not to fear.

A Methodist writes at large about "Christian Liberty and Christian Knowledge." These commodities are, no doubt, very wonderful things in their way, but the man or woman who prefers them to real liberty and real knowledge needs to get his mental apparatus spring-cleaned.

The Franciscans have erected a new church at Jerusalem on the alleged site of the Garden of Gethsemane. The building is of marble, and its estimated cost is £625,000. We hazard a guess that the bulk of the money was conjured out of the pockets of poor persons living in hovels or in a mere room or two. It is astonishing how easy it is to get money for building marble palaces for God to live in, yet how difficult it is to obtain money and building materials for housing the hundreds of thousands who have no decent roof over their heads. Perhaps things will be different when the Christian peoples begin to put man's necessities first and God's last.

Canon Spencer Elliott, of St. Paul's, Sheffield, recently expounded the meaning of Holy Communion. One of his remarks was that no one could now view religion as much upon subjective experience as was common years ago. Modern psychology had changed our habit in this matter. It had given us a better understanding of ourselves. We hope the Canon appreciates the fact that it is from science, not religion, that we have gained a better understanding of ourselves.

Caning, and plenty of it, in our schools, is what the Rev. D. Morse-Boycott believes in. He says that, on looking back at his own school-days, he realizes that no punishment ever did him so much good as a walloping—and he was, he says, constantly under-dosed. Is the reverend gentleman inviting us to admire him as a specimen of the type of person produced by the flogging system? If so, it would appear that flogging did not cure him of childish egotism. But we are not surprised at a Christian clergyman standing up for the purifying influence of the lash. A brutal creed naturally favours brutal methods.

The film industry is thirty years old, yet the Churches and educational authorities have not taken a hand in steering it for the benefit of mankind, says Canon Chase, of New York. Heaven forbid that the industry be steered by the Churches! For they can only steer in a circle with the Bible and narrow pietism as its centre. And even a half-wit knows that we cannot go forward while one's course is a circle. But in justice to them, it should be added that they do the best they can. They see to it that nothing shall appear on the films that make an attack on Christianity. And very much is put in order to placate religious prejudice.

When Christians talk of the opposition of Christianity to slavery, it is as well to remember that the oldest of Christian States is Abyssinia, which is not usually reckoned a model of civilization, and that in Abyssinia, according to Mr. J. H. Harris, in his recently issued "Slavery, or Sacred Trust?" there are no less than two million slaves. If other Christians object, we feel sure that Abyssinian Christians will be able, as did the Christians of the Southern States of America, to put a good biblical defence of the practice.

A Norfolk vicar has struck a new method of getting people to Church. He has secured a motor 'bus, with which he calls personally on those who care for him to call, and drives them to and from Church free of charge. Now, if some parson, say, at Brighton or Ramsgate, will set up a service for Londoners during the summer months, taking them down on the Saturday and bringing them back on the Monday morning, we feel we can safely promise him plenty of passengers. We shall expect to see in the near future notices outside the Churches promising free lunches for all who will come to service. After all, a parson must get custom somehow. But we should not be at all surprised to find the same parson preaching on man's insatiable craving for religion—and free rides.

The "Freethinker" Endowment Trust.

I HAVE two interesting items to chronicle this week in connection with this Trust. Mr. C. Bush, one of the Trustees, who gave a very handsome subscription last year, has promised to give £150 provided the sum necessary to secure the £1,000 offered by Mr. Peabody is completed.

Mr. H. Jessop, the Secretary of the Trust, who gave £500 last year, and has promised £200 on the same conditions as Mr. Easterbrook and Mr. Peabody, has placed to the credit of the Trust £86 gs. 8d. for the following purpose. There were some legal expenses in forming the Trust, and there were various stocks purchased at market prices, that were above par, and there were brokers' charges in the purchase and transfer of the stock. The whole of these expenses amounted to the sum named. Mr. Jessop says he wishes every subscription to go to the Trust in full, and so has paid all the expenses incurred in forming the Trust, the amount paid above par for stocks and the broker's charges. That leaves the Trust free of all expense, and with everything bought at the face value of the stock.

Now, these things give me an occasion for saying what I have been feeling for two or three weeks. And as I do not often grumble at the support given—I have never grumbled before—I may as well ease my mind and have done with it.

This year's special appeal has yielded well over £600. That is not an insignificant sum, and if that had been subscribed by, say, a couple of thousand readers of the *Freethinker*, I should have nothing of which to complain. But this is not the case. Some very substantial sums have been given, and in every instance these were given, not to take the place of those who could afford only small sums, but to show that those who were responsible for the formation and the working of the Trust are in deadly earnest. They mean the Trust to be a success, and they gave as they did give, in the hopes that *all* interested would do their share, whether what they did was much or little. I am bound to say that all have not done their share up to the present. I know quite well that times are bad, and that many cannot give as much as they would like, and so, perhaps, do not give at all. That simply will not do, and I should not be acting fairly to those who have supported the Trust so handsomely if I did not plainly say so. I know many who could help if they would, and there must be a couple of thousand readers of the paper, who are interested in its work, and profess themselves deeply interested in the cause the paper serves, who could send along at least £1 each before the next week is over, and a still larger number who could send smaller sums. It was partly in the hopes of encouraging readers to do this that the larger sums were subscribed. Mr. Peabody offered his £1,000 for no other reason. I know this gentleman well, and I know he is anxious to pay that money over as soon as possible. But he wishes to see, and is justified in so wishing, all to do what they can to help. And that is the aim of each of the Trustees.

I may be excused thus lecturing others, for although my name does not figure on the subscription list, I am as large a subscriber as anyone. I give my subscription—not for one year, but for every year—by doing the work of the paper single-handed so as to save expense, and by taking myself a salary that many a working man would turn up his nose at. I am supposed, for all I do on the paper, to take the magnificent sum of three guineas per week. The salary was not offered me, I fixed it myself, and our accountant

could inform anyone that often I do not get it. I think, therefore, I am warranted in saying that I am a regular and a large subscriber to the paper. And I am not working to make the Trust a success because I shall in any way benefit from it. The Trust is for the sole purpose of clearing off the deficit. No one will benefit from it in any way, except the benefit and pleasure that will come from seeing a continuous worry ended, the paper placed in a position of financial security, and the need for an annual appeal for financial help ended.

I say, then, with all seriousness, that every Freethinker in the country who values the work the *Freethinker* has done and is doing, ought to do what he can to help a scheme of this description. I am not writing in a panic. The *Freethinker* will not die. I said when G. W. Foote died and friends were writing me as to what would become of the paper, that they need be under no alarm, the paper would live. It has lived—through twelve years of stress and strain that has killed hundreds of other papers. And it has lived because of the devotion of a number of friends to the Cause for which it stands. I have been proud of their help, and proud of the opinion they have expressed of what I have been able to do.

I am writing as I have written to say quite plainly to the widespread body of *Freethinker* readers what they might do, and what they ought to do. The Endowment Trust is the one chance that Freethinkers have had, during the 45 years of the existence of this paper to place it in a position of complete financial independence. It is the duty of all to make the most of the opportunity before them.

Previously acknowledged (Corrected total), £515 13s. 6d.; J. Breese, £5; W. Nelson, £10; Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Finney, £1; E. Wilson, 10s.; H. Harland, 6s.; H. Jessop, £86 gs. 8d. Total £618 19s. 2d.

Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the *Freethinker* Endowment Trust, and addressed to me at 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4. Every contribution will be acknowledged week by week in the *Freethinker*.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

To Correspondents.

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

G. A. CAMPBELL.—The passage quoted is from Principal Donaldson's *Woman*. The full passage, with others from various authorities will be found in Mr. Cohen's *Woman and Christianity*, published at 1s.

J. B. APPLGATE.—Thanks for verses, which we regret we are unable to use.

F. JACKSON.—We do not care to tell readers what they should subscribe to the Endowment Trust. What we want to see is a thoroughly concerted effort. And the sender of a small sum is quite as welcome as the sender of a large one.

J. BREESE.—One day the leading Freethought writers may receive their due recognition, but it will be a long time after they are dead. Luckily, they are not of the kind that write for public praise. If they were they would not keep to the job long. Perhaps that accounts for the fact that many do commence on the right lines, and then gradually fade out. The greater honour to those who remain.

J. SAMUEL.—The nearest place for you is the South London Branch, which holds its Sunday evening meetings at 30 Brixton Road, at 7 o'clock.

R. RAWLINSON.—We have never said that the clergy *cannot* tell the truth about religion, only that they seldom do so, and have no inducement and no encouragement to be honest in the matter.

W. SMITH.—Crowded out this week.

S. L.—Sorry, but the letter is much too lengthy for the importance of the subject discussed. Brevity is a jewel—particularly when writing to a paper. And it is an aid to clarity of thought to be compelled to be brief.

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.

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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

To-day (November 28), Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Battersea Town Hall, Lavender Hill, at 7.30 p.m. His subject will be the "Passing of the Gods," and good audiences are anticipated. It is very many years since Mr. Cohen lectured in that district, although there are very large numbers of Freethinkers there, and it is hoped that they will make the meeting known among their Christian friends. The hall can be reached by Tram No. 26 from Blackfriars Bridge, or 77 from Westminster Bridge, and is five minutes from Clapham Junction Tube Station.

There were excellent audiences in Nottingham at Mr. Cohen's meetings on Sunday. In the afternoon, the Mechanic's Institute was more than crowded, many were unable to gain admission, and in the evening there was a fine audience at the Victoria Baths. This is a huge place, and considering the very small amount of advertising that had been done, the gathering was a remarkable one. Mr. T. Mozley acted as Chairman in the afternoon, and Mr. Shaw in the evening. Both discharged their duties with admirable firmness and discretion.

Mr. R. H. Rosetti visits Manchester to-day, and will lecture in the Engineer's Hall, Rusholme Road, at 3 on "The Church and Recent Events," and at 6.30 "Twenty Centuries of Spiritual Imposture." There should be, as is usual, good meetings.

Miss Ettie Ront has followed up her *Maori Symbolism with Native Diet*, in which she gives an account of the Maori teaching with regard to food, the methods of cultivation, the nature of the food raised, with some practical recipes for the preparation of the different foods, which, she argues, ought to be raised in this country. Those interested in the origin and introduction of our European food stuffs will find much in this volume that will interest them. The book is published by Messrs. Heinemann, at 6s., and has a number of plates.

Our own struggle to make ends meet leads us to congratulate our American contemporary, the New York

Truthseeker, on once more being well within sight of making up its annual "Sustaining Fund." Friend Macdonald requires five thousand dollars a year to keep the flag flying, and by November 13, he had already received within 480 dollars of that amount. And there is still six weeks to go to the end of the year. We congratulate all concerned.

Providence shows its activity in peculiar ways, and in passing certain decrees through the Italian Senate—one can scarcely call them laws—the Minister of Justice explained that the new decrees, which suppress all papers and all persons who venture to criticise Fascism, and establishes as complete a form of tyranny as has as yet been seen, were not to protect Mussolini, as his life "would be inviolable by the will of Providence." Which makes us say, again, that Providence expresses its partiality in the most unaccountable manner.

The Rejected Invitation.

(Mat. xxii. 1-14; Lk. xiv. 16-24.)¹

I.

COMPARISON OF THE TWO ACCOUNTS.

I. *The Common Details.*—1. Invitations to an important meal. 2. Readiness of the meal duly announced to the invited but absent guests. 3. Disobedience of these persons to this invitation, partly from their commercial preoccupations. 4. Anger of the host. 5. A fresh lot of persons invited, and the invitations obeyed.

II. *The Principal Differences.* 1. One host a king; the other, a private man. 2. One meal "a marriage feast"; the other, "a great supper." 3. The king employs "servants"; the private man a "servant." 4. The king sends twice to call the previously invited guests; the private man does this but once. 5. The king takes vengeance for his rejected invitations; the private man does not. 6. The king sends once for other guests; the private man sends twice.

II.

THE STORY AND ITS MEANING.

I. *The Matthaean Version.*—This is indeed a wild tale. The king is an oriental despot of the worst type, yet the guests whom he has bidden to his son's marriage-feast, and who are his own subjects, venture to incur his displeasure by ignoring his first reminder, and by treating his second with mockery, to which they add the grave offence of outraging and slaying his messengers. This conduct certainly deserved punishment, but instead of letting the police apprehend the offenders, who, as intended guests of a wedding-feast, must have been relatively few in number, the king sends out whole "armies" to destroy "those murderers," and to fire "their city," which of course is his own capital. Then he desires other guests for the feast, which during the mobilization, the massacre, and the fire, has been waiting ready cooked, but still unspoiled. As the notables have all perished, he orders his servants to visit "the partings of the highways," and invite indiscriminately the passers-by. This is done, "bad and good" are collected, and the place is "filled." Finally, on coming to view the festive throng, he finds a man without the festive garment which oriental hosts have ready for their guests, and which is handed to each one upon demand. Here was no doubt a grave omission, but still it would have been adequately punished by the ejection of the careless

¹ In *Bereshith Rabba*, sect. 62, fol. 60, there is a parable very similar to this, and another still more so in *Sohar Levit*, fol. 40.—A. Clarke, on Matthew xxii. 2.

man into the sun-kissed, or moon-blighted street. Instead of this, however, the king gives orders to his servants, saying, "Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth"—really the punishment does not fit the crime.

There can be no doubt respecting the signification of the characters and the episodes in this version. The king is Almighty God. The king's son is Jesus Christ. The marriage-feast is that in celebration of the union between the bridegroom Christ and his bride the Church. The guests who were originally invited, but who received the invitation at first with indifference, and then with hostility, are the Jewish people. The "servants," outraged and slain, are the apostles. The "armies" sent by the king to destroy the "murderers" and to fire "their city," are the Roman legions which in A.D. 70 under Titus, son of the Emperor Vespasian, slaughtered vast numbers of Jews, and reduced Jerusalem to a heap of ruins. The guests subsequently invited, to wit, those sought for at "the partings of the highways," are Gentiles. In this scheme, the gross confusion between the bride and the guests is similar to that which occurs in *The Revelation*.² There we read, "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.....Blessed are they which are invited to the marriage-supper of the Lamb"; but as the Church stands for the bride, it is hard to discover the identity of the guests.

The meaning of the marriage-robe is explicable by a passage in *Isaiah*,³ "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath clothed me with the robe of righteousness."

II. *The Lucan Version*.—This avoids all the absurdities of the other account. Here the host is only "a certain man"; the meal, only "a great supper"; and the reminder, only once sent out. The guests do not refuse rudely, but make admirable excuses. The host is naturally vexed; but he has no remedy, and seeks no vengeance. He sends first "into the streets and lanes of the city"; and then, because "there is yet room," "into the highways and hedges." The sole improbability is that the "servant" at his second dispatch was ordered to "constrain" the wayfarers "to come in"; but even this is perhaps not so strange as might casually appear, for it may well be supposed that whilst the destitute needed no constraint, the rest had previous engagements, or preferred other distractions. Luke, though some times very careless, was a literary artist of indisputable genius; and in this instance he has surpassed himself, turning an Irish cabin into a French villa. The circumstances of the present version of the parable render the moral less clear than in the other case. Matthew indeed says that upon the second reminder, "one went to his own farm, and another to his merchandise"; but he adds that the rest outraged and murdered the messengers. Luke, on the other hand, whilst insisting that the purchase of land and the purchase of oxen, and the claims of domesticity, evidently of opulent domesticity kept the invited guests from taking advantage of the invitation, does not say a word about their deriding it much less about their murdering the persons sent to repeat it. Thus, according to his account the refusal was solely occasioned by what he elsewhere terms "the cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life"; and the refusers did not manifest any ill-will towards the giver of the supper, or any discourtesy towards his messengers. Moreover, although Luke, like Matthew, represents the refusers as mem-

bers of the well-to-do class, he differs from him in representing their substitutes as poor people, apparently as beggars and indigent cripples. Thus it might seem that the moral here intended is the advantage of poverty over wealth respectively to the chances of salvation. This superiority is clearly taught in other parts of Luke's Gospel. Here Jesus exclaims, "Blessed are ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.....but woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation";⁴ and he supports this teaching by the impressive parable of Dives and Lazarus⁵—not to mention that of the Rich Fool.⁶ But plausible as the above interpretation may appear, it does not suffice to explain a certain striking and characteristic feature in Luke's version of the present parable. There, when "the poor, and maimed, and blind, and lame" have been brought in "out of the streets and lanes of the city," as substitutes for the well-to-do persons originally called, the servant charged with the invitations remarks to his lord, "Yet there is room," whereupon the latter replies, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and constrain them to come in that my house may be filled." Thus, according to Luke, there were three calls, first to those with fields, oxen, and houses; then, to the destitute of the city, sound or infirm; and, finally, to the rovers and idlers of the highways and hedges. Hence it appears that the first two calls are directed to two different classes of the Jewish people; and that the third call is directed to the Gentiles. In this manner, Luke whilst introducing a new moral into the parable agreeably with his peculiar views respecting wealth and poverty, still retains the old moral about the rejection of the Jews and the vocation of the Gentiles. "The wedding is ready, but they that were bidden were not worthy," says the host in *Matthew*. "I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper," says the one in *Luke*.

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

(To be Concluded.)

Strange Tales.

We have an injunction on excellent authority to "search the scriptures for in them ye think ye have eternal life." Note the word "think" in this connection. There is no guarantee. The sacred writer is too cautious for that. He had in mind Shakespeare's dictum:—

There's nothing either good or ill,
But thinking makes it so.

Recently, in a literary paper, a correspondent gave a list of books he had read during the last five years. I admired his wonderful capacity and the variety of his mental calories. But what struck me was the fact that he had read the Bible through five times. That is, once a year. Prodigious! The man must be a literary ostrich.

Years ago, I started to read the Bible through. I had joined a Bible-reading society and I thought if I read a chapter a day I should be entitled to eternal life. At that time I was not anxious to shuffle off. Life is sweet at one-and-twenty.

Freethinkers are sometimes credited with being great readers of the Bible. Indeed, some say they are the most zealous students. However, that may be, I heard a sermon the other night based on a text not to be found in Scripture. It was taken from an alleged discovery of new sayings of Jesus.

² xix. 7-9.

³ lxi. 10.

⁴ vi. 20-24.

⁵ xvi. 19-31.

⁶ xii. 16-21.

The implication was worthy enough. The words were, "Make a friend."

By wrenching the context one can find any kind of peg to hang a sermon on. You have heard of the adventurous person who took as his text, "Hang all the law and the prophets."

In my Bible-reading I struck somewhere in Chronicles. You see, I had read a good deal of the same information in Kings, and I had no time for repetition. Besides, I wanted to get on with *Sartor Resartus*. I desired to indulge in sins I was inclined to, by damning those I had no mind to.

Burns, you remember, in that douce Scotch poem, "The Cottars' Saturday Night," draws a fine picture of the auld Scot and his family at prayers. The bonnet reverently is laid aside, while no doubt the youngsters read verse and verse about, as I, too, had done years ago.

But I dare wager young Jennie was thinking more of that young man over the moor than her particular verse in Deuteronomy.

I was greatly upset once when I heard Mr. Bradlaugh refer to Egyptian civilization 7,000 years ago. "Dear, dear," thought I, "here I am in a pickle. The world has only been created about 6,000 years, so how came those Egyptians?" It was lack of faith on my part, and a too literal acceptance of Usher's chronology.

Archbishop Usher made a great mistake. If he were alive to-day he would be cuter. He failed to give himself plenty of rope. He tried to be too accurate. He, or his friends went the length of affirming that this wondrous planet was created on a Monday in October at 3.30 p.m.

Well, Sir Oliver Lodge can tell you how many grains of sand there is at Brighton, or how many atoms are packed side by side on the film of a soap bubble. So I think Usher's friends may be excused for timing the Creation.

Cannot you see our revered parent, set and dried, furnished with a sparking-plug, telling Eve all about the magneto, with a stop-watch in his hand?

ALAN TYNDAL.

The Professor and the Parson.

TRULY a great event for my little town was the visit of Professor J. A. Thomson to the Y.M.C.A. The late Dr. Landsbury of scientific memory, formerly minister of a local church, now named after him, was the father of the Professor's mother, so he had "Saltcoats blood in his veins," which sentiment might account for the honour of the visit. The present incumbent of the church was the Professor's host, had been his college chum at Edinburgh, and "best man" at his wedding, himself remaining a bachelor. The minister, as chairman, made the most of these intimate details in some pleasant old-wifely humour—little compatible with the lecture that followed, but excusable—in a parson!

The minister is a man of virile, if superficial, energy and intelligence, what his friends call "spirituality": The Professor is slow and cool and commonplace—not in his language—one could not help contrasting the divergent paths of the two minds. A "youthful" churchman said to me he admired the Professor's adherence to religion; but religion or none, politic or sincere, it was not hinted at in the address. As one listened one wondered what the parsons present were thinking—or if they thought at all! Very grandly the speaker outlined, in its evolutionary aspect, "The Drama of Animal Life." "If this was not dramatic

nothing was," and one sensed the super tragic in the unfolding tale. All was necessarily adaptation to environment. We were shown on the screen a beautiful Australian lizard or chameleon "even now getting on to its hind legs"—not greatly advanced, we might say, but given two or three million years there was no knowing what it might become. The golden eagle, on the other hand, was a highly specialised animal and little likely to advance further. We were told of the great whale moving open-mouthed through the seas at six or seven miles an hour, collecting in the whalebone contrivance of its cavernous mouth thousands of millions of tiny and beautiful creatures. The microscope revealed the amazing structural beauty of the tiniest organic and inorganic things. Nature's products were all unerringly shaped in beauty. We were shown the white, fragile skeleton of a creature from the deep ocean bed, such as a child could crush to powder in its hand, but because porous, the inner and outer pressure at the sea bottom was equalised. The expression, "the brains of a hen" was a libel on a most intelligent fowl. Domesticated, the hen tended to degenerate, but from the shell always bred back to type. Fluffy chickens were shown us, suggesting, as in all youth, intelligence, innocence, love, and beauty, all endearing and engaging, yet, though the Professor did not say so, food, if necessary, for Nature red in tooth and claw. There was quite too much, said the speaker, of this tooth and claw talk, for, after all, the tendency of evolution was to produce ever nobler forms of body and mind, and instanced the difference between the Eohippus and the modern horse. The wonder of the flowers was noted, the wisdom of the ants—especially those "agricultural" fungus-growing ants of South America—with reference to the migration of eels and birds—wonders on wonders of the yet but half expounded Scripture of Natural History. Very apt and fine were the lines from the poets and prose-writers given at intervals, including Ruskin's glowing eulogy of the beauty of the snake. This drama had been staged for at least a hundred million years—not the actors only, but the stage itself had changed and passed.

A quite elementary treatment of a great subject, befitting Sunday-school intelligence, but what a change in the human mind to make even this possible! Not the Professor's actual words or full meanings have been given, but the impression, in vivid contrast, of *this* teaching and of *that*.

There is the reflection, also, that in the professorial and clerical, as in the common mind, it is quite natural, necessary, inevitable, some vague cushion of comfort should interpose itself between it and the hard facts of reality—is it not cruel to take it away? Is it not emulating the hair-shirt hermit to torture ourselves too much and too consistently with those melancholy "realities of life"? There is one more heretical reflection: one main reason why the *Freethinker* has such a specialised and rare public is owing to the melancholy fact that in giving the whole truth as it does, it gives what most people are happier without; and, conversely, the Church flourishes happily on the amiable ignorance and error of its following. And yet we, who so righteously and heroically endure the hair-shirt of Truth, would not have it otherwise; and, fond of elegance and comfort as he is, we are sure our editor would be the last to exchange his heretical hirsute for the orthodox lawn.

ANDREW MILLAR.

Leisure without books is death, and burial of a man alive.—*Seneca*.

Drama and Dramatists.

THOSE readers who availed themselves of an opportunity to see the play, "Gas," by Georg Kaiser, at the Gate Theatre Salon, would, we feel sure, not be disappointed. The author is well ahead of the times, and by this we do not mean that he has a plan to reach Australia in five minutes, speed up traffic, or blow up a continent with an ounce of chemical. Far from it. He is insistent on man knowing himself. He is only interested in man, and when this interest is absent, these notes disappear. His thesis is the development of man from the peasant age to the mechanical age, and, thanks be to the Gods, an emergence from this age to a commonsense blending of the two. With the presentation of all views, without bias or prejudice for aristocrat or artisan, Mr. Georg Kaiser beholds life, and, like a gallant struggler, says this something better is possible. Swedenborg, when his feet were on the ground, wrote that the world would be a cold place if the word "love" disappeared. When we have no plays like "Gas," when we have no band of artists to shape a purpose to life like Mr. Peter Godfrey and his company, then, and then only, shall we reach down *Ecclesiastes* and mope over the pages. The pint pot of the Church will not hold mankind; the English drama cradled on the altar has now left that place behind, and if it will only tell man how good he is, how potential he is for nobility, how plastic is life, and how ready we are for a departure from the Stone Age of the last two thousand years that has had as its refrain to man "how bad you are," we shall not quarrel with anyone who hears the quiring of the spheres to celebrate the event.

In the preface to *Aristotle's Art of Poetry*, translated by Mr. Ingram Bywater (Oxford and Clarendon Press), a few words are arresting. The writer, Mr. Gilbert Murray, says, "You look up to the characters of tragedy, and down upon those of comedy." This is true and excellently stated. May we gather an index from this into the intellectual state of a nation? The preponderance of comedy in a community might reveal much on this standard. The greatest dramatists are universal men; Shakespeare is remembered more for his tragedies than his comedies, and Aristophanes stands in the shadows cast by Æschylus and Sophocles, who were the real high priests of mankind. Through the mechanism of myth the Greek children were taught to look up. Our inheritance from them is also something that did not escape from Pandora's box. "What a revolution for mankind it would be to get back the good conscience," writes Mr. Edward Moore in *We Moderns*. "Life made innocent, washed free from how much filth of remorse, guilt, contempt, 'sin'—that vision arouses a longing more intense than that of the religious heaven." There is a Freethinker's amen to that and a distant hope in the function of the drama.

Many years ago when the steam-roller on the road had to be heralded by a man with a red flag, the coming of the drama to a small provincial town was looked forward to as a taste of heaven. Gaudy caravans, stacks of properties, and general commotion signalled the entry of Wall's Phantoscope. A small stage was made in the Market Square: the entrance was over a raised platform on which was an organ worked by steam. Glittering trumpets, small Arab figures that struck bells and triangles, and a daily announcement of three acts and a farce, acted like the Pied Piper to scrubby-headed boys, and girls who dressed their hair in pig-tail fashion. How we would live and die for the heroine in "The Mistletoe Bough." Incidental music from a harmonium tuned up expectancy; grown-ups would also flock inside to the make-believe of smiles and tears, whilst the real tragedy was going on outside with the unfortunates who could not obtain the magic to enter. Fascination took us to the place in the morning; on a fire made on the ground was a frying pan containing a burnt cork, and our heroine, for whom we cried, was closely watching our movements from the caravan door.

Pale and beautiful she was; probably she had just finished washing the dishes. Our admiration is admiration still for the lovely woman who was the mouth-piece of Melpomene. For the little stage bound us all in unity for a few hours—this, no small feat, for the Saxon spirit is morose, individualistic, independent, separatist. When the Saxon takes his beer on the pavement like his continental brothers we may begin to see the growth of brotherly love, that pink elephant, the exclusive property of those who would not only make man look down, but force him on his knees to do it. Tragedy then shall make us look up to man struggling in a world into which he was not invited, but he shall face life without the leaden weight of original sin round his neck. Many of our modern dramatists are still struggling with this theological conception, and their proper place is the Church that finds man vile, and profitable to delude him that he is vile.

WILLIAM REPTON.

Correspondence.

RELIGION AND SEPARATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The judgment in *Alley v. Alley* does not explain why Roman Catholic husbands or wives should claim separation when they might obtain divorce—especially as divorce gives the wife better financial security than separation. So long as the petitioner does not marry again he or she commits no sin by leaving the respondent legally free to do so.

The bigger question arises—why the law should allow the alternative remedy of separation at all, for the latter remedy is regarded in some countries as an offence against public policy. There might be good cause for a probationary separation for, perhaps, three years, but it should then mature into divorce. Many reformers (including the first Lord Gorell) pointed out more than twenty years ago that the guilty party suffered more from a decree of separation than from a decree of divorce in the case of an honest and genuine attachment to a third party. A decree of final separation can only suit the rake, who can always decline marriage because of a legal tie, which is not a human tie. Moreover, to give this power of choosing a remedy to the innocent party favours not only vindictive motives, but might lead, in some cases, to the secret and unlawful extortion of money from the guilty party.

E. S. P. HAYNES.

"MAORI SYMBOLISM."

SIR,—I know it is unfortunate that such books must necessarily be expensive, and the only suggestions I can make are that several friends should club together and buy a copy jointly, or apply to their respective libraries. I have tried to meet the need for cheaper books by embodying some of the information in small volumes, e.g., *Native Diet* (Heinemann, 6s. net) contains the Food Legends, with practical recipes; *Sex and Exercise* (Heinemann, 6s. net) contains the women's health exercises; and my husband's book, *The Culture of the Abdomen* (Heinemann, 6s.) contains his system of exercises based on the native dances, and *Physical Fitness in Middle Life* (Cassell, 6s. net) contains general advice on health. *Native Diet* also gives the cultivation legends in regard to terrace gardens. There were so many photographs and drawings to be embodied in *Maori Symbolism* that the book could not be produced for less than 21s. This book is really a report of evidence: the legends are not my own theories, but simply the native traditions, particularly the health and diet traditions. The script has not yet been compared with ancient Mediterranean and other scripts.

ETTIE A. ROUT (Mrs. F. A. Hornibrook).

What you have done to another, you may expect from another.—*Publius Syrus*.

Society News.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.

A lively discussion followed Mr. Leonard Ebury's somewhat provocative address last Sunday, but, under the genial chairmanship of M. Ratcliffe, the greatest good humour and tolerance prevailed. To-day, Mr. Rex Roberts, whose visits we always enjoy, will address us on "Some Burning Questions," and we hope for a good audience.—K. B. K.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY.

On Sunday, November 21, Mr. W. M. M. MacEwan lectured to the Glasgow Branch on "The Meaning of Secularism." Mr. MacEwan's vigorous and eloquent exposition was followed by many questions and much discussion. Controversy centred on the relation of Secularism to Politics, and the interpretation of the Principles and Objects of the National Secular Society was, at times, reminiscent of the "higher criticism." On Sunday, November 28, Mr. Fred Mann will lecture on "Lord Birkenhead forgets Charles Bradlaugh."

Obituary.

We regret to record the death of Mr. Joseph Tage, of Hogtow, near Preston. Mr. Tage had been a Free-thinker for over 40 years, and his quiet, unassuming disposition and sterling character had won the respect of a large circle of friends. Almost his last words were: "Well, I don't know that I can call myself anything but an Atheist." After that, he spoke very little, but gradually lapsed into unconsciousness, and so passed away. In accordance with his wishes, a Secular Burial Service was read over the grave, which was listened to in silence by a large circle of friends and relatives. Preston Freethinkers mourn the loss of a good friend, his wife and children, a good husband and parent.—H. P.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road and three minutes from Camden Town Tube Station): 7.30, Mr. Rex Roberts, "Some Burning Questions."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Battersea Town Hall, Grand Hall): 7.30, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "The Passing of the Gods."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Mr. A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., "The Heart of Religion."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, S. K. Ratcliffe, "The Gospel of Henry Ford."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (101 Tottenham Court Road): 7.30, Mr. E. C. Saphin, "Joseph's Dream," Thursday, December 2, at the above Hall, at 7.30, Mr. A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., Recitation.

OUTDOOR.

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

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): 11.30 and 3 p.m. Speakers—Messrs. Botting, Hart, and Peacock.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Brassworkers' Hall, 70 Lionel Street): 7, Messrs. F. E. Willis, J.P., and E. C. Williams, "National Secular Society and the Use of the Schools." Questions and discussion cordially invited.

GLASGOW (Bakunin House, 13 Burnbank Gardens, Glasgow): Thursday, December 2, at 8, Mr. Guy A. Aldred, "Red Atheism and the Economists." Questions and discussions cordially invited.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY, Branch of the N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, "A" Door, Albion Street): 6.30, Mr. Fred Mann, "Lord Birkenhead forgets Charles Bradlaugh." Questions and discussion cordially invited. Silver Collection. The Branch will have a Social Evening in the D and F Café, High Street, Glasgow, at 6.30 p.m., on Saturday, December 4. Tickets 2s. 6d. A Public Debate on "Was Jesus a Socialist?" will be held in the City Hall, Candleriggs, at 7.30 p.m., on Monday, December 6. Affirmative, Mr. Guy A. Aldred; Negative, Mr. George Whitehead. Questions. Tickets 6d. Tickets for Social and Debate can be had at the meetings on Sunday.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Dora Russell, A Lecture.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, 120 Rusholme Road): Mr. R. H. Rosetti, 3, "The Church and Recent Events"; 6.30, "Twenty Centuries of Spiritual Imposture."

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