

# The Free Thinker

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## MR. GLADSTONE AND MRS. BESANT.

MR. GLADSTONE continues his theological excursions in the *Nineteenth Century*. Last month he wrote on Heresy and Schism; this month he writes on the Atonement. Perhaps he will complete his labors by writing on the Trinity and the Immaculate Conception. The former of these doctrines would admirably suit his mysterious style of composition, while the latter would afford a rare opportunity for the exercise of his characteristic subtlety.

Mr. Gladstone's defence of the Atonement is extremely labored. He works it out unto *twelfthly*, after the fashion of the most cumbrous of our old preachers, who sometimes went on to *nineteenthly*, amidst the yawns and snores of their congregations. Mr. Gladstone is great as an orator, for the fine quality of his voice, and the rare significance of his gestures and expression, would give a charm to the poorest substance of his speech. But all these advantages are lost when he exchanges the tongue for the pen. He does indeed retain the art of the rhetorician, and his periods are sonorous, if not musical; but he ceases to be stimulating and refreshing.

Put into a nutshell, what is the real substance of Mr. Gladstone's plea for the Atonement? He admits that the innocent suffers for the guilty, as is often the case in the affairs of this world; nevertheless the Atonement "is mystery, but is not injustice." Acceptance of Christ as our Savior implies an embracing of the "means of grace," and this involves a renovation of our sinful natures, by which means we are reconciled to God, who forgives us our sins when we are sincerely repentant. We are not thus relieved from the "internal" consequences of sin, for wounds will leave scars, and evil habits will assert themselves; but we are relieved from the "external" consequences of sin; that is to say, God will not remember our pardoned sin against us. Mr. Gladstone does not, however, tell us what this precisely amounts to *in fact*. In the whole of his article he never once mentions heaven or hell, without which the Atonement loses all its historical meaning. Mr. Gladstone is really bringing the "mystery" of the Atonement down to the level of an earthly transaction, and the death of Christ into a line with the death of other characters whose sufferings have been a "sacrifice" for the good of the world.

The common doctrine of the Atonement, against which Mrs. Besant in her younger days revolted, is declared by Mr. Gladstone to be an "utterly modern caricature." It is not the doctrine of the Fathers of the Christian Church, nor of "the Churches" themselves. Sin is not an I O U, which God holds and Christ cancels. The sinner is not a prisoner for debt, whom Christ releases by paying the account in full. The "ethical" part of the Atonement is, in such a notion, entirely left out of sight; indeed, the doctrine is "so stated as if good had been undeservedly obtained for the sinner, by the infliction of evil undeservedly upon the righteous."

It is a pity that Mr. Gladstone did not go further back than "the Fathers." His primary appeal should have been to the Scripture, where he would have found plenty of awkward texts to handle. What he calls "that utterly modern caricature of the doctrine of the Atonement" is distinctly supported by the text, "Ye are bought with a price." Christ is set forth in the New Testament, not only as a "propitiation," but also as a "ransom." Surely it would have been an act of honesty to deal with such texts,

rather than to call the doctrine derived from them a "caricature." Surely, also, it might have been expected that Mr. Gladstone would consider the Articles of his own Church—the Church of England. "We have been told at times," he says, "of the indiscriminating grace of God, which saves or consigns to damnation according to mere choice or pleasure, and irrespectively of anything in the persons whose destinies are to be so controlled; so that of two persons, exactly alike in point of service or offence, one is to be rescued and the other lost. The meaning of this would be that the sovereign pleasure of God did not move upon lines parallel to those of the moral law." Very likely. But this is the teaching of the Bible and of the Articles of the Church of England. What is the meaning of the text about God's having mercy on whom he will have mercy? Why did Paul take refuge, if not from moral objections, in the right of the potter over the clay, to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor? This very doctrine of absolute free grace was passionately maintained by all the Protestant Churches, as the primitive and scriptural doctrine, against the "gospel of works" taught by the Catholic Church. And indeed if you look at heaven and hell, and their sharp, eternal division, it is obvious that the Protestants were right. What real difference is there between the worst man who goes to heaven and the best man who goes to hell? Yet the difference of their fates is infinite. How then is it to be accounted for? It *cannot* be accounted for on any grounds of character or "service." It can *only* be accounted for by the free—that is, the arbitrary—grace of God.

Luther and other Protestant teachers tried to evade the immoral consequences of this doctrine by a logical subterfuge, which is patronised also by Mr. Gladstone. They saw—for they were neither fools nor blind—that God's despotic will, and man's utter helplessness, created what Mr. Gladstone calls "a license for transgression, instead of a powerful means for its avoidance." Accordingly they invented the fiction that, while good works were not conducive to salvation, they were proofs of saving faith; they did not help a man towards heaven, but they were signs that he was on the road to it. Still, they were only signs when connected with a consciousness of "grace"; for the greatest tenderness and the most splendid heroism were "displeasing" to God if manifested by a "heathen" or an "ethnick."

On the whole, it appears to us that Mr. Gladstone is really defending, not the doctrine of Scripture, nor the doctrine of the Church of England or any other Protestant body, but the doctrine of the Church of Rome. We should say that his article will give great satisfaction at the Vatican.

But it is not our intention to deal exclusively with Mr. Gladstone's view of the Atonement. Our readers will, in all probability, be far more interested in what he has to say on the subject of Mrs. Besant, whose recent Autobiography is the occasion of his article in the *Nineteenth Century*.

It has been said of Cromwell—indeed, Lord Rosebery says it, in his volume on Pitt—that he was a great man of action with a very imperfect gift of expression. To a certain extent this is true, but it is far from being entirely so. Cromwell's utterance was turbid when his feelings were mixed, or when his judgment was far ahead of his analysis of its reasons, or when he felt it more prudent to indulge in hints than in declarations. Nothing could be plainer or more straightforward than some of his letters

from the army to Parliament, or than his proclamation to the Catholics of Ireland; and no doubt the obscurest parts of his addresses as Lord Protector to his recalcitrant House of Commons were adequately illuminated by his gesture and expression. When a great soldier says "But," and puts his hand on the hilt of his sword, Cicero himself could not make the matter more intelligible.

Mr. Gladstone is not a Cromwell, but he is often as obscure, although his composition is excellent and his syntax is perfect. Yet he can be plain enough on occasion, and his criticism of Mrs. Besant is strong and luminous; how unlike his half-oracular utterance on the Atonement! With a swift, firm touch he lays bare some of the chief weakness of her mind and character. He admits that she is "a person highly gifted," which, indeed, she is, for her intellect is remarkably nimble, and she is one of the best public speakers in England. But her faculty is purely that of the born advocate. She lacks originality, and is doomed to be always someone's disciple. This is the key to unlock the mystery of her career, though Mr. Gladstone does not know enough of her to be aware of the fact. It is true, as he says, that she has "followed at all times her impulsions with an entire sincerity"; so much could hardly be contested by her worst enemy. But is he quite right in laying so much stress on her "egregious self-confidence," which he regards as "in itself a guarantee of failure in mental investigations"? Secondly, her fault may be self-confidence, but primarily it is a ridiculous confidence in other persons. She is always leaning upon an authority, or following an infallible teacher. Not perceiving this clearly, or not perceiving it at all, Mr. Gladstone is led into a clever but very cruel sarcasm. Referring to her childhood, he says: "She is sensible of having been much governed by vanity at this period of her life, while she does not inform us whether this quality spontaneously disappeared, or what had become of it in her later stages." This is likely to give a bitter point to Mrs. Besant's reply, which we suppose will be forthcoming. Yet it contains a certain element of truth. Mrs. Besant has always had a passion for being "in evidence," as the French say; and one obstacle to her ever becoming a Catholic is, that the Church of Rome offers women nothing but suffering and silence.

We will now produce the more personal part of Mr. Gladstone's criticism *in extenso* :—

"Instruction will be derived from the work at large; but probably not exactly the instruction intended by the authoress. Her readers will find that they are expected to feel a lively interest in her personality: and, in order that this interest may not be disappointed, they will find her presented to their view in no less than three portraits, at different portions of the volume. They will also find that the book is a spiritual itinerary, and that it shows with how much at least of intellectual ease, and what unquestioning assumptions of being right, vast spaces of mental travelling may be performed. The stages are, indeed, glaringly in contrast with one another; yet their violent contrarieties do not seem at any period to suggest to the writer so much as a doubt whether the mind, which so continually changes in attitude and color, can after all be very trustworthy in each and all its movements. . . . An ordinary mind would suppose that modesty was the one lesson which she could not have failed to learn from her extraordinary permutations; but the chemist who shall analyse by percentages the contents of these pages will not, I apprehend, be in a condition to report that of such an element he can find even the infinitesimal quantity usually and conveniently denominated a 'trace.' Her several schemes of belief, or non-belief, appear to have been entertained one after another, with the same undoubting confidence, until the junctures successively arrived for their not regretful, but rather contemptuous, rejection. They are nowhere based upon reasoning, but they rest upon one and the same authority—the authority of Mrs. Besant. In the general absence of argument to explain the cause of her movements, she apparently thinks it sufficient to supply us with her three portraits, as carrying with them sufficient attestation. If we ask upon which of her religions, or substitutes for religion, we are to place reliance, the reply would undoubtedly be, the last. Yes; but who is to assure us that it will be the last?"

That is, indeed, the question. He would be a bold prophet who predicted the last, or even the next, sweep of Mrs. Besant's meteoric flight. Mr. Gladstone points out in the course of this passage what we laid stress upon at the beginning of Mrs. Besant's theosophic avatar. It never gave her pause for a moment that she had been wrong before. She is always positively right *now*. A genius like

Newman, leaving the Church of England, accepts the humble duties of a curate in the Catholic Church, feeling that his long period of error called for modesty, if not silence, until he could at least satisfy himself and others that the change was permanent. Mrs. Besant is not kept back by such considerations. She vehemently advocates to-day with perfect self-confidence what she as vehemently opposed yesterday; and it is this impulsive element in her nature which gives force to Mr. Gladstone's criticism, as it justified the mistrust of her old Secular co-workers, who, nevertheless, parted from her with pain.

G. W. FOOTE.

## THE CHURCH AND DIVORCE.

THE Convocation of York has published a Report directed against divorce. The attitude of the Church on the question is one of complete antagonism. It says, with Jesus, "What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matt. xix. 6). Of course it is understood that the ministers of God who have done the joining may also do the sundering. The Catholic Church, which is claimed by Mr. W. S. Lilly as the great bulwark of marriage, permitted the Duke of Aosta to marry his niece, and, though Mr. Lilly assures us "divorce has no place within its fold," allowed the daughter of the Duke of Hamilton and the Prince of Monaco to dissolve their marriage vows. The ground on which it did so was curious. It alleged that, though outwardly consent to marriage was given, yet inward consent was wanting. This doctrine, that a contract may be broken because one of the parties does not give inward consent, may commend itself to free-lovers. Yet the Church is only known to put forward such a doctrine in the case of the wealthy.

The aphorism, "Whom God hath joined let no man put asunder," like so many others from the same source, looks very fine in theory, but does not work out well in practice. Perhaps it is because Satan sometimes takes the place of God in the joining performance. At any rate, every civilised nation now allows that there are circumstances under which a contract, flagrantly violated by one partner, is no longer binding on the other. Now, it is noticeable that the Bible legislation on the subject is altogether one-sided. Moses allowed the husband to give his wife a bill of divorcement, or to try her by the water of jealousy. But there was no such permission to the wife. Jesus seems to allow a man to put away his wife for adultery, but has no legislation for the unfaithful husband. Indeed, in the same passage he goes on to say that celibacy is altogether preferable to marriage, to those who are able to receive it. The evident teaching of Matt. xix. 12 is, that the perils of marriage may be escaped by making ourselves eunuchs *ut majorem Dei gloriam*. Origen so understood it, and mutilated himself to escape temptation and marriage. On another point Jesus is still more explicit. He declares: "Whosoever marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." To the divorced woman this is a punishment, which, instead of tending to reform her, must tend in the opposite direction; while to prohibit a guiltless man from attempting to redeem the erring one by honest marriage is questionable morality.

Divorce is still the perquisite of the few. Before the Act of 1857 the privileged could obtain divorces.\* But the process was long and costly. Adultery had to be proved before an Ecclesiastical Court, and again before the House of Lords, at which, of course, the bishops were, or had a right to be, present. The suits were called *privilegia*, and the name denoted their nature.† The Act of 1857 extended to the middle classes privileges which, owing to expense, were only available to the nobility before that time. The Church was violently opposed to such extension, and the Bishop of Oxford and Mr. Gladstone exhausted every effort of antagonism. They were opposed to the very principle of divorce, although every bishop had

\* The privileged were males. Out of hundreds of divorces before 1857 only four were granted to women, and these in most painful cases.

† A curious feature of these *privilegia* was that the House of Lords always put into the Bill that the guilty partner should not be allowed to re-marry, which clause was always struck out in due course by the Commons.

virtually sanctioned it in all the cases which came before the House of Lords. The Church now looks back to the Act of 1857 as an iniquitous letting out of waters. It points to the fact that divorces have been and are on the increase. The figures are by no means alarming. There were 190 divorces in 1892. If this represented a tithe of the cases in which divorce would be for the welfare of husband, wife, children, and society, society might be congratulated. The report issued by Convocation also points to the comparatively frivolous reasons for which divorce is granted in some of the American States. Doubtless there may be error on the side of laxity as well as stringency. But when have the clergy followed their obvious duty of pointing out that marriage should not be lightly entered upon? They are rather themselves examples of the opposite practice, and appear to hold that the command to increase and multiply is the one thing needful. The Free-thinker, Hume, states an argument against great facility of divorce, which has since been amplified, but not improved, by Mr. Gladstone. Hume says: "How many frivolous quarrels and disgusts are there which people of common prudence endeavor to forget when they lie under the necessity of passing their lives together, but which would soon be inflamed into the most deadly hatred were they pursued to the utmost under the prospect of an easy separation." Here, as elsewhere, moderation and good sense should prevail. But who will say that every man or woman who has had the mischance to link their lives with those who become habitual drunkards, hopelessly insane, or convicted criminals, should have no fresh chance of a better partnership? Yet for such cases neither Jesus, nor the Church, nor English law provides any remedy.

What is wanted in England is not that divorce should be made easy, but that it should be made just: as easy to the poor as to the rich, as easy for the woman as for the man. It was boasted that the Divorce Act extended to the people the privileges of the few. As a matter of fact, the masses of the people never can avail themselves of it, however urgent their necessity. In this question it is the offspring who should have first consideration. With those in comfortable circumstances the custody and care of children presents comparatively little difficulty. But with the poor it is otherwise. Drunkenness, dissipation, adultery, cruelty, and criminal habits aim heavy blows at the family who cannot be removed from the effects of their bad surroundings. Those who, from a social point of view, should be freest to obtain divorce are debarred from this protection to their children, through want of means to set the law in motion.

Women, too, who, as a rule, will never go to the inconvenience of breaking up their home and incurring disrepute, save in cases of absolute extremity, are in a position of inequality. English law empowers a man, however monstrous his conduct may have been, however great his cruelty, desertion, or adultery, to turn his wife out into the street and separate her from every intercourse with her children, and leave her to starve in a workhouse if, in a moment of weakness, she forgets her marriage vow. No act of the husband's entitles the woman to plead in her defence; no number of years of forbearance, or of much tried fidelity, gives her protection. She may be turned into the street at an hour's notice, while before the law she has absolutely no remedy. On the other side, a man may commit adultery as much as he pleases, if he avoids all cruelty amounting to danger to life or limb, and the wife is unable to obtain more than a separation. How much the spiritual and temporal peers were really concerned for the interests of women in this matter may be judged by the fact that the House of Lords threw out an amendment of the House of Commons to the effect that adultery under the conjugal roof should be ground for divorce on the part of the wife. Possibly the bishops and their lordships thought this would make divorce too common. Remembering this sample of male legislation for women, who can wonder at the much-talked-of, but little seen, revolt of women against male tyranny? What revolt could be more justified than rebellion against enforced sexual relations, the burdens of which are so unequally distributed. If the Church wishes its protestations for social welfare credited, let it insist on the serious, not the sacramental, character of marriage, and let it advocate that the law shall be as open to the poor as to the rich, and as free to the feeble as to the strong.

J. M. WHEELER.

## SECULARISM DISTINCT FROM ANARCHISM.

SECULARISM and Anarchism have recently, on more than one occasion, been classed together by Christian enthusiasts as if the two "isms" were synonymous in their teachings and methods. This is one of the many misrepresentations upon the part of orthodox theologians to which Secular philosophy has been subjected. It is to be regretted that too much of our time, as Secular exponents, has to be taken up in endeavoring to correct the many gross perversions as to the nature and object of Freethought propaganda that are continually being urged by would-be-thought pious folks, who profess to teach that charity which "thinketh no evil." Every unbiassed person who has fairly studied the subject should know that there is nothing in common between the teachings and methods of Secularism and those of Anarchism. The former is a system of life guided by reason and experience, and its method of advancing its claims upon society is one of argument and moral persuasion. It seeks to improve individual and national government by a peaceful, humane, and intellectual process; but Anarchism means the abolition of all national government, and through its violent efforts to secure this result it has become associated with confusion, plunder, and murder. Underlying all forms of social revolt there will generally be found some features that are commendable; and Anarchism, in its highest aspect, is no exception to this rule. Its warfare against cruel and unjust laws and its desire to promote personal and general liberty (when this word is properly understood) may be regarded as being unobjectionable; but this part of its program is obscured and counteracted by bomb explosions and other forms of violence, which cause the destruction of innocent lives. Such barbarous and inhuman conduct Secularists abhor, and they unhesitatingly repudiate such brutal modes of warfare.

It may be urged by some that all revolt in the past has presented the same objectionable features, in more or less degree, to those which Anarchism does to-day. As an illustration of this allegation, reference is made to the great revolutions of our own country and of France. It should be remembered, however, that the conditions of society were then very different to what they are now. Far be it from me to allege that we possess all necessary liberty; still, it is true that we have more freedom and more individual rights than our predecessors could command, and, if we use what we have wisely, there can be no reasonable doubt but that more can be secured by peaceful means. At any rate, the endeavor to alter the economic laws regarding the possession and distribution of wealth by blowing up public buildings and recklessly sacrificing human life appears to me to be as foolish as it is certainly horrible and unjust. Personally, I adopt the motto of Thomas Attwood of the old Political Union, which was: "Peace, Law, and Order." As wise men we should not overlook the lessons of the past. The leaders of the English and French Revolutions, it is true, used physical force; but such violence was provoked by causes that do not exist in England at the present time. Moreover, it should be remembered that the violence did not settle any question of right, or make better rule permanent. It is ideas, not arms, that consolidate progress. Great and glorious as those revolutions were, we must not forget that they did not altogether succeed in their objects; for the Stuarts came back to the throne in England, and the terrors in France arrested for generations the true principles of democracy. It was not that these outbreaks of an insulted people were wrong in themselves, but the deplorable fact connected with these revolts was that the means employed to secure the desired emancipation from wrong provoked a reaction in the public mind. Indications are not wanting that the same thing, to some extent, is likely to occur among us, and from similar causes, unless the madness of certain Anarchists ceases. It is no justification for resorting to physical force to-day to urge that it was necessary in the past, for now we have other and better means at our command to obtain reform. I have grave fears that, if peace and order are ignored in our political and social struggles, progress will be retarded, liberty delayed, and the enemies of civilisation will once more triumph.

It should be highly gratifying to every friend of political and social advancement to note the rapidly-extending belief that, with our present laws and institutions, imperfect

as they are, to use violence with a view of obtaining reform is unwise and indefensible. As a Secularist, I hold that such a method is useless and immoral, and that resorting to it can tend only to check the achievement of the objects of true reformers. Order is essential to all permanent progress; hence it is evident, to my mind, that some government by law is necessary. Goethe said: "The best government is self-government." This implies an absence of those elements that destroy social tranquility. It also implies the existence of a moral sentiment and a desire to do that which will be for the benefit of all sections of the community. Reformers of our time should be more enlightened and better informed than were their predecessors. They have had what those who toiled in the past had not—namely, the teachings of Spencer, Darwin, and others to impress upon their minds the overwhelming importance of the law of evolution, which is applicable to all the concerns of life as well as to the formation of species. The results of what were once believed to be the effects of revolution are now recognised as being a growth of time, and not a sudden product. To be of lasting service to the world, changes must be the outcome of matured thought and of gradual process. Government and social order, of the best and most enduring kind, arise from the exercise of the intellect, and not from the explosion of gunpowder. While it would be folly to blame our ancestors for not acting in accordance with this law of evolution, which was unknown to them, it would be a lack of duty upon our part not to condemn the neglect of it by our contemporaries. Men aiming at the reform of society at the present time, and ignoring the lessons of experience, prove themselves destitute of insight concerning all genuine improvement.

As we hold it to be a self-evident truth that it is irrational for a man to inflict injury either upon himself or upon others, the only logical inference that can be drawn from the propagandism of the physical-force Anarchists is, that it is conducted by men laboring under some hallucination that blinds them to the consequences that will follow their wild actions. I thoroughly condemn such conduct as a fatal policy, even if it could be proved that the principles of Anarchism were reasonable in themselves. I am opposed to priests and the Church, yet I would be no party to stabbing or in any way inflicting physical torture upon the former, or in pulling down the latter and with its materials mending the highways.

"Thou shalt not steal" and "Thou shalt do no murder" are no doubt old-fashioned notions; but, if stealing and murdering were practised generally, what would be the state of society? Would it not become a condition of chaos, where danger, confusion, and uncertainty would reign supreme? Supposing the Anarchists' programme were carried out, there would be nothing left but disorder, individual jealousies, and the subjection of the weak to the strong. It does appear to me that to destroy the State, with the object of reforming society, would be beginning at the wrong end. Anarchism is based upon a misconception of the true meaning of political and social freedom. Advocates of these wild and impractical efforts for reform seem to be impressed with the idea that all government is an infringement upon the rights of the individual. In my article next week I will endeavour to show the fallacy of this notion.

In the meantime it must be understood that, while Secularism prescribes no particular class of politics, yet it teaches that it is the duty of all Secularists to strive to secure that form of government which would be the reflex of the intelligence and requirements of the general community. Secularism counsels the subjugation of evil passions and the fostering of that mental equilibrium which is the surest guarantee against violent and extravagant actions. Secularists are not blind to the wrongs and inequalities that still so terribly mar the happiness of life; but to attempt to correct these evils by physical force, in the present state of society, is condemned by Secular philosophy. What good and lasting purpose has ever been achieved by allowing brutal passions to run riot? Reason and experience answer, "None whatever." Secularism, therefore, enjoins upon its adherents the duty of governing themselves. It is incumbent upon us all to withdraw our eyes from the barbaric past, and to renounce its anachronisms. Let the people in general fix their gaze upon the future of humanity, and resolve to do their best to induce the world, of which they are part, to march

boldly and peaceably on in the path to political justice and social harmony; they will then, as the philosopher Condorcet said, possess the "pleasure of having done a lasting good, which fate cannot destroy by the fatal exchange of recalling prejudices and slavery."

CHARLES WATTS

## THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

(Concluded from page 558.)

*Commandment the Eighth.*—"Thou shalt not steal" (Exodus xx. 15; Deut. v. 19). And yet the Jewish God commanded the Israelites to rob the Egyptians of "jewels of silver, jewels of gold, and raiment," under the pretence of *borrowing* such goods of them (Exodus xi. 2; xii. 35). The revised version of the Bible substitutes the verb "to ask" for the verb "to borrow." To "ask" what?—to *give* or to *lend*? For it must have been one or the other; and all the circumstances of the case point to the latter meaning as being the true reading. The old translation, therefore, is the truthful and best one. The Egyptians did not give, but lent; and as the Israelites took without the intention of giving back again, they *robbed*. Were this not so, how could the Israelites be said to have spoiled the Egyptians (Exodus iii. 22)? For it is not to be supposed that these primitive Egyptians practised the Christ-like precept, though not Christian virtue, to "do good and lend, hoping for nothing again" (Luke vi. 35).

According to the Levitical laws, a thief was either to "make full restitution," or, if he had nothing, then to be "sold for his theft" (Exodus xxii. 3); unless, indeed, he stole simply for the purpose of satisfying his hunger. "Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry" (Prov. vi. 30). It was not for this purpose that the Israelites robbed the Egyptians and the inhabitants of the land of Canaan; the latter, indeed, they murdered when they did not rob them. Joshua tells us that this was the case. "It came to pass," says he, "when the children of Israel were waxen strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, but did not utterly drive them out" (Joshua xvii. 13). "Tribute" is a pretty word to use, but it really means "blackmail."

*Commandment the Ninth.*—"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor" (Exodus xx. 16; Deut. v. 20). And yet we are told by a prophet that the God of Israel employed a "lying spirit" to cajole Ahab, the King of Israel, even unto death. Here is a full, but shortened, account of the matter:—

Ahab, the King of Israel, desiring to possess Ramoth-Gilead—a strongly fortified city, standing in a mountain pass between Israel and Judah—inquired of the prophets of the God of Israel, about four hundred men, if he should be successful in an effort to take it. The answer of the prophets was: "Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king." Now, although we are assured that "in the multitude of *counsellors* there is safety" (Prov. xi. 14), this aphorism does not seem to have applied to *prophets*. At all events, it did not in the eyes of Jehoshaphat, the King of Judah, who had undertaken to assist the King of Israel with horses and men in the contemplated siege. Doubt rested in his mind as to the prophetic ability or truthfulness of these four hundred prophets, for he asked: "Is there not here a prophet of the Lord *besides*, that we may enquire of him?" There was one, "Micaiah, the son of Imlah"; but the King of Israel hated him, because, said the king, "he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." However, Micaiah was sent for, and when he arrived, in answer to the king, he said: "Go and prosper; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king." But the king doubted him, and adjured him to tell the truth. Then said Micaiah: "I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd." Said Israel to Jehoshaphat: "Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil?" Then spake Micaiah: "Hear thou, therefore, the word of the Lord. I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand, and on his left. And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will

persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he (the Lord) said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth and do so" (1 Kings xxii. 3-22).

Evil spirits and deceitful utterances seem to have been patronised largely by the Jewish god. Thus we read: "The spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him" (1 Samuel xvi. 14); "Behold, this evil is of the Lord" (2 Kings vi. 33); "O Lord, thou hast deceived me" (Jeremiah xx. 7); "If the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet" (Ezekiel xiv. 9); "Shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?" (Amos iii. 6); "Evil came down from the Lord unto the gate of Jerusalem" (Micah i. 12).

*Commandment the Tenth.*—"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's" (Exodus xx. 17; Deut. v. 21). And yet the God who gave this commandment for the edification and government of man was the God of the patriarch Jacob—of Jacob who is the impersonation of deceit and covetousness; the God without whose assistance Jacob could not have defrauded his uncle Laban of his cattle (Genesis xxx. 31-43). This, also, was the God of David; for are we not told that David was "a man after God's own heart" (1 Samuel xiii. 14; Acts xiii. 22)? And David was not only a captain of robbers and cut-throats (1 Samuel xviii. 27; xxii. 1, 2; xxiii. 14; xxv. 21, 22; xxvii. 11), but was the murderer of the man whose wife he had debauched (2 Samuel xi. 2-21). Further, it was this Jewish God who, in his dealings with the Israelites and the inhabitants of Canaan, consecrated, if he did not institute—

The simple plan,  
That those should take who have the power,  
And those should keep who can.

A high-handed and unjust proceeding, which, of course, commends itself to those who believe in the Christian dogma that "he that hath [much], to him shall be given; and he that hath not [much], from him shall be taken even that which he hath" (Mark iv. 25; Matthew xiii. 12; Luke viii. 18).

In what light, then, ought we to view these commandments—as having been given supernaturally, or as being mere human decrees? Most certainly the latter—as decrees resulting naturally from that social intercourse which necessarily took place "when men began to multiply on the face of the earth" (Genesis vi. 1)—decrees the inception and fashioning of which were the outcome of experience and common sense. To believe otherwise one must assume that, before Moses, such commandments, or rules for the conduct of men one towards another, were unknown; whereas it is a well-known historic fact that the very reverse is the case. Ages before the advent of Moses these or similar laws—or such of them as appertained to the well-being and progress of humanity—were known to, and practised by, the Egyptians, and at other great centres of civilisation. The story of Joseph proves this statement up to the hilt; as also does the fact that Moses, having murdered an Egyptian, fled to another land in order to escape punishment for his crime. It was murder! If it were not, why did Moses "hide the corpse in the sand" (Exodus ii. 12)? It was murder! If it were not, why was it that Moses "fled from the face of Pharaoh" (Exodus ii. 15), who, as chief of the State whose laws Moses had broken, had a right to punish him? This fact alone enables the measure of "divine afflatus" possessed by Moses to be accurately gauged. N. M. X.

An Argyllshire elder was asked how the kirk got along. He said: "Aweel we had four hundred members. Then we had a division, and there were only two hundred left; then a disruption, and only ten of us left. Then we had a heresy trial, and now there's only me and ma brither Duncan left, and I ha' great doots o' Duncan's orthodoxy."

Wife (returned from church)—"You should have heard Mr. Goodman's sermon, this morning, my dear. I don't know when anything has made such a profound impression upon me." Husband—"Did you walk home?" Wife—"No; I took a tramcar; and do you know, John, the conductor never asked me for my fare! Wasn't I lucky?"

## IS THE BIBLE OBSCENE?

THIS is a delicate question, which will come before the United States Courts in October. The case has already been briefly mentioned in the columns of the *Freethinker*. A Mr. J. B. Wise, of Clay Center, Kansas, had some religious controversy with the Rev. H. B. Venum, of Industry, Kansas. He sent the man of God a post-card, whereon were inscribed simply and solely the words of God found in the twelfth verse of the thirty-sixth chapter of Isaiah; words so peculiarly divine that they are repeated verbatim from 2 Kings xviii. 27. The reverend gentleman was incensed with this proof that his adversary had followed the divine injunction to "search the Scriptures." He handed the post-card over to the police, and Mr. Wise was arrested for obscenity. Had the charge against him been simply that of sending an abusive post-card, his case would be of comparatively little interest. But the charge brought against him is that of having "mailed obscene matter." For this he was arrested, and is held in heavy bail. To ensure his conviction it will be necessary for a jury to affirm that this portion of the Bible, which, by the way, in England is ordered by our Parliament-appointed Book of Common Prayer to be read publicly in the churches every 7th of May and every 11th of December, is obscene, or to anticipate legal quibbles, at any rate, that it becomes so when written down and transmitted openly through the mails. Some American Freethinkers are getting up funds for the defence of Mr. Wise. If this is necessary to ensure a fair trial against a clerical prosecutor, there can be no objection. But, as a matter of policy, I cannot avoid the reflection that the cause of Free thought has more to gain by the conviction of Mr. Wise than by his acquittal. The affirmation by a court of justice that the Bible contains obscene matter which must not be transmitted through the post will do much to open the public eye to the real character of the semi-barbarous documents worshipped as the word of God. I would, therefore, suggest to our American friends that they might do well not to subscribe for the defence, but simply for an appeal to the Supreme Court upon conviction, so that the matter may obtain the utmost publicity. If they make too much fuss over the defence, the clerical prosecutor will probably withdraw from the charge, and a rare opportunity of exposing the real character of the old Jew book be lost.

If the Bible can be acquitted of the charge of obscenity, it is difficult to say what book can come within the definition. Its language is often revoltingly coarse, and quite unnecessarily so, as in the passages which so stirred the reverend minister when written on a post-card. But this is child-like innocence itself compared with the impurity of Genesis ix. and xxxviii. In Leviticus and Deuteronomy crimes are detailed which are considered unmentionable in polite society. The story of the Levite and his concubine in Judges xix. is horribly disgusting. The tales of David and Bathsheba, and Amnon and his sister Tamar, are libidinous in character. The "linked sweetness, long drawn out," of the Song of Solomon is of so sensual a character that the Jewish doctors prohibited its reading to all under the age of thirty. The prophet Ezekiel is so filthy in his imagery that the stuff he was ordered to eat seems to have been his fitting diet.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

## THE LATE DATE OF THE PSALMS.

THE theory of Professor Edwin Johnson, that the whole the Bible is of late date, has not, I believe, found many converts even among Freethinkers; and the task of upholding such a theory against a wilderness of authority might prove a difficult one, especially to an unlearned man. But, looking through the Psalms recently, I was forcibly struck with some reflections tending in the same direction, which I venture to set down. The Psalms, as a whole, certainly show a cultivated people in misfortune. Their psychological standpoint is altogether out of harmony with the time of David, indeed, rather suited to to-day—say to the Jews in Poland or Russia. It is this which gives them life, and has made them so acceptable to Scotch Covenanters and French Camisards. But persecution has been so common, especially by Christians, that in this

there is little whereby we can affix a date, save only that the note of affliction in so many psalms is quite unsuited to the circumstances ascribed to their alleged author, David. The absurdity of David, who stored up a hundred thousand talents of gold and a thousand thousand talents of silver (1 Chron. xxii. 14), saying, "I am poor and needy" (Psalms lxxxvii., cix. 22), need not be dilated upon.

One noted passage, "By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept when we remembered Zion" (cxxxvii. 1), is taken by all rational critics as showing a date posterior to the Babylonian captivity. I would suggest the possibility that here, as well as in 1 Peter v. 13, Babylon is a synonym for Rome. Psalm xlv. 11 says distinctly, "Thou hast scattered us among the heathen," and compares their condition to sheep. It is very questionable if this was so appropriate in the Babylonian days as much later. "Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth" (Psalm xcvi. 10) shows that they were dispersed. Israel and the heathen are constantly contrasted as they only would be when the Israelites were scattered among the heathen. It is plain that the Psalms were compiled after the temple was destroyed. "They have cast fire into thy sanctuary, they have defiled by casting down the dwelling-place of thy name to the ground" (lxxiv. 7). It goes on to say "They have burned up all the synagogues in the land." When did this occur? In the time of Antiochus of Titus, or of the Crusades? When were synagogues first set up?

Jerusalem must have been destroyed. "O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple they have defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps" (lxxix. 1); "they have devoured Jacob and laid waste his dwelling-place" (v. 7). Yet this Psalm is ascribed to Asaph, one of the chief singers of David; while another for the sons of Korah says: "Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself where she may lay her young; even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my king, and my God" (lxxxiv. 3). In Isaiah lxiv. 10, 11 the plain statement is made, "Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and our beautiful house where our fathers praised thee is burned up with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid waste." This, being ascribed to a prophet, may be taken as a prophecy by whosoever list; but the similar statements in the Psalms are proof to me that these writings were compiled after the destruction of Jerusalem.

When these passages are pointed out, the school of rational critics, represented by Drs. Driver and Cheyne, admit that there are signs of late date in the Psalms, and they will assign those I have mentioned to "the Maccabean period." Reuss goes further, and assigns the bulk of the Psalms to Maccabean times. If these particular Psalms, why not others? If any of the Old Testament documents are of that or a later period, clearly its compilation, as a whole, must be as late as the latest. Much nonsense has been written by the so-called rational critics about "late interpolations." What they call interpolations are often really signs of the late date of the whole document.

LUCIANUS.

### ONLY HUMAN NATURE.

[A POEM FOUNDED ON FACT.]

A TEACHER in a Sunday school  
Announced that he'd present  
A silver-clasped morocco-bound  
Illumined Testament  
To every boy who, on the next  
Bright Sunday, could repeat  
From memory a chapter of  
The Scriptures all complete.

When Sunday came the teacher found  
But one had gained the prize,  
And so he set to work a plan  
Much better to devise;  
Instead of Testaments, he said,  
"I'll give a ball and bat."  
When Sunday came, each urchin bright  
Had learnt his chapter pat!

—*Western Pigaro.*

Some people are a good deal like angels' wings. That is, they are no earthly good to anybody.

### ACID DROPS.

THE Rev. J. Guinness Rogers, of London, discoursed last Sunday at Newport, near Dundee, and declared himself a Christian Optimist, which is a curious faith for one who believes, or who ought to believe, that the majority of this world's inhabitants are walking straight to hell, and are sure to plunge into it. Mr. Rogers had a great deal to say about Christ. Among other things, he said that no man could die as Jesus died. Well, many men have died more firmly. There was nothing particularly heroic in crying out "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" As for the "agony and bloody sweat" in Gethsemane, it would be regarded as a mark of cowardice, or, at least, of great weakness, in any other "martyr" than the nauseously belauded prophet who died on Calvary.

Mr. Rogers, who had crossed the Tay Bridge, was kind enough to say that "science was doing a great deal," but he thought it would be sad if man had nothing else to rest upon but what he could do for himself. Perhaps so. But it would be still sadder if he had nothing else to rest upon but what Jesus Christ could do for him. Science builds a Tay Bridge, and Jesus Christ inspires endless blethering.

"The Scotch Spurgeon," the Rev. John McNeill, is reviving (or should it be reviving?) at the antipodes. By the local press he is described as a great and commanding orator, but the description is not borne out by the printed report of his eloquence. An extract given in the *Westminster Gazette* is so low and vulgar that the speaker would never be tolerated in a Secular meeting-place. Still, it seems good enough for the Christians of the southern hemisphere; at any rate, they greeted it with loud applause.

John McNeill is the "funny man" of the revival business. He has a certain number of catchwords that do duty with great regularity. One of them is "Juggins." John is not a Juggins himself. Oh dear no. He makes a first-rate living by clowning on religious platforms. The Jugginses are the people who listen and pay.

A new sect, according to the *New York Herald*, has started in Brooklyn, led by a Mr. D. Stellfer Moulton, a Harvard graduate, who proclaims himself the Supreme High Priest of God. The new sect puts John the Baptist in the place of Jesus, and certainly he is less objectionable, probably because less is known about him. Moulton claims to have two thousand followers.

Moulton says that John the Baptist was the original founder of Christianity. He started the movement and taught all its distinctive doctrines, and when he was imprisoned by Herod Jesus left him, without so much as an effort to effect his release, and stepped into the place that belonged to John rightfully.

It is very curious that in Asia Minor there still exists a sect known as the Mendai, or Christians of St. John, who hold the very doctrine started by D. S. Moulton, and even go the length of saying that Isa (Jesus) was an impostor.

A Mr. A. Vance, in a curious work, entitled *Vox Clamantium*, came to the conclusion, from a dissection of the gospels, that many of the utterances ascribed to Jesus really belonged to John the Baptist.

The Austrian bigots refused to have the bells tolled at the death of Baron Mundy, because he had committed suicide. The Baron was noted for his philanthropy, and thousands turned out to show their respect at his funeral. After the Franco-Prussian War he paid all the expenses of the wounded and prisoners being returned to their own homes.

One of the witnesses before the Welsh Land Commission said he remembered the time when he paid tithe in eggs. "The parish clerk used to come round and count the hens, and we had to give an egg for every hen and two for every cock." In clerical reckoning a tenth of a fowl equalled one egg, but a tenth of a rooster was equal to two eggs.

After the gatling-guns come the missionaries in Matabeleland. All the natives left alive are to be taught "the dignity of labor"—for British capitalists—and "the way to heaven through Jesus Christ." So says the Rev. James Hughes, of Kimberley, S.A., who has come over here to "procure money" for this noble enterprise.

The *Liverpool Pulpit* is down on the South African Baptists for accepting a gift of nine thousand acres of land in Matabele and Mashonaland from Mr. Cecil Rhodes, and calls on them to "fling back, with disdain and horror, the price of human blood."

Our indignant contemporary adds: "When the land of

the Matabele has been paid for, when due confession of the sin of filibustering has been made, when penitence has been shown by such reparation as is in the power of mortals, and when the whole bad policy of extending the empire by means of Maxim guns has been abandoned, then, and not until then, ought the 'handsome donations' of these people to find their way to the treasury of God." Probably the Baptists of South Africa think God is not particular as to the items that make up his banking account.

The Rev. Dawson Rogers, writing against the Anarchists, says Christ used no violence. The scourge he used in the temple was only employed on the sheep and oxen. But does it not say he poured out the changers and overthrew the tables? Very likely it was all done gently, and in a spirit of sweet reasonableness.

The *Pall Mall Gazette* mentions that the paternal Government of Hanover had the multiplication table bound up with the school catechisms, so that the doctrine of the Trinity glared heresy at the line of three.

Sarah Ann Whitehead, the victim of the Mumps tragedy, was buried without any religious ceremony; the Catholic priest, who was engaged by the relatives, refusing to officiate, on the ground that she was not a Catholic. No hopes of a glorious resurrection were held out to her; but her husband and murderer will have every spiritual consolation and opportunity of making his salvation sure.

Bruneau, the French priest, who was executed for the murder of the Abbé Fricot, made an edifying ending, as became one who had committed numberless crimes. The priest who attended him said he was absolutely penitent. There must have been much joy in heaven over his reception. His last act was to kiss the crucifix.

*China's Millions*, a missionary journal, devoted to the conversion of the Flowery Land, calls for more workers. The proportion of Christian missionaries to the number of the Chinese makes the task as if half-a-dozen Chinese were seeking to convert London. Especially more money is wanted. This is the universal cry of missionaries, who collect from the rich fools who have no eyes for heathenism nor hearts for wretchedness at home in Christian England.

Dr. G. Vance Smith, replying in the *Nineteenth Century* to Mr. Gladstone's article on Heresy, takes exception to the G. O. M.'s statement that 450 millions of professing Christians agree in witnessing to the "central truths" of the Incarnation and the Trinity. "When all is said and done," asks Dr. Smith, "what is the testimony thus appealed to worth? What proportion of these numberless millions can be said to 'witness' to the alleged truths with any rational conviction of their own, or after any intelligent inquiry worthy of acknowledgment? What of the mass of English Christians, including the multitudes of fine people who frequent churches and chapels merely because it is the fashion to do so? Their testimony, surely, is only a nominal thing, destitute of weight or value."

"Numbers," says Dr. Smith, "are no test of truth. Otherwise, what should we have to say of those other hundreds of millions, Buddhists and Mohammedans, who are as passionately devoted to their religion as are Christians, and, indeed, far more so?" This has often been urged on Secular platforms, and we are glad to see it presented in a "high-class" magazine.

Talmage makes the following admission in a letter dated Samoa, June, 1894:—"It is a common saying among the natives that first comes the missionary, then comes the merchant, then comes the Consul, then comes the man-of-war, then—Oh, my!"

The Rev. Silas J. Hocking, of Southport, is a leading light of Nonconformity, and during Dr. Parker's absence he has been discoursing at the City Temple on "The Grandeur of Life." He was very severe on "the pessimists." "Your pessimist," he said, "is always a little man." Further, "the keynote of his philosophy is the wail of Solomon, 'Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.'" Mr. Hocking should really be more careful. His argument makes Solomon "a little man," while the Bible makes him a great monarch and the "wisest of men."

"The man that believes he is merely a clod," Mr. Hocking said, "will remain a clod to the end of the chapter." Very likely. But will Mr. Hocking be good enough to tell us who are the men that think themselves clods?

Mr. Hocking, who is a writer himself, is guilty of great impertinence in his reference to Thomas Hardy. Of course he is free to prefer "one page" of Robert Browning to "all the volumes" of Thomas Hardy, for that is a matter of taste, and England is a free country, especially for the likes of

Silas J. Hocking. But it is quite another thing to call Thomas Hardy a pessimist after saying that all pessimists are little men. Thomas Hardy a little man! And his ticket put upon him by Silas J. Hocking! It is a spectacle to convulse the universe.

Mr. Hocking wound up with the conclusion of Bryant's *Thanatopsis*, which is one of the finest pieces of writing of one of the finest American poets. Yet the editor of the *Christian Commonwealth* asks if any reader can "trace the authorship" of the lines.

Bryant's lines are indeed "fine," but they were singularly inappropriate at the end of Mr. Hocking's discourse. Mr. Hocking talked ever so much more than he knew about the future life, whereas there is not even a suggestion of immortality in *Thanatopsis*, which speaks of "the silent halls of death," and bids us approach death as we go to our beds to rest.

Christian ladies may be allowed a fair supply of superstition, but why does Miss Marianne Farningham parade hers so glaringly in the *Christian World*? Could not the editor put a little restraint on the exuberance of her credulity? She tells of a lady who wanted a hundred pounds badly, whereupon she sought the Lord in prayer, and two days later she received a letter containing a cheque for a hundred pounds from a gentleman who thought he had paid too little for one of her pictures. "Now," asks Miss Farningham, "how had that been brought about?" Of course she means that God arranged the matter. Why, then, does he not work a similar miracle for other poor women, some of whom do not want a hundred pounds, but a hundred pence? Miss Farningham should drop conundrums and offer explanations.

Moody, says the *New York Congregationalist*, was exhorting at Washington, and in the course of his outpouring he asserted that, if Christ were to come to this world again and appear in that city, the people would not consent to be governed by him. Moody asked the audience if they would receive Christ, and put the question pointedly to a "colored brother" sitting near the pulpit: "Would you vote for him?" It was an unlucky question, for the "image of God in ebony" replied: "Twouldn't do no good; they wouldn't count my vote." No wonder that Moody "at once changed the subject."

Poor *Christian Commonwealth*! Having opened a column, which is yet very carefully guarded, for "Objections to Christianity," it finds (or we find) the space nearly monopolised by the lowest class of Christian defenders, such as J. H. Mitchell, who pours out the contents of his book of extracts, with little connecting passages of his own, written as much in defiance of grammar as of common sense. Another long-winded Christian is G. Flower, who hails from Peckham, although his proper address would be Colney Hatch. He stands up for the reality of witchcraft, cites *Macbeth*, and is of opinion that witches are "instruments of hell" and "unfit to live." The poor man is far gone, and we fear he is typical of the *Christian Commonwealth's* readers.

It is reported that the appearance of the Virgin Mary up a tree in Austrian Silesia, is owing to an American student lodging in the vicinity with a magic-lantern.

The heathen Chince is learning all the tricks of Americans. In the States he is buying land for joss houses, because it is exempt from taxation, and so is sure to increase in value. "John" will soon plant in Chicago the most magnificent joss house in America at a cost of not less than ten thousand dollars. The furniture and paraphernalia are all being manufactured in China.

Advertisements sometimes throw light on the times we live in. Here are three from the *Two Worlds* which help to make darkness visible:—

WANTED A PSYCHOMETRIST for a medical business in a populous Yorkshire district.

WANTED lady clairvoyant to travel with hypnotic exhibition. Must be good, clear, and refined. Long engagement to suitable person. Address, with photo, age, and lowest terms, Hypnotist.

ASTROLOGY.—What does your Horoscope indicate as regards your prospects in Health, Marriage, Business, etc? Write for Prospectus to —

This last is one of five astrologers, all advertising to tell your fortune from the stars.

Owen Stevens is another "mejum" who has been grabbed at Bradford, Pennsylvania, while impersonating a spirit. He owned up, but offered to "lick" the man that caught him. Next day Stevens, who had been living in clover, left the town. If he returns, he will be arrested for obtaining money under false pretences.

An aged undertaker was asked if he had ever seen any

spooks. He laughed derisively and said: "No, and I doubt if you will find anyone in my line of business who believes in the existence of such things. We find there is nothing more harmless and pitiful than dead people."

Mr. S. C. Hall promised some spiritists he would reappear to them after he was dead. He was rather taken back when they expressed themselves anxious for the speedy fulfilment of his promise. This was nearly as bad as Douglas Jerrold's out at *Heraud*, the mystical poet and bore, who asked him if he had read his *Descent into Hell*. "No," said Jerrold, "but I should much like to see it."

An American traveller says they have improved Jerusalem of late. They have some decent hotels, commanding views of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Mount of Olives; but still the dirty monks are everywhere, and there is not a drop of good liquor in the place.

Dr. Dallinger, the Wesleyan scientist, rejects Paley's design argument, and also the design argument of Professor Drummond's *Ascent of Man*. Nevertheless, he believes in some sort of "design" or "purpose," but it appears to be too deep for human comprehension. Good old Incomprehensibility! What a friend he has been to the theologians! Verily, yea verily, too much comprehension is dangerous, and a god understood is no god at all.

Dr. Dallinger says: "Professor Drummond adopts the conception of 'design,' which is, in root and branch, a human conception—Paley in principle—and, therefore, I without hesitancy reject it." But he does not tell us how any conception of design or God's purposes can be other than a human conception.

The difference between Paley and Dr. Dallinger seems to be this: Paley predicated "design" in specific things he knew something about, and Dallinger predicates it in vague things beyond finite comprehension.

The *Church Times* denies that Ritualism makes Romanists, any more than Romanism makes Agnostics. It says we hear a great deal of the influx of converts to the Roman Church, though commonly only from sources which are not free from suspicion. "We do not hear of a terrible drain from her membership, which, alas! too frequently travels in the direction of unbelief."

An American paper notes that a decision has been handed down by the Supreme Court of Alabama in the case of Sylvester Festerazzi and others, executors of St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Mobile, sent up from the Chancery Court. Some time ago a prominent Roman Catholic died at Mobile and bequeathed \$2,000 to be used for saying masses for his soul. The court holds the bequest void, because there is no living beneficiary of the trust endeavored to be created, the soul not being an entity at law.

The *Hyogo News*, Kobe, Japan, gives the following peculiar advertisement: "When my daughter was sick I prayed the Koprira of Sanuki providence for her recovery, pledging to let her pay a thanksgiving visit to the temple by creeping on her hands and feet all the way through, in imitation of cattle, if she recovered. The prayer was heard, and she recovered. But, after all, it is impossible for a tender girl to creep several hundreds of miles to Sanuki. I should, therefore, like to find a substitute for her; and if anyone offering himself or herself be found suitable for the task, I will give such a person £200." Probably Jesus would do, as he is the Christian's substitute-bearer for sins.

Christian peasants at Boschewn, in Austria, broke into the house of a wealthy Jewish farmer, who appears to have excited the enmity of a portion of the community, and murdered not only him, but all the members of his family, consisting of eight persons. Christian teaching has left them almost as savage and bigoted as in the Middle Ages.

The York Convocation Report on Divorce has censured the Church for allowing the re-marriage of divorced persons. It says, p. 46: "Can it not honestly and truly be said, she contrives at, condones, and even encourages on every side both the divorce and the adulterous entry into a fresh union?" Of course the Roman Catholic *Tablet* makes much of this.

According to the *Times*, the Archbishop of York is much concerned that licences for the re-marriage of divorced persons have been granted in his province. He wishes it known that such proceedings are distasteful, and says the legal aspect of the question is not free from obscurity. He promises that before long it shall be brought to a definite issue before a legal authority. Meantime he feels bound to disclaim all responsibility for the bestowal of the blessing of the Church upon the marriage of divorced persons in the diocese of York.

Mr. George Lewis, who is probably a better authority on the legal aspect than the Archbishop, says the clergy are at liberty to refuse to re-marry the guilty party, but not to refuse to re-marry the innocent party. Moreover, the guilty party may be re-married in a parish church if a clergyman is found who will perform the ceremony, and, if not, he can be married before a registrar.

The Rev. A. Brinkman writes to the *Church Times*, boiling against those clergymen "who are ignorant or traitorous enough to bless these unhallowed unions"; and as for the reflections cast at the Church, he says he should have flung the ink-pot at those who drew up the report.

By the way, it appears from this report that Anselm was of great assistance to Charlemagne in his marital relations, which were somewhat polygamous. As Charlemagne died two centuries before Anselm, this may account for the latter being canonised after his second incarnation. But possibly those who drew up the report meant Aleuin.

"Robert" writes to the *Londonderry Sentinel* to express his gratitude for the Thursday half-holiday, which he says he spends in delightful meditation on the Psalms. No one can be lonely who keeps company with David.

Lucifer matches were introduced in 1833, and got their name from the smell of the phosphorus. At Margate a lady who took some down with her from London was turned out of her lodging for striking a light with one. The landlord declared he would have no one in his house who had dealings with the Devil. This, we are assured, is a fact.

Our correspondent who suggested the Lord was sleeping may suspect he is waking up. Forest fires in America destroying 1,000 lives are a lurid evidence of providence. The destruction of the Gohua dam in India, the cholera in Russia, 5,518 cases and 2,546 deaths, a destructive storm in Spain, and more earthquake shocks in Greece, indicate that either our Heavenly Father is waking up, or that he ought to be.

The writer of "Powder and Shot" in the *Weekly Times and Echo* is responsible for the following: "Most people know that the Queen is a firm believer in the identity of the Lost Tribes of Israel with the British nation, and that, in addition, she has a special private family tree, whereon her own lineal descent from David, through the daughter of King Zedekiah, is depicted. I hear royalty of the second, third, and fourth generation does not share these views, and that the Duchess of York as well rather kicks at the addition of young Prince Edward's name to the scroll that links the British throne to the Psalmist king, some of whose latter-day tendencies have certainly frequently manifested themselves in the persons of his quasi-descendants!"

Mr. F. May Holland tells a story of a sexton who, when the rector asked why a rich parishioner had stopped coming to church, and whether the trouble was Latitudinarianism, answered, "No, sir! it's wusser nor that." "Then it must be Unitarianism?" "No, sir! wusser nor that." "Ah! perhaps it is Agnosticism?" "Oh no, sir! it's wusser nor that." "But it can't be Atheism?" "No, sir! it's wusser nor that." "But there can't be anything worse than Atheism." "Oh! yes, sir, it's rheumatism."

### The Recited Verses.

A collection was taken in a Boston Sunday-school on a recent Sunday for a foreign mission, and the pupils of one class were asked each to repeat a verse from the Bible appropriate to the occasion, says the *Boston Traveller*. The first boy said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

"Good!" cried all. And then they went on: "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver"; "He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord"; and so on.

One boy staggered the teacher a bit by quoting: "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak"; but a certain amount of appropriateness was recognised.

"Give the Devil his due" lengthened some faces when the next boy blurted out; but the climax was reached and the quotations ended when another boy shouted: "A fool and his money are soon parted."

### An Absent-Minded Friend.

A young husband met an old and pre-occupied friend, whose mind is weighted with thoughts of things extraneous to family affairs; but, wishing to be agreeable, he asked after the family and, of course, the baby. "Beautiful, beautiful!" was the reply. "We had the little fellow christened on Sunday." "Indeed!" said the preoccupied one, with an air of interest, and then inquired, "On the arm or on the leg?"



## SPECIAL.

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, September 9, Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street, Glasgow:—11, "Is Immortality a Blessing?"; 2.30, "Christian Socialism"; 6.30, "A New Plea for God: Professor Henry Drummond's *Ascent of Man*."

September 16, Liverpool; 30, Plymouth.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—September 9 and 16, Hall of Science, London; 28, York; 30, Dundee. October 3, 4, and 5, Aberdeen; 7, Edinburgh; 14, Glasgow; 21, Bradford; 28, Hall of Science, London. November 4, Hall of Science; 11, Hall of Science, London; 18, Liverpool. December 2, Newcastle-on-Tyne (Sunday Society); 9, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

G. W. B.—See a paragraph in "Sugar Plums." Mill's portrait will be one of our earliest illustrations.

H. ROBAR.—Your suggestion shall be laid before the Committee, but we rather fancy that general experience is against it.

G. L. MACKENZIE.—It certainly is amusing to watch that pretentious ignoramus trying to put you right, and setting down a common Italian phrase as *Latin*. When he says that "any ordinarily educated person" knows it to be so, he proves himself a very "ordinarily educated person." But, after all, is it really worth while to trouble about such animalculæ?

J. B.—Sir Isaac Pitman is, we believe, a Swedenborgian. What he calls the "onor ov neithud" was certainly well deserved in his case.

POCCURANTE.—Your letter appears in the *Boston Investigator*. If you send your address to Mr. Wheeler, it will be forwarded to you.

WEYMOUTH, BURY, and CLACTON.—Can any readers say where the *Freethinker* can be obtained in these places?

SEVERAL correspondents remain unanswered in consequence of Mr. Foote's absence in the North.

F. RYAN.—We receive a wrapper marked "manuscript only," but the manuscript is missing.

X. Y. Z.—Your inquiry must await Mr. Foote's return.

E. D. H. DALY.—Your cuttings are always welcome.

A. GUEST.—Your notice was too late last week.

BRANCH SECRETARIES are requested to note that Mr. A. Guest has removed to 19 Alwyne road, Canonbury.

D. F. GLOAK.—Glad to observe from your report that many Christians were present at Mr. Foote's lectures, and that you have made six new members.

J. R. C.—Compulsory Church rates are abolished, but there are special Acts empowering rates for specific churches, and St. Bride's, Fleet-street, is one of them.

IMMORTAL.—Sorry we cannot find space for your voluminous prophecy. It is sad to learn that England is the place where God's wrath is to be executed, and that people in high buildings are to be among the principal sufferers. We ought to pity the people of Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen, who live in flats in "heaven-kissing" buildings. Let us hope you are mistaken.

J. LESTER.—Miss Vance, secretary, 28 Stonecutter-street, will supply you, on application, with members' forms. See paragraph.

R. CORNISH.—If you read French, you will find Saisset's translation of Spinoza an excellent, scholarly performance. Dr. Willis has rendered the *Bhiv* into English, and there is an English edition of Spinoza's principal writings published at a comparatively cheap rate by Bell & Son.

F. MELVILLE.—We have stated our view at length in our pamphlet entitled *What was Christ?* in which John Stuart Mill's panegyric on the Prophet of Nazareth is very closely examined. You had better obtain the pamphlet. We do not care to go over the ground twice.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: D. Young, 2s.; the late Mr. W. Trevillion, per Miss E. Trevillion, 10s. 6d.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish to call our attention.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Der Lichtfreund—Boston Investigator—Der Arme Teufel—Freidenker—Two Worlds—Liberator—Western Figaro—Ironclad Age—Truthseeker—La Verité—Dageraad—Progressive Thinker—Freedom—Für Unsere Jugend—Crescent—Secular Thought—Isle of Man Times—Echo—North Eastern Daily Gazette—Norwood Press—Vegetarian Messenger—Independent Pulpit—World's Advance Thought—Universal Republic—Rochdale Observer—South London Tradesmen's Advertiser—New York Herald—Westminster Gazette—Liberty—Oldham Standard—Twentieth Century—Family Herald.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Fordler, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*.—(Narrow Column) one inch, 3s.; half column, 15s.; column, £1 10s. Broad Column—one inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE'S first country lectures since his late illness were delivered on Sunday at Dundee. The weather was too fine for very large indoor meetings. Still, the audiences were fairly good and highly appreciative, and seven new members were enrolled during the day. The chairman earnestly invited discussion, but none was forthcoming. Mr. Watts's encounter with the Rev. David Macrae seems to have frightened away the opponents of Secularism. Mr. Foote lectures at Glasgow to-day (September 9), and hopes to meet a good gathering of the "saints" on this occasion.

During next week—that is, from September 10 to September 15—Mr. Foote will be taking a holiday at the Isle of Man, by way of preparation for a hard winter's work. He must beg the indulgence of his correspondents while he is absent from London.

The Dundee Branch is making up a brave program for the winter. The monthly Sunday concerts are to be resumed, and it is intended to start a Sunday-school. We wish the Branch all success in its praiseworthy efforts.

Mr. Charles Watts had a capital audience at the Hall of Science last Sunday evening, when he showed the relation of Secularism to the social problems of to-day. He pointed out very clearly that, from the very nature of their principles and objects, Secularists are social reformers. It would be well if this lecture were given throughout the provinces, for the purpose of correcting the erroneous idea entertained by a few individuals that the work of the National Secular Society is limited to attacking theology. As Mr. Watts said, every person who carries out Secular teachings must deal with the social questions that now confront us. The audience was enthusiastic in its applause, and when the lecturer sat down he received quite an ovation.

Mr. Watts will occupy the same platform again this Sunday evening (September 9), taking for his subject "The Atonement: A Reply to Mr. Gladstone." Most of our readers have, no doubt, read Mr. Gladstone's article upon the subject which appeared in the *Nineteenth Century*, and they will probably be interested to hear Mr. Watts's criticism upon it. Previous to the lecture Miss Anna Butland will play Liszt's Rhapsody, No. 14.

The arrangements for conducting Mr. Watts's contest at the Finsbury election for the London School Board are now completed. His central committee-room will be at 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street. All friends willing to give their services in canvassing and distributing literature throughout the borough of Finsbury should write to Mr. Watts direct. His address to the electors will be published in a few days.

Mr. S. R. Thompson, and some members of the Wood Green Branch, visit Southend this Sunday and hold a meeting at 11.30 at the corner of Weston-road and High-street. They hope to be supported by all Freethinkers who can make it convenient to attend.

Mr. Sykes, the newsagent of Southend, got publicly prayed for by a prominent Salvationist in front of his shop in the High-street, last Sunday. An enormous crowd gathered, and Mr. Sykes chaffingly thanked the man for his kind attentions.

Open-air lecturers who have engagements with the Lambeth Branch are requested to communicate at once with Mr. V. Roger, 114 Kennington-road, S.E. The Branch

has arranged a debate between Mr. Hales, C.E.S., and Mr. G. Coombe, N.S.S., on "Is Christianity Superior to Secularism?" to take place on Sept. 23, at 3.30, in Kennington Park. Mr. Hales is a most courteous opponent, who never indulges in abuse or personalities.

Freethinkers would do well not to enter into discussion, while lectures are proceeding, with parties who come round for the sake of interruption.

A few Freethinkers at Chesterfield have resolved to form a Branch of the N.S.S. All friends of the movement, who happen to see this, are requested to meet the promoters on Monday evening, September 10, at 7 o'clock, at Mr. G. Fidler's, "The Marquis of Hartington," Sorsby-street, Chesterfield.

The Tottenham Branch has amalgamated with that at Wood Green, and will carry on joint work.

Mr. Symes is making the *Liberator* lively with short pieces. We notice the paper on "Gospel Forgeries," by N. M. X., is reprinted for the benefit of Australian friends.

Mr. Wheeler was recently pretty severe on Mr. Drummond's popular *Ascent of Man*, but not more so than Mrs. Lynn Linton, who, in the September *Fortnightly*, sums up the work thus: "Whatever is true is borrowed; whatever is false, strained, and inconclusive is his own. His sin is the sin of plagiarism, with the additional offence of distortion in the lifting."

The September number of the *Fortnightly Review* contains a slashing attack by Professor Karl Pearson on Lord Salisbury's address at the British Association. He says: "Why must we join him (Lord Salisbury) in the *credendum est* of Lord Kelvin, and find 'overpoweringly strong proofs of intelligent and benevolent design' in the stages of biological evolution, while we have discarded, in the development of the material earth, a perpetual miracle in favor of physical laws? Has it struck Lord Salisbury that the laboratory and the microscope may, after all, at this very moment be establishing the high probability of natural selection, and pushing back from the evolution of species, as they have done from terrestrial evolution, that 'influence of a free will' into a dim, unfixed, and indescribable past?"

Mr. Benjamin Tucker, who introduced the English reading world to Claude Tillier's *My Uncle Benjamin*, has translated another work from the same little-known French Free-thinking writer. It is entitled *Belle Plante and Cornelius*, a story of two brothers, one a plodder, the other a poet.

Noticing the *Universalist Herald*, which laments that Christians so commonly assign infidelity to depravity of mind, the *Independent Pulpit* says: "For the honor of the race, we would be glad to see all controversies between Infidels and Christians conducted in a reasonable and candid manner; but if Christians want to make fools of themselves by getting mad and abusing those whose arguments they cannot answer, we are perfectly willing for them to do so. We can stand it as well as they can."

Our veteran contemporary, the *Boston Investigator*, reprints Mr. Foote's article on the Assassination of President Carnot. Our contemporary is always full of interesting matter, and we hope it is no less so for an occasional excerpt from other columns.

Rev. J. L. Jones, of Chicago, says: "There is not a first-class college in the land but what has got through the silly task of trying to reconcile Genesis to geology, or proving that Darwin and the writer of Genesis were of the same opinion. The only way a faith in the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is preserved by preacher or pew is by refusing to follow the plain methods of the student of Hebrew literature to their plain conclusions. The preacher does to-day, as in the time of Jeremiah, 'bend his tongue as if it were a bow for falsehood' in regard to the obvious facts revealed by Biblical criticism concerning both Old and New Testament interpretations."

The new Act of Parliament in regard to cruelty to children dispenses with children taking oaths in courts of justice. Under a former Act for the prevention of cruelty to children it was often difficult to obtain a conviction, because the evidence of a victim who was too young to explain the nature of an oath could not be admitted in court. That glaring injustice, based on the assumption that a child would not speak the truth until it was old enough to understand the penalties involved in the breaking of an oath, has been done away with now. Moreover, there are clauses making criminal the conduct of those who keep sick children without proper medical aid, under plea of following the religious instructions of St. James.

The *Independent Pulpit*, of Texas, has two excellent papers by Mr. C. L. Abbot on the Bible and the Higher Criticism, one being in reply to a reverend critic. J. P. Richardson writes on "Believers and Unbelievers," and Mr. Wheeler's article on "Devil Worship" is reprinted from our columns.

A clear but rather elementary exposition of "What Evolution Teaches Us," by Lawrence Irwell, appears in the September *Westminster Review*. It gives at the end a list of writers on the subject, but omits Oscar Schmidt's able *Doctrine of Descent and Darwinism*.

The *Sun* of Sept. 4 gives a sketch of Mrs. Samson, wife of one of the vice-presidents of the N.S.S., and editress of the *Spinning Wheel*. It mentions her having written sermons which a country parson duly passed off as though they were his own.

The *Truthseeker*, of New York (August 25), pays us the following compliment: "We are pleased to see evidences of the prosperity of our London contemporary, the *Freethinker*. It has recently donned a new dress throughout, and presents a most neat and attractive appearance. Mr. Foote and his assistant, J. M. Wheeler, with such staff-writers as Frederick Ryan, Charles Watts, and W. Heaford, are maintaining the always enviable reputation of the *Freethinker*. It prints only the best matter, and hence is always a most creditable representative of the Freethought cause."

The *Freethinker* illustrations will be resumed in October, beginning with the first week. We intended to resume them in September, but, finer weather having set in, the holiday season will be prolonged.

## EXAMPLES OF HYPERBOLE.

HYPERBOLE is a term adapted into our language from the Greek, and in rhetoric is a figure of speech which exaggerates facts, and makes them appear greater or less, better or worse, than they really are. The Munchausen tales are a species of hyperbole that have become famous, because of their extravagance in description. It occurs quite frequently in all our literature, both sacred and profane. One very marked example occurs in the last chapter and the last verse of St. John. We purposely add the Catholic title "saint" to the author, for it is needed to ensure conviction of its truth. We quote: "There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written, every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that could be written."

Dr. Clarke, in his *Commentaries*, very correctly shows that this exaggeration of facts is common to the Old Testament, and gives numerous illustrations. He quotes one from the Jewish writer, Basnage, in his *History of the Jews*, wherein he tells of one Jochanan: "He composed such a great number of precepts and lessons that, if the heavens were paper and all the trees of the forests so many pens, and all the children of men so many scribes, they would not suffice to write all his lessons."

And still another from the same pious author: in eulogizing Eliezar he says: "Although the firmament were vellum, and the waters of the ocean were changed into ink, it would not be sufficient to describe all the knowledge of Eliezar."

One more illustration of exaggerated lying by holy men, to show what they are capable of, for it is from these common fountains the priests and clergy have drunk in large profusion. The reader who is familiar with the Christian Fathers will open vol. ix., book 5, chap. 33, secs. 3 and 4, p. 146, *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*. The author, Irenaeus against Heresies, was telling what great rewards would come to Christians, and how "our Lord" taught that "the days will come in which vines shall grow, each having ten thousand branches, and in each branch ten thousand twigs, and in each true twig ten thousand shoots, and in each of the shoots ten thousand clusters, and on every one of the clusters ten thousand grapes, and every grape when pressed will give five and twenty metretres of wine. And when any one of the saints shall lay hold of a cluster another [shall] cry out, 'I am a better cluster, take me.'"

A metrete, according to *Smith's Bible Dictionary*, article "Weights and Measures," was equal to two and two-third gallons. A learned writer, who has stopped to make the exact figures, says: "One millennial grape-vine will produce a quantity of wine equal in bulk to the planet Mercury. Allowing the thousand millions of earth's inhabitants enough to keep them constantly intoxicated, say two gallons a day to each person, it would keep them all dead drunk for the space of thirty thousand million years."

A prolific vine, a first-class lie, just such as only a Christian Father could invent, and a credulous follower believe; and yet it is a staple production in what passes for ancient Christian literature.

## WHO KILLED GOLIATH?

EVERY Sunday scholar can shout out "David" to the above question. Yet there is a little circumstance which suggests that the story is mythical, and that David, like many others, is credited with other persons' doings, just as he is often credited with Psalms he never wrote. Nothing is more common to students of legends and folklore than the ascription to one hero of deeds originally related of another. Mr. E. C. Brewer, in his *Dictionary of Miracles*, has shown how many of the miracles of the saints were mere repetitions of Bible wonders, or, in some cases, of miracles ascribed to Pagan gods. Even Jesus was far from original. Raising the widow's son had previously been performed by Elijah, and it may, perhaps, be doubted, if Moses had not been fabled to have brought forth water from the rock and fed the children of Israel with manna, whether we should have heard of Christ turning water into wine and feeding thousands miraculously.

The circumstance referred to is the passage, 2 Sam. xxi. 19, which reads in the Authorised Version, "And there was again a battle in Gath with the Philistines, where Elhanan, the son of Jaare-oregim, a Bethlehemite, slew the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam." It will be noticed that the words, *the brother of* are italicised, showing they are not in the Hebrew, but are supplied by the translator, to explain, or rather to avoid, a contradiction. It must be allowed that, on the principles of criticism current in their day, they were justified. To interpret one passage of Scripture by another, written at however great a distance of time, was considered legitimate. Accordingly, theologians referred on this passage to the account in 1 Chron. xx. 5, where it says that "Elhanan, the son of Jair, slew Ithai, the brother of Goliath the Gittite." But it is now known that Chronicles is a much later document than 2 Samuel, often altering the old story, and where it does so being far less trustworthy. For instance, 2 Samuel xxii. 24 says "David gave Araunah fifty shekels of silver." 1 Chronicles xvi. 25 says it was six hundred shekels of gold. 2 Samuel viii. 4 says "David captured seven hundred horsemen." 1 Chronicles xviii. 4 says it was seven thousand. 2 Samuel x. 18 says "David slew the men of seven hundred chariots." 1 Chronicles xix. 18 says seven thousand. Evidently the later writer had a tendency to magnify David's exploits. To rectify Samuel from Chronicles is the reverse of the right procedure. It is far more likely that the writer of Chronicles added the words, *the brother of*, than that the earlier writer omitted them.

Jerome sought to reconcile the contradictory texts by supposing that Elhanan and David were one and the same person under two names. But this would make David the son of Jaare-oregim, and make confusion worse confounded. The most likely supposition is, that a deed originally ascribed to Elhanan was afterwards attributed to the more popular hero, David.

J. M. W.

## Apes and Men.

On all sides I hear the cry, "We are men and women, not a mere better sort of apes, a little longer in the leg, more compact in the foot, and bigger in brain, than your brutal chimpanzees and gorillas. The power of knowledge—the conscience of good and evil—the pitiful tenderness of human affections, raise us out of all real fellowship with the brutes, however closely they may seem to approximate us."

To this I can only reply that the exclamation would be most just, and would have my own entire sympathy, if it were only relevant. But it is not I who seek to base man's dignity upon his great toe, or insinuate that we are lost if an ape has a hippocampus minor. On the contrary, I have done my best to sweep away this vanity. I have endeavored to show that no absolute structural line of demarcation, wider than that between the animals which immediately succeed us in the scale, can be drawn between the animal world and ourselves; and I may add the expression of my belief that the attempt to draw a psychical distinction is equally futile, and that even the highest faculties of feeling and of intellect begin to germinate in lower forms of life. At the same time, no one is more strongly convinced than I am of the vastness of the gulf between civilised man and the brutes; or is more certain that, whether from them or not, he is assuredly not of them. No one is less disposed to think lightly of the present dignity, or despairingly of the future hopes, of the only consciously intelligent denizen of this world.—*T. H. Huxley.*

## THE TALKING DEMON.

ACCORDING to historical accounts, Valladolid, in Yucatan, has been the theatre of remarkable events in days not very distant. It is asserted, on the authority of the Church, that the place was once haunted by a demon of the worst character, called "a demonio parlero," or talking devil, because he held nightly discourse with any who chose to question him, answering like a parrot. Though never visible, he seems to have been a merry sort of devil, dancing, laughing, playing on guitars and castanets. After a time he took to throwing stones into houses, pelting people with eggs, slandering honest folk—in short, getting the whole town by the ears to such an extent that the Bishop of Merida was obliged to interfere and forbid any one to speak to the demon under pain of severe spiritual punishment. It is related that, when the people abstained from any further communication with him, the demonio wept and wailed, and finally took revenge by burning houses. At this alarming juncture the cure was compelled to seek divine assistance, and, after a long tussle, succeeded in ousting the devil, who fled to the woods. In an official report the pious Dr. Sanchez de Aguilar says: "An aunt of mine, one day vexed with this devil, said to him: 'Go out of my house, thou evil one.' And she gave him a blow on the face that left his nose redder than cochineal. Forty years afterwards, when I was a cure of the same city, the demonio returned to infest some of my annexed villages, especially that of Yulcoba. He always came at midnight, or at 1 o'clock a.m. with a great whirlwind, dust and noise as of a hurricane. Stones swept over the entire pueblo, and though the Indians promptly put out all the fires in their kitchens, even this did not avail, for from the flames with which the devil himself was tormented proceeded flashes like mighty comets or wandering stars, which did fire two or three houses at once, and spread so rapidly that there were not people enough to put them out. I, being sent for to come and drive him away, conjured the demon with the faith and zeal that God gave me, and commanded him not to enter that village again, whereupon the fires and the whirlwind ceased, to the glory and honor of the Divine Majesty which has given such power to the priests." Being thus banished from Yulcoba, the demon returned to Valladolid with new burnings, but was finally barred out altogether by setting up consecrated crosses on all the surrounding hills. These he could not pass, and to this day hundreds of these holy crosses stand guard around Valladolid.—*N. Y. (Monthly) "World," August.*

## The Praying Mantis.

An insect has been discovered in Japan which feeds on the caterpillar, so injurious to fruit and other trees. "It catches the caterpillars and holds them firmly with its strong arms while it sucks the juices out of them." The Oregon Horticultural Society has made some successful experiments with this insect. "It is called the 'praying mantis,' from the devotional attitude it assumes while watching its prey." So says the *Daily American*. We have about one hundred and twelve thousand "praying mantis" in this country; but, instead of sucking the life juices out of humanity's enemies, they confine their delicate but effective attention almost entirely to man himself. One of their neat tricks, performed in a very "devotional attitude," is to induce the foolish people to exempt their, the praying mantis', property from taxation. Some of the more audacious and greedy of these pious insects are now at work on a scheme to have their most dangerous doctrines taught in a series of special text-books to be prepared for use in the common schools. Cannot Japan furnish us with a parasite that will suck the juices out of these praying mantis of the pulpit?—*Truthseeker.*

## A Spiritual Body.

Our Christian friends talk a great deal about a "spiritual body," just as seriously and solemnly as though they knew what they were talking about. It is impossible for a Christian to see the humor in such talk. He gulps down all the ridiculous dogmas of the Church as if they were food or medicine, and gets tearing mad with everyone who does not care to poison his intellectual stomach with such nesses. A spiritual body is not a material body, but is a *body* just the same, a "refined incorruptible" body, we are informed. Wonder where such a body can be seen? Such a body cannot be seen, our Christian friend tells us; "the spiritual body is not visible to those in the flesh." This wonderful body can only be discerned by those who have suffered the resurrection. Well, then, how does anyone on earth know that there is such a body? The trouble with a Christian is that he mistakes his faith for knowledge, and imagines a thing is so because he has been taught to believe it is so. A spiritual body is a kind of imaginary soap bubble.—*Boston Investigator.*

## BOOK CHAT.

## THE BOOK OF JASHER.

THE lost books of the Bible are pretty numerous. There is, for instance, "the book of the wars of the Lord," referred to in Numbers xxi. 14, the very title of which confirms the statement that Jahveh was a man of war. It probably celebrated his prowess and that of his banditti. Then there were the book of the constitution of the kingdom "laid up before the Lord" (1 Samuel x. 25) the acts of Solomon (1 Kings xi. 41); the book of Nathan the prophet, and the book of Gad the Seer (1 Chron. xxix. 29; 2 Chron. ix. 29); the book of Shemaiah the prophet (2 Chron. xii. 15); and the book of Iddo (2 Chron. xiii. 22). But none has created more interest than the book of Jasher, cited in Joshua x. 13 and 2 Samuel i. 18.

\* \* \*

ספר יאשר [Sepher Hayashar], or the *Book of Jasher*, referred to in *1 Samuel* and *2 Samuel*, is now published at Salt Lake City. The translation is by Mordecai Manuel Noah, and it was first published in English at New York in 1840. The Hebrew from which it was translated was first printed in Venice about 1613, and it was evidently popular, as it was issued in 1625, at Cracow in 1628, and at Prague in 1668. It purported to have providentially turned up at the destruction of Jerusalem, just as the book of the law turned up in the time of Josiah. Its authenticity is not only questioned and questionable, but it is plainly spurious. None the less, it is certain that it preserves Jewish traditions not found in the Bible, and throws light on the mythical character of the collection known as the Word of God.

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There is no doubt the book of Jasher was much esteemed before the Bible was generally known. Emanuel Deutsch says: "The book became immensely popular, and it richly deserved its popularity. No one," he continues, "seems to have doubted its authenticity"—that is, its being that lost treasure to which "Joshua" and "Samuel" referred, until modern criticism looked into the matter, and found that it was a clever compilation from the Talmud from various Midrashim, from pseudo Josephus (Joseppon), and many popular Jewish and Arabic legends; that it made suspicious mention of such words as Abdallah, Ali, Mohammed, Abu Jussuf, Emir, Khalif, etc.; all of which things put together led to the irresistible conclusion that it was one of the latest offshoots of the legendary development known as Midrash, that it arose between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries A.D., and that its birthplace was Spain.

\* \* \*

The version before us gives none of the Arabic and Moslem terms mentioned by E. Deutsch; but it has mediæval jumbling of classical history with that of Scripture. Thus we read in chapter xvii. that the children of Tubal dwelt in Tuscanah and built a city, Sabinah; and the men of Chittim went to the city of Sabinah, and each man took a young woman from the daughters of Tubal, like the rape of the Sabines in Livy. We also have Turnus, King of Bibentu, and Anzala, King of Africa, rival claimants for the hand of Jania, daughter of Uzu; and Azdribal, the son of Angeas, fighting with Latinus, King of Chittim. Such mixtures of history were common in the Middle Ages. Yet an Oxford M.A., Mr. W. B. Woodgate, says: "It seems to me quite possible that in this Jasher record we trace evidence that, if not Rome, at least Tuscany, was a flourishing kingdom in the years of the Hebrew Exodus from Mesopotamia to Canaan—i.e., Abraham's time."\*

\* \* \*

The book of Jasher is in ninety-one chapters, dealing with the Jewish heroes, from the time of Adam to the conquest of Canaan and reign of the Judges. Many of the Bible stories are told at greater length, sometimes in nearly the same words as the Bible, but at others quite differently, and, indeed, inconsistently with its records. Much is said about Enoch, who, like Elijah, ascends to heaven "in a whirlwind with horses and chariots of fire." Amraphel of Shinar is identified with Nimrod. Ishmael's progeny, as would be natural if taken from Moslem sources, is given more fully than they appear in Genesis. Human monstrosities with "tails" steal Esau's asses. Joseph's adventures with Potiphar's wife, Zelicah, are more fully detailed than in Genesis (compare the adventures of Yusuf and Zuleikha, in Mirkhond's *Rauzat-us-Safa*). Moses is described as King of Cush. He is imprisoned ten years by Reuel, and Zipporah nourishes him secretly. The Pharaoh of the Exodus is named Adikam. He leads an army of a million in pursuit of the Jews, for whom the sea divides in twelve parts. In Joshua's time we have Latinus, king of Chittim [Romans or Hittites?], making tributary "the inhabitants of Britannia and Kernania."

\* \* \*

In relating the miracle of the stopping of the sun by

Joshua, it says "the sun stood still in the midst of the heavens, and it stood still thirty-six times," though the translator has rendered it, not *times*, but *moments*. The other Bible reference to the Book of Jasher occurs in the dying charge of Jacob to his son Judah: "Teach, I pray thee, thy children the use of the bow, and all instruments of war."

\* \* \*

Mr. Woodgate, who gives an epitome of the work in his *Modern Layman's Faith*, p. 525, says: "If these chronicles were as old as a favorable deduction would make them out, then, apparently, neither Jasher is taken from Genesis, nor Genesis from Jasher, but each is the compilation of independent authors, who had access to records more or less common to each, each author using his own discretion as to what he collated and what he ignored." Again he says: "We find in Jasher and the Pentateuch two independent histories, each showing traces of compilation from extraneous sources common to both compilers." If Mr. Woodgate is right, the argument of Professor Johnson, that the whole of the Bible is later than Mohammed, derives confirmation from the Book of Jasher.

\* \* \*

Whenever the Book of Jasher was compiled, the author certainly used sources similar to, but not the same as, those in the Bible. Like the books of Chronicles, it is a compilation, and that book refers to the Midrash of the Prophet Iddo, the Midrash of the Book of Kings, and other sources. Jasher tells big yarns, but the million soldiers of Pharaoh are no more of a stretch than the inspired statement that 500,000 chosen men of Israel were slain in one day (2 Chron. xiii. 17), or that David stored up 100,000 talents of gold and 1,000,000 talents of silver for the house of Jahveh (1 Chron. xxii. 14). If the Book of Jasher had been included in the Canon, excellent reasons would have been found for all its absurdities, and antiquity would have been ransacked to show how it was supported by profane history.

\* \* \*

A much later, spurious, Book of Jasher was put forward in 1751, by Jacob Ilive, a printer. It was not from the Hebrew at all, but was probably intended as a skit on Moses and the Bibliolaters. It purported to have been translated by Alcuin of Britain, who went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. A note by Wickliffe is appended, wherein he states that he approves of the work, but does not want it made part of the Canon. This bookseller's skit was reprinted at Bristol in 1827, and gave an opportunity to several men of God to show their learning and lack of sense by its elaborate refutation. It may have contributed to getting poor Ilive immured in Coldbath Fields, a prisoner for blasphemy. In 1756 he was sentenced to three years' imprisonment, the charge against him being blasphemy in *Some Modest Remarks on the late Bishop Sherlock's Sermons*.

\* \* \*

In 1854 Dr. John William Donaldson put forward in Latin his *Jasher*, a learned and instructive attempt to reconstruct the book of the Upright from the references and supposed quotations in the Old Testament. For this attempt Dr. Donaldson was violently abused by the orthodox; Dr. Perowne, now Bishop of Worcester, writing that, if his phallic view of the story of the Fall was correct, it "would render it incumbent on all decent parsons to bury this leaf of the Bible nine fathoms deep in the earth."

The ancient Platonists, you know, were the most religious and devout of all the Pagan philosophers; yet many of them, particularly Plotinus (205-270 A.D.), expressly declare that intellect or understanding is not to be ascribed to the deity, and that our most perfect worship of him consists, not in acts of veneration, reverence, gratitude, or love, but in a certain mysterious self-annihilation or total extinction of all our faculties. These ideas are perhaps too far-stretched; but still it must be acknowledged that, by representing the deity as so intelligible and comprehensible, and so similar to a human mind, we are guilty of the grossest and most narrow partiality, and make ourselves the model of the whole universe.—*Hume's "Dialogues on Natural Religion."*

The history of civilisation teaches us how little real morality is in essence connected with any form of ecclesiastical creed. Often hand in hand with the absolute lordship of an almighty Church go the grossest barbarity and lawlessness. Let us think only on the mediæval age. And, on the other hand, we see men who have cast themselves away from every belief of the Churches attaining the loftiest heights of moral grandeur. Dissevered from all Church creeds, there lives in the breast of every man the germ of a true natural religion. Its highest commandment is love—the narrowing down of our natural egoism in favor of our fellows, for the good of that human brotherhood of which we are members. This natural law of morals is far older than all the religions of the Churches. It has evolved out of the social instincts of animals.—*Ernst Haeckel.*

\* *A Modern Layman's Faith*; Chapman & Hall; 1893; p. 523.

WINWOOD READE *v.* HENRY DRUMMOND.

PROFESSOR DRUMMOND makes much of the sexual and parental instincts as exhibiting a divine scheme of evolution; but I think Mr. Winwood Reade, the African traveller and nephew of Charles Reade the novelist, has placed the matter in both a clearer and a truer light. In his *Martyrdom of Man*, first published in 1872, he says (p. 444, fourteenth edition, 1892): "Reproduction was once a part of growth; animals therefore desire to perpetuate their species from a natural and innate tendency inherited from their hermaphrodite and animalcule days. But, owing to the separation of the sexes, this instinct cannot be appeased except by means of co-operation. In order that offspring may be produced, two animals must enter into partnership; and, in order that offspring may be reared, this partnership must be continued a considerable time. All living creatures of the higher grade are memorials of conjugal affection and parental care; they are born with a tendency to love, for it is owing to love that they exist. Those animals that are deficient in conjugal desire or parental love produce or bring up no offspring, and are blotted out of the book of Nature. That parents and children should consort together is natural enough; and the family is multiplied into the herd. At first the sympathy by which the herd is united is founded only on the pleasures of the breeding season and the duties of the nest. It is based entirely on domestic life. But this sympathy is extended and intensified by the struggle for existence. Herd contends against herd, community against community; that herd which best combines will undoubtedly survive; and that herd in which sympathy is most developed will most efficiently combine. Here, then, one herd destroys another, not only by means of teeth and claws, but also by means of sympathy and love. The affections, therefore, are weapons, and are developed according to the Darwinian law. Love is as cruel as the shark's jaw, as terrible as the serpent's fang."

OUTCAST.

## GOD KNOWS BEST.

THE value of prayer on all sides we hear,  
And parsons will tell you 'tis right;  
All the sins of the day will be swept away  
If you kneel by your bedside each night.  
You may lie, you may thief, and—you'd hardly believe—  
A murder perform any day.  
You are always forgiven in the kingdom of Heaven;  
You're an innocent man if you pray.  
Just so!  
Quite an unblemished man if you pray.

The world we live in is brimful of sin—  
Any Christian will tell you that's true;  
And many and oft prayers go up aloft  
For Betterment. What does God do?  
Well, the world gets much worse, and if Christians don't  
curse,  
They *can't* think the earth is much bless'd,  
For day after day for improvement they pray,  
Forgetting their God knoweth best.  
Poor things!  
Don't remember their God knoweth best.

Many friends, so I find, all more or less kind,  
And all self-appointed 'tis true,  
Pray 'gainst my sin, year out and year in,  
And ask God to make me anew.  
They rave and they shout till they're quite tired out:  
To God scores of prayers are addressed;  
But, curious to say, I go on my old way.  
Perhaps, after all, God knows best.  
Of course!  
Why worry God? He knows best.

P. T. WHELAN.

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## INFANTILE FAITH.

"It must take a long time to get to heaven," remarked Tommy, as he watched a funeral procession go by. "Why, Tommy?" said his mother. "Because the carriages go so slow."

First Youngster—"I've got a new baby brother, what came from heaven last night." Second Youngster—"That's nothin'. My little baby brother went to heaven yesterday." First Youngster—"I bet it's the same kid."

"What did you learn at Sunday-school, Harry?" said his mother, after his first visit to that institution. "Nothing." "What did the teacher talk about?" "Only that they put dandelions in the lion's den, and he wouldn't eat 'em."

Tommy—"All these people haven't gone to heaven, auntie." Auntie—"Hush, Tommy, why do you say that?" Tommy—"Because I read on some tombstones, 'Peace to their ashes,' and they don't have ashes only where it is very hot!"

"Mamma, what did you pray for?" said the little five-year-old son of a friend of mine. "Why, for papa and mamma, and for God to make you a good boy," she replied. "Well, that's just what I've been praying for too, and, if you are going to keep on, I quit."

Little Bobby—"Ma, will I go to heaven when I die?" Mother—"If you are a good boy, you will." "Will you go, too?" "I hope so, Bobby." "And will pa?" "Yes, we shall all be there." Bobby didn't seem altogether satisfied, but, after some thought, he said: "I don't see how I'm going to have much fun."

A SCHOOL inspector, examining a class in religious knowledge—the lesson being about our first parents in the Garden of Eden—remarked: "Now, children, could a greater punishment have been given to the serpent than that of having to crawl on its belly and eat dust all the days of its life?" "Yes," said a bright little lad, "if he had had to walk on the pint o' his tail, that would have been a tickler." "Please, sir," said another, "was not that the way it walked before it was cursed?"

## The Scottish Sawbath.

There is a milk boy in Kelvinside-avenue, Glasgow, who disturbs the neighborhood for six days in the week by continuously ringing a bell in the early morn. But he is a good boy, and has been reared in a Sunday-school; he knows it is very wrong to ring bells on Sunday except they happen to be church bells, so he compromises the matter by industriously rattling a stone in a milk-can. O blessed Sawbath!

## A Curious Juxtaposition.

In Dumbarton-road, Glasgow, there is a grocer's shop underneath a mission hall; the signs read thus:

"A Just God and a Saviour."

"Ham, Butter, and Cheese Factor."

Who says a Scotchman cannot joke?

## It Worked the Other Way.

"Er—our revival has resulted in so many accessions to the church," said the minister, leaning back in his chair, and putting the tips of his fingers together, "that I—um, ah—I think it would not be a bad idea for my salary to be increased."

"I'm afraid we can't do it, brother," replied the deacon. "You see, the only way we got so many of them to join was by explaining that with a large membership the burden of carrying a minister at the salary you are now getting would be but little felt."

## The Heathen Never Got It.

At the parish church of a village in the north special sermons were to be preached and collections made on behalf of a well-known missionary society. To remind them of the annual effort, and to request their attendance in church, the vicar visited many of his flock for some time previously. A few days after the event had transpired the man of God walked into the shop of one old woman, whom he had seen in church. Judge of his surprise and amusement when, before he could utter a word of greeting, she startled him by jerking out in great wrath: "Ah, you've comed; I tho't you would. But I'll give no more to your missions, not I. Why, look at that," reaching down a penny from the shelf. "I put that in the plate, and it has comed back to me. I marked it, I did. I knowed well them blackits (negroes) never got the money."

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

### LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.) : 6.30, musical selections ; 7, Charles Watts, "The Atonement: A Reply to Mr. Gladstone." (Admission free ; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.)  
 BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station) : 7.30, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "Freethought Ethics." (Free.) 9.15, social club. Monday, at 8, musical and dramatic entertainment and dancing (tickets, 6d.). Tuesday, at 8, dancing class. Wednesday, at 8, dramatic club.  
 CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road) : 7.30, W. Heaford, "Christian Errors and Secular Antidotes."  
 EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile-end-road, E.) : 8, "F. Haslam, "The Protestant Reformation: What we have Gained or Lost by It."  
 WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Duke of York," Kensington-place, Silver-street, Notting-hill-gate, W.) : Monday, at 8.30, business meeting.

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES : 11.15, a lecture.  
 CAMBERWELL (Station-road) : 11.30, W. Heaford, "Belief and Unbelief."  
 CLERKENWELL GREEN : 11.30, W. J. Ramsey will lecture.  
 FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand) : 11, E. Calvert, "The Philosophy of Materialism"; 3, F. Haslam, "The Rise and Decline of Islam, Mahomet and his Koran."  
 HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side) : 7, J. Rowney, "The Bible Creation Story." Thursday, at 8, Stanley Jones, "Miracles."  
 HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch) : 11.30, S. E. Easton, "The Bible as a Guide to Morality"; 3.30, S. E. Easton, "Christ's Teachings." Wednesday, at 8, Stanley Jones, "Miracles."  
 ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street) : 11.30, A. Guest, "Faith Made Easy."  
 KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction) : 11.30, P. H. Snelling, "Romans xiii."  
 LAMBETH (Kennington-green, near Vestry Hall) : 6.30, a lecture.  
 LEWISHAM (Deptford, Broadway) : 7, A. G. Herzfeld, "Secularism."  
 LEYTON (High-road, near Vicarage-road) : 11.30, C. J. Hunt will lecture.  
 MILE-END WASTE : 11.30, St. John, "The Curse of Superstition."  
 REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester-gate) : 3, C. J. Hunt, "Religion and Education."  
 VICTORIA PARK (near the Fountain) : 11.15 and 3.15, St. John will lecture.  
 WALTHAMSTOW (Markhouse-road) : 6.30, H. L. Barron will lecture.  
 WESTMINSTER (Old Pimlico Pier) : 11.30, H. Snell, "If Christ came to London."  
 WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill) : 11.30, C. James, "Deism the Road to Freethought"; 7, C. James, "The Gospel of Secularism." Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen will lecture.

### COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street) : Thursday, at 8, C. C. Cattell, "Was Man at First Mature in Body and Mind?"  
 BRIGHTON (Star Assembly Rooms, 6 Whitecross-street) : 7.30, Mr. Pearce, "Travels in the Land of Bruno and Galileo." Wednesday, at 8, a lecture.  
 DUNDEE (City Assembly Rooms) : 11, Zosimus, "Freethought in Scotland: an Historical Sketch"; 2.15, "Devils in Hell and Out of It"; 6.30, "Science and Religion."  
 GLASGOW (Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street) : 11, G. W. Foote, "Is Immortality a Blessing?"; 2.30, "Christian Socialism"; 6.30, "A New Plea for God: Prof. Henry Drummond's *Ascent of Man*."  
 LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Ann-street) : 11, Tontine Society ; 7, John Walter, B.A., "Unitarianism."  
 MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints) : 11, Dr. Edward Aveling, "Radicals and the Independent Labor Party"; 3, "Charles Darwin and Karl Marx"; 6.30, "Secularism and Socialism."  
 PORTSMOUTH (Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea) : 11, C. Cohen, "The Factors of Social Evolution"; 7, "Christianity and Medical Science." Wednesday and Saturday, at 8, dancing class.  
 ROCHDALE : 3.30, Saturday, Sept. 8, pilgrimage to Owen's College Museum.  
 SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, King-street) : 6.30, ethical class ; 7.30, business meeting.

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

ABERDEEN (Castle-street) : 3, Stanley Jones, "Christianity and Social Life"; 7, "The Church and Science." Monday, at 8, "Religion and Morality." Tuesday, at 8, "Special Creation and Evolution."

READING (at Cemetery) : Monday, at 7.15, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Secularism."  
 ROCHDALE (Town Hall-square) : 11, Sam Standing, "Parliament in Ancient Rome"; 3, "Creation Visualised—Day III."; 6.30, "The Right of Private Judgment."  
 SOUTHSEA COMMON : 3, C. Cohen will lecture.  
 SOUTHBEND (corner of Weston-road, High-street) : 11.30, S. R. Thompson, "Christianity and Secularism Compared."

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—Sept. 9, Portsmouth ; 10, Reading ; 13, Wood Green ; 16, m. Finsbury Park, a. Victoria Park, e. Edmonton ; 20, Wood Green ; 23, m. and a., Victoria Park ; 27, Wood Green ; 30, Manchester.

STANLEY JONES, 58 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—Sept. 9, Aberdeen ; 16, Dundee ; 23, Edinburgh ; 30, Glasgow. October 7, Belfast ; 14, Newcastle-on-Tyne ; 21, Huddersfield.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Sept. 16, Clerkenwell Green ; 23, Westminster. October 14, Camberwell.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—September 23, Hall of Science, London.

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