

# The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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## VIRGIN BIRTHS.

DURING my recent debates with Mr. Lee he has more than once referred to Professor Huxley as saying that no man of science would ever think of denying virgin births. I have seen Professor Huxley's words cited in Christian journals before—with what degree of accuracy I was unable to determine. The object in all cases was to make it appear that the great Agnostic had nothing whatever to say against the *à priori* credibility of the birth of Jesus Christ in the manner recorded in the New Testament. Mr. Lee was good enough to mention that Professor Huxley's words might be found in the appendix to Canon Gore's "Bampton Lectures" on the Incarnation. I have consulted that volume, the text of which I had read, though not the "Notes" which follow; and I find, as I suspected, that the Christians have made an unfair use of the passage in question. It has, indeed, been Professor Huxley's misfortune, and to some extent his fault, that his authority has been urged against his own opinions. His talk about the *possibility* of miracles, which he meant in the metaphysical sense that they are *conceivable*, was seized upon as an "infidel" testimony to the *practical* possibility of miracles. His eulogy of the Bible, written as far back as 1870, was quoted *ad nauseam* by the party of religious, as opposed to secular, education in public elementary schools. And now his name is being employed to give a scientific countenance to the absurd, and not over decent, story of the supernatural birth of Jesus Christ. I say *supernatural*, notwithstanding the fact that certain Christian apologists are trying to give the Incarnation a semi-natural appearance. And, indeed, if the birth of Jesus from a human mother, without the assistance of a human father, was *not* really supernatural, we may just as well believe in the similar births of Buddha and Plato, to say nothing of the legendary Saviors of antiquity. In that case, the Incarnation loses its special significance, and Christianity falls absolutely into line with the other great world-religions—a position which is entirely fatal to its divine pretensions.

The particular passage of Professor Huxley's on "virgin births" is quoted by Canon Gore, with permission, from a private letter to the late Dean of Wells, dated April 27, 1877. It runs as follows:—

"I have not the slightest objection to offer *à priori* to all the propositions in the three creeds. The mysteries of the Church are child's play compared with the mysteries of Nature. The doctrine of the Trinity is not more puzzling than the necessary antinomies of physical speculation; virgin procreation and resuscitation from apparent death are ordinary phenomena for the naturalist. It would be a great error, therefore, to suppose that the Agnostic rejects Theology because of its puzzles and wonders. He rejects it simply because in his judgment there would be no evidence sufficient to warrant the theological propositions, even if they related to the commonest and most obvious every-day propositions."

I think it a pity that Professor Huxley wrote this letter, No. 794.

and a still greater pity that he allowed Canon Gore to print it after a lapse of fourteen years. The last sentence is scarcely intelligible as it stands; apparently there is a misprint or an error in composition. And surely the value of the first sentence is precisely nothing; for in saying that he has no *à priori* objections to all the propositions in the three creeds, Huxley can only mean that he has no *à priori* objections to any proposition whatever. Does he not, also, fall into a confusion in his use of the word "mysteries"? A mystery in Science is merely ignorance; it is entirely negative; whereas a mystery in Theology is positive, being a flat contradiction between an admitted theory and an undisputed fact. When we say that life is a mystery, we mean that we are unable to explain its origin in the present state of our knowledge; but when we say that the existence of evil is a mystery, we simply mean that it cannot be reconciled with the theory of omnipotent benevolence. There is no more mystery about the *fact* of evil than about the fact of good. Pleasure and pain are equally natural. If a man catches a shark, or a shark catches a man, there is nothing to excite the bump of wonder. Astonishment only arises when we are told that God orders all things, and that he is infinitely wise and good and powerful. We are then puzzled to understand why this great ruler of the world, and indeed of the universe, allowed a shark to dine off his superior, in violation of etiquette and economy, to say nothing of still higher considerations. Until the theory is pressed upon us there is no mystery; in fact, the mystery is only the illogical aspect of the theory; and calling it a mystery is but anticipating its being called an absurdity.

As for the "necessary antinomies of physical speculation," what are they but the necessary antinomies of metaphysics? If you work with infinities, you are bound at last to come to logical contradictions, as Mr. Herbert Spencer has well shown in his *First Principles*. Antinomies do not occur in positive science, but in abstract speculation, which is about as nutritious as sawdust. The atomic theory is one thing, for instance, and the infinite divisibility of matter quite another. Pursue the latter and you come to an antinomy. Take a piece of chalk, and ask: Is it infinitely divisible? The answer is: Yes. Well, then, it is divisible into an infinite number of particles? Yes. But an infinite number of particles would fill infinite space, and that piece of chalk would monopolize the universe. Which, as our old friend Euclid says, is absurd. You always come to these blind alleys in theology and metaphysics. The only escape is to accept Positivism, and to decline these word-juggles, in which fictions masquerade as realities.

With regard to "resuscitation from apparent death," one can only wonder why Huxley took the trouble to pen such a sentence. Raising up from *apparent* death is not raising up from *real* death; and it is the latter which is taught by the Christian theologian. Certainly there is nothing extraordinary in the Resurrection if Jesus Christ was buried while in a swoon or in a state of catalepsy. But is that

what the Creeds mean in declaring that "the third day he rose again from the dead"?

Lastly, we come to "virgin procreation"—observe that Huxley does not say "virgin births." Now what does this mean? Low down in the organic scale there are self-fertilising hermaphrodites. The differentiation of the sexes has not yet taken place. But when that differentiation is once established, the association of a male and a female organism is necessary to procreation. It is ridiculous to argue from a mollusc to a mammal, or from an oyster to Mary of Nazareth. Indeed, the very phrase "virgin procreation" is misleading, for the word "virgin" can only properly apply in the case of a perfectly differentiated female, capable of becoming in the fullest sense of the word a mother. The phrase will only be permissible when a case occurs of self-fertilization on the part of a female mammal. Until then it is a misuse of language; and the Christians, in citing it as lending color to the scientific possibility of the Incarnation, are only betraying their ignorance of biology, or their recklessness in defending their faith.

G. W. FOOTE.

### MAN AND OTHER ANIMALS.

THE sadness of life is vastly enhanced to any sensitive mind by the knowledge that unnecessary suffering is the lot, not only of humankind, but also, and probably in a still greater degree, of those animals whom we may call our dumb relations. For its services in endeavoring to alleviate some of the awful woe of the animal world the Humanitarian League deserves all praise, and I am happy to think that the kindly sentiments which it inculcates are spreading in the world. Some evidence of this may be found in the volume now before me.\* It consists of a number of addresses delivered under the auspices of the Humanitarian League by gentlemen entertaining a wide variety of views upon social, political, and religious topics, yet all agreeing that the subject of animal treatment demands serious attention. The volume is entitled *The New Charter* by its editor, Mr. Henry S. Salt, who provides an excellent note of introduction. That men differing so much on other topics as Messrs. Kenworthy, Lilley, Oldfield, Harrison, Foote, and Leadbeater, the gentlemen whose addresses are reprinted, should yet be so largely in substantial agreement, is indeed an indication that both ethics and law must now include the claims of the animal world in any new charter.

There is just a shade of heresy about the volume, which is hardly redeemed by the essay of the Rev. A. L. Lilley on "The Church's View." This is not surprising. Mr. Lecky, in his *History of European Morals*, points out that, though Hindus and Buddhists have ever inculcated humane treatment to animals, it has only been within the past century that in Christian countries there has been a growing sentiment on the subject; and in this, as Mr. Foote shows in his address, Freethinkers like Bentham and Voltaire were leaders. The last Pope, Pio Nono, declared it was a theological error to suppose that man had any duties to the animals, and the famous pietist, John Foster, described them as "incarnate absurdities gazing on an unredeemed world." No doubt, as the cause of humanity grows, the Church will, as of old, be ready to step in and cry: "We did it all." Meanwhile the work is mainly in the hands of the heretics.

The opening address by Mr. John C. Kenworthy is eloquent, but just a little too preachy for my fancy. I do not see how describing vivisection as "the practice of a people who have denied God and their own souls" helps the argument against it. The following paper, by the Rev. A. L. Lilley, is to the full as eloquent; but Mr. Lilley, as it seems to me, puts himself out of court as a representative of "The Church's View" by a definition of Christianity which departs entirely from the historical position of that religion. He says: "By Christianity I mean the theory of life, of each living creature, as an expression of the Divine, and the temper of love as the permanent moral element in the relations of all living creatures to one

another." Evidently this is not a definition of what Christianity has been, but of what an amiable humanitarian Christian would desire it to be.

Mr. Josiah Oldfield, who deals with "The Scientific View," gives the longest, the most pretentious, and, I must add, the driest discourse in the whole book. Mr. Frederic Harrison follows with one so brief as to make us wish it were longer, the more so as he deals mainly in generalities, which, of course, are admirably stated.

Secularists have every reason to be proud of Mr. Foote's place in the volume. Certainly his lecture is as interesting and as well written as any. To me it shows most grip of the subject, being free from the objection of mere sentiment, which may be raised against some. Mr. Foote thus states his standpoint:—

"Our standard is utility; not the narrow utility of the passing hour, which is merely policy, but the wide utility of generations, which is principle. What conduces to human welfare is right; what militates against it is wrong. This criterion is deep, and high, and solid enough to satisfy the profoundest philosopher; it is also simple enough to be intelligible to a little child; and it is applicable at all times, and to all the varied affairs of this world. There may be differences in its application, but the test is a practical one, and differences subside, and eventually disappear, in the course of experience and investigation."

Mr. Foote (in this agreeing with Mr. Harrison and Mr. Leadbeater) prefers to speak of duties rather than rights. But he does not remain content with generalities, and makes the application of his principles. "All domestic animals," he holds, "should be brought within the pale of legal protection. A minimum of consideration and comfort should be stipulated for them, and the denial of it should be treated as cruelty." A great deal of what is ridiculously styled "sport" calls for immediate suppression.

"It is enough to make a decent person sick to read of the agony inflicted by 'sportsmen' on helpless rabbits, pigeons, pheasants, and deer. The very dogs are brutalized by the men who keep them to hunt without the prompting of necessity. If it is wrong to shoot a man for amusement, it must be wrong to shoot an animal for amusement. Dear old Uncle Toby would not kill the fly that teased him; he opened the window and let it out, remarking, 'The world is wide enough for me and thee.' How different is this from the spirit of English 'sportsmen'!"

While not a vegetarian, he asks for the stringent regulation of the slaughter-house and the cattle-ship. "I would not allow animals to be driven into towns to be killed. What bewilderment must assail them as they tread the busy haunts of men. Let them spend their last hours amidst the accustomed peace of their lives, and let their death come (as some day it *must* come) with the swiftness of lightning, leaving no time for suffering or apprehension." Vivisection Mr. Foote regards "as the ultimate horror of man's unjust dealing with the animal world." But I must not be tempted to make any more extracts. Let those interested in Mr. Foote's view procure the book for themselves.

Mr. C. W. Leadbeater, a gentleman who, I believe, left the Christian ministry to embrace "Esoteric Buddhism," concludes the volume with "The Theosophical View." Man's duty to animals, according to Mr. Leadbeater, is to help them onward to a higher state of existence. I confess this seems to me wildly speculative. Yet, practically, I find myself very much in agreement with him. The Indian mahout may treat the elephant under his charge as his friend, believing that there is indeed a human soul enshrined in that huge carcase; the Highland shepherd would scout such a notion as applied to his collie; but both do the right thing in treating the animals as friends and appealing to their intelligence and affections rather than to mere brutal fear. Experience shows that this method brings the best returns, and on this low common ground there is quite sufficient to warrant us in encouraging kindness and repressing cruelty. As we do not know, for instance, that horses will become dogs, elephants, or men in their next incarnation, it is hard to see how or why they should be trained for such other stage of re-birth. But we can recognize their services here; we can alleviate their lot, and do what in us lies to make their work a pleasure.

I cannot conclude my notice of the volume without adding a word which seems missing. It is the relation of women to this question. Mr. Foote and Mr.

\* *The New Charter*. A Discussion of the Rights of Men and the Rights of Animals. (G. Bell.)

Leadbeater both refer to the cognate and important question of the training of children in sentiments of humanity. But this item of education must chiefly rest with the sex that fullest knows the meaning of pain and the beauty of sympathy. It is peculiarly the part of women to foster all tenderness and eradicate all cruelty. Let their hearts and minds be directed to the subject of animal treatment, and there will be such a quickening of conscience on the matter that the horrors of the past shall live but in the memory of time—

Who, like a penitent libertine, shall start,  
Look back, and shudder at his younger years.

J. M. WHEELER.

## PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY.

(Concluded from page 628.)

THE nature and object of philosophy are thus described by Epictetus, the Stoic: "Philosophy begins in our being aware of the differences of men among themselves, inquiring into the cause of these differences, disapproving and distrusting mere beliefs, examining them to see how far they are correct, and finally finding out some test which shall serve us, as the balance does, in telling what is light or heavy, or the rule, in showing what is crooked or straight. This is the beginning of philosophy. It is impossible that beliefs which are held differently by different people, and in which we differ from the Syrians and Egyptians, can be correct. And even in weights and measures we are not satisfied with the mere appearance; but for everything we have some test. Is it possible that what is of the greatest importance to mankind should have no test, and be past our finding out? There is a test, then; and why not seek for it and find it, and then use it unceasingly, so as never to stir a finger without it? Thus can those who use no test but their own belief be cured of their madness. It is the business of philosophy to examine and fix these tests, and to make use of those which are known is the part of a good and wise man" (*Discourses*, book ii., chap. xi.).

We have given this rather lengthy quotation from the Stoic philosopher because, in our judgment, it contains the very essence of philosophic force, and shows wherein philosophy differs from theology in the consideration of the great problems which affect human conduct. Theology assumes a certain belief to be true, and it requires no examination as to the causes of its profession. It does not attempt to explain the why and wherefore of the differences of opinion that obtain, and it takes no notice of the causes of the extensive unbelief which prevails. It bases its claims upon the supposition that man can believe at will, and that uniformity of opinion upon theological questions is both possible and essential to human welfare. No test as to the accuracy of views is provided for, and reason is allowed no part in deciding what is true and what is false. Philosophy, on the other hand, recognizes the impossibility of all persons thinking alike upon speculative subjects, and it seeks to discover the natural causes of divergence of thought. It provides a test whereby the accurate can be discerned from the inaccurate, and it proclaims the right to differ and to hold any honest and well-thought-out opinions. The wise man will not be bound by the opinions of others, but will think, select, and decide for himself. Upon this point we agree with the philosophy of the Stoics, of whom Plutarch writes thus: "They hold the essence of good to be the reasonable election of things according to nature, or, as they say, a reasonable election of things having a fitness for the causing felicity. This so highly venerated utility, which, preserving as some great and excellent thing for the wise, they permit not so much as the name of it to the vicious—this is the work of their amity; in this do the virtues of the wise man terminate by their common utilities."

Philosophy offers inducements to right-doing which even mistaken selfishness may profit by. Its injunction is: "Serve yourself by the best available means"—that is, by promoting the good of others. General comfort, prosperity, and happiness contribute to the welfare of the individual, who is surrounded by influences that either make or mar his life. When this philosophic view of self-interest is thoroughly understood, and acted upon, it will release the

victims of theology from the bondage in which for centuries they have been kept by the fatal teaching that the wrongs and shortcomings of this life will be compensated for in some future existence. The value of philosophy consists in the fact that it demonstrates that whatever contributes to our own well-being has its source in nature, and in the genius, skill, and labor of the human family; hence the study of nature and of the motives to exertion must be made the obvious function of the whole community. A useful feature in philosophy is, that it does not invent those evils which, it is said, will have to be encountered in an existence to us unknown. Unlike theology, it enables us to live on this planet regardless of the fears engendered in some minds by the pictures of the terrors which haunt the devout believers in religious superstitions. It encourages the search for remedies in the world we know, so that they may be applied to the evils that now retard human happiness. The philosopher finds no pleasure in beguiling mankind by deception, but he holds that the real good of man is enhanced only by truth, virtue, and justice; these he regards as the fundamentals of all possible progress. He delights in spreading knowledge, in widening the bonds of veracity, and in aiding the promotion of all that tends to elevate and improve mind and body.

It was a principle of Descartes, the French philosopher, "never to admit anything as true but that which is evidently so." This is truly philosophical, and would, if acted upon, destroy the power of theological pretensions, and counteract the evil effects of much of the pulpit teaching, which is mere assertion destitute of any evidential value. It would also discourage dogmatism, which is the child of ignorance. True philosophy is thoroughly opposed to the dogmatic spirit, and those who accept its teachings must be content to practise humility, and to lay aside all arrogant assumptions of their great superiority to other men whose views may not be identical with their own. As the ancient philosopher observed: "We are never more in danger of being subdued than when we think ourselves invincible." The object of philosophy is to learn, as far as possible, the limits of the human mind in reference to the acquisition of knowledge; and, having done this, to use every effort to effect improvement wherever it is possible, and to leave the useless and impracticable labor of sowing the wind to those who seek to know the unknowable and to perform the impossible. Philosophy, unlike theology, never attempts to extend the domain of the known into the unknown by indulging in wild flights of the imagination respecting the unknowable. As Socrates wisely observes: "Having searched into all kinds of science, we discover the folly of neglecting those which concern human life, and involving ourselves in difficulties about questions which are but mere notions. We should confine ourselves to nature and reason. Fancies beyond the reach of understanding, and which have yet been made the objects of belief—these have been the source of all the disputes, errors, and superstitions which have prevailed in the world. Such notional mysteries cannot be made subservient to the right use of humanity."

Theology ignores the fact that belief and conduct depend upon circumstances. Hence it enjoins uniformity of belief, not recognizing that the ability to believe any particular faith is subordinate to mental capacity, evidence, and training. Philosophy teaches that, as human nature is at present constituted, variety of opinion is inevitable, and no stigma should be cast upon anyone for dissenting from any particular view. The same principle applies to conduct, theology alleging that human nature is necessarily depraved, and that it can be reformed only by one specific means. Philosophy goes to the root of the matter, and says that the nature of actions depends upon the conditions which surround the actor; such conditions are, of course, internal as well as external. As Herbert Spencer observes: "The belief that a faulty character can so organize itself socially as to get out of itself a conduct that is not proportionally faulty is an utterly baseless belief." And Plato taught: "That the influence of circumstances guides all our actions; that according to the circumstances which surround us, or in which we may be placed, will be our conduct and fate." This is Secular philosophy, and it accords with reason and is justified by experience.

That philosophy is superior to theology in the nature and object of punishment is equally evident. The true object of punishment should be the reformation of the individual and the protection of society. The theological

theory of punishment is based upon a principle opposed to all good government. It allows no grades in virtue or vice. It divides the world into two classes—the sheep and the goats, leaving no intermediate course. Now, mankind are not either all good or all bad; there are degrees of innocence and guilt in the human family. Besides, this theory is vindictive; it inflicts punishment for past offences without the possibility of being a deterrent to the culprit in his future conduct. It comes too late; for when a person is once in hell, if he ever gets there, there is no opportunity afforded for improvement, inasmuch as all progress ceases. Now, philosophy, as taught by Plato, says: "Punishment ought to be considered, not as a method of retaliation, but as a means of prevention; not as referring to the past, and to acts which, being done, cannot be undone, but having relation solely to the future." Herein lies the right use of punitive laws, which modern society is beginning to recognize and enforce in spite of the revengeful character of theological punishment.

In reading the ethical teachings of the Stoics and other philosophers, one cannot but be struck with their practical and sublime tone. They give instructions for guidance in every department of life, both for individual discipline and governmental administration. In our opinion, they surpass, in variety and in power of adaptability to personal and general conduct, anything that is to be found in the New Testament. Theologians, while compelled to admit their excellence, seek to depreciate their beneficial influence by alleging that such teachings do not enjoin reformation "from within," but are simply dry moral maxims lacking educational force. This is not true, for the very keynote of Solon's philosophy was self-government. Pythagoras said: "Let not sleep fall on your eyes till you have reviewed the transactions of the day. Where have I turned from rectitude?" Socrates taught that "Morality and virtue will be found by all to be the only sure path to happiness. The most happy is he who is sound in health, moderate in fortune, and cultivated in understanding." The philosophy of Democritus was that "He who subdues his passion is more heroic than he who vanquishes an enemy."

But, the theologian exclaims, the teachings were not acted upon. In every instance probably not, any more than are the teachings of the New Testament. The question, however, is: Are the teachings of philosophy, when adopted, capable of regenerating man? We allege that they are, and history affords many instances of their regenerating power. It was philosophy that reformed the student Stilpo, that imparted to Socrates a degree of patience which no Christian has excelled; and of Plato Toulmin Smith writes: "We need not hesitate to assert that few men have had their names recorded in the book of history whose lives and characters can afford, in the perusal, more deep gratification to the benevolent and virtuous inquirer; more worthy of our admiration and our imitation" (*Progress of Philosophy*, p. 303). Again, the same writer, a few pages further on, says: "Point to the works of moderns equal to those of Plato, either in vastness and majesty of conception, in extent and force of illustration, in beauty and elegance of sentiment, in depth and profundity of thought, or in mellowed grace, harmonious flow, and vigorous energy of language; and then you may sneer at the wisdom of the ancients—then you may despise their works, and scoff at their progress, advancement, and remains" (*ibid.*, p. 328).

CHARLES WATTS.

### A Roaring God.

"Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Drink ye and be drunken, and spew, and fall, and rise no more; . . . and it shall be if they refuse to take a cup at thy hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Ye shall certainly drink." This quotation is from Jeremiah xxiii. 27, 28. In the 30th verse this "God of Israel" is presented as a roaring and shouting personage, as if on a booze himself. "The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar . . . he shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes against all the inhabitants of the earth."

Jeremiah xviii. 31 tells us the Lord will howl. A roaring, shouting, and howling God may have served the Jews a good purpose; but is he really a need in our American Constitution?

—*Progressive Thinker.*

### THE CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPELS.

#### I.

We are told in the Christian Scriptures that, some two thousand years ago, a divine personage, named Jesus, the "son" of the Creator of the universe, who, from a remote period termed "the beginning," had dwelt with that creator in some unknown place beyond the reach of mortal ken, paid a visit to the earth for the avowed purpose of saving the whole human race from the penalty alleged to be attached to their "sins," or, more correctly, to the transmitted guilt of their first ancestors. Therein it is related that, being begotten of a Hebrew virgin by a mysterious being called the "Holy Ghost," this divine personage took the form of man, was born into the world like every other human being, "grew and waxed strong," and "advanced in wisdom and stature" until he reached manhood. Then, it is said, when about thirty years of age, this son of the Ghost and Virgin appeared as a public teacher, and for an uncertain period (which is variously placed at from one to three years) travelled throughout Palestine preaching, disputing, and working miracles of healing; but, it is stated, notwithstanding all his mighty works and the unequalled morality of his teaching, he was rejected by the Jewish nation, and put to an ignominious death. We are further told that on the third day after his burial this divine personage rose from the dead, and was seen alive on several occasions by his disciples, and that, after remaining upon the earth for forty days, he left it in the full sight of eleven men whom he had named apostles, and, passing up beyond the clouds, went back to his "Father" in heaven, where he remains to this day interceding for all who believe on him, and preparing suitable places of residence for all who love him.

All the particulars of the life and teaching of this Savior are recorded in four biographies which are called "Gospels"; but, as each biography contains various matters not found in either of the others, the complete life is obtained only by combining the four accounts and making them into one long narrative termed a "Harmony." This method of reconciliation is regarded as perfectly legitimate by all Christians, though they are unable to show by the smallest scrap of evidence that each biography, when first placed in circulation, was not given to the world as a narrative complete in itself, and that the various circumstances omitted by each writer were not matters of which that writer had either never heard or had rejected as fictitious.

The writer of the Fourth Gospel, for example, is the only one of the four evangelists who records the following miracles which are ascribed to Jesus: Turning water into wine; healing a nobleman's son; healing a man who had an infirmity for thirty-eight years; and raising Iazarus from the grave (John ii., iv., v., xi.). In this case we are to suppose that Matthew, the compiler of the first Gospel (who, we are told, was an apostle and an eye-witness), was fully aware of the working of these four miracles, but for some reason best known to himself he thought it better not to record them.

If it be allowable to assume that one Evangelist supplements, or relates more fully, some incidents or events respecting which one or more of the others are silent, there will, of course, be fewer discrepancies between the four accounts than if each be considered a complete history. This method of reconciliation has been justly called "the last refuge of harmonistics." There is, moreover, not the slightest warrant for such a procedure; for we have evidence that, in the earliest times, each gospel circulated singly, and in different localities, and must, therefore, have been regarded as a complete account of the sayings and doings of Jesus, if not the only true account.

In commencing an examination of the Gospel narratives, the first question that naturally arises is: Was the Jesus of the Gospels an historical personage? And the next: Did the historic Jesus utter the sayings and work the miracles ascribed to him in those Gospels? It is, of course, quite possible that there may have been a person named Jesus who really went about proclaiming what he called "good news," and denouncing all practices of which he did not himself approve. Given such a Jesus, it is easy to understand how, after his death, various stories came to be related of him, and miracles of healing, and what were considered wise sayings, attributed to him. Josephus mentions several pretenders and false prophets who

appeared in Palestine in the first century, each of whom was able to draw together a considerable number of followers. Such were: (1) Judas of Galilee; (2) a pretender who appeared in Samaria; (3) a magician named Theudas; (4) a false prophet who came from Egypt; and (5) another later impostor. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that the historic Jesus, could we identify him, may have been a similar pretender, or may, perhaps, with more probability, have been the Jewish fanatic who, somewhat later, went about crying, "Woe to Jerusalem," and who actually bore the name of Jesus. Upon this question, however, we have little or no evidence—at least, none that is reliable. I will therefore not waste time in discussing it.

Coming to the second question, Are the events recorded in the Gospels true? we tread upon firmer ground. The answer in this case can be given without hesitation. A critical examination of the Gospel narratives places one fact beyond all possibility of doubt. This is, that those narratives are, one and all, fictitious. It is with the view of shedding some light upon this important fact, and setting that fact clearly before any readers who may have had their faith shaken by Christian-evidence mongers, that I commence to write this series of papers.

And, first, let us hear what Christian apologists and others have to say on the subject. According to some of these defenders of the faith, the Gospel accounts are true in every particular—even when one account flatly contradicts another.

The following are some of the statements we hear most often advanced in support of the truth of the Gospel stories:—

1. The four Gospels, it is asserted, are authentic apostolic writings, composed by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, two of whom (Matthew and John) were apostles and eyewitnesses of what they relate. Of the other two, Mark is said to have been the companion and "interpreter" of Peter, and Luke the fellow-laborer of Paul; so that the Second and Third Gospels virtually represent the substance of the preaching of Peter and Paul respectively.

2. In these four Gospels, we are told, we have four separate and independent accounts of the life and ministry of Christ. Matthew, it is said, has related the circumstances which his own observations suggested to him; Mark and Luke have narrated the circumstances which they had heard preached by Peter and Paul; while John, writing later than the other three, and having seen and read the first three Gospels, wrote to supply many matters omitted in those accounts.

3. It is further asserted that these four Gospels were written under the supernatural influence of what is called the "Holy Spirit," which influence, it is said, informed and directed the writers, and kept them free from error; so that the accounts contained in the books, however extraordinary some portions may appear, are perfectly trustworthy, and true in every particular.

There are, it is true, a few among the more intelligent Christians who, having had their attention directed to numerous errors, discrepancies, and contradictions in the Gospel narratives, are ingenuous so far as to admit the presence of what they are pleased to call a "human element" in those books; and when some of these errors are shown to be among the sayings ascribed to Jesus, they appear to think they do away with the natural inferences arising therefrom by asserting that Christ was human as well as divine, and by talking incomprehensible nonsense about the "limitation of his manhood," his "fallibility as a human being," his "voluntary renunciation" or "emptying himself" of knowledge (*kenosis*), etc.

The majority of Christian teachers, writers, and commentators, however, hold to the unwarranted assertions given above, and many of them, in order to maintain and defend that position, display a large amount of ingenuity in attempting to reconcile some of the most contradictory of the Gospel statements.

With regard to the foregoing apologetic contentions, it will be shown in the course of this inquiry that not one of the assertions is supported by the smallest particle of evidence. Sufficient it is to say here that, in the first place, we have no evidence either that apostles, or the companions of apostles, had any hand in writing the Gospels; in the next, that the Gospels are *not* independent accounts of the sayings and doings of Christ; lastly, that the Gospel narratives, so far from having been dictated by the spirit of truth, bear internal evidence of being gross

and silly fabrications. It is not going beyond the limits of truth to say that, notwithstanding the fact that the expression, "As true as gospel," has become proverbial, Truth and the Gospel are never found together.

ABRACADABRA.

## EARLY CHRISTIAN LIFE AND MORALS.

AMONG his five reasons for the spread of Christianity Gibbon satirically enumerates "The pure and austere morals of the Christians." Those of us who have studied much of Church history, as revealed in its writings, from Paul's Epistles downwards, can smile cynically at such a claim; and as the holy festival of St. Callixtus is celebrated on October 14, we may meditate upon early Christian life and morals as revealed to us in the life-story of this "Pope and Martyr."

St. Hippolytus of Portus, in his *Refutation of All Heresies*, gives us the history of St. Callixtus, his contemporary. Callixtus, it appears, was originally a slave in the service of a freedman of Commodus, named Carpophorus. The imperial freedman, recognizing that his slave was a very cunning man, entrusted him with a large sum of money, and set him up as a banker in Rome. Hippolytus tells us that many of the Christian widows and poorer brethren entrusted their money to the care of the banker Callixtus, a prominent member of the Roman Church. He, however, contrived to make away with all the money committed to his charge, and became involved in financial difficulties. Carpophorus, hearing some hints of this, demanded an account; but the saint absconded to the mouth of the Tiber, with the object of getting on board an outgoing ship. His watchful master, however, caught him on board a vessel; and, although St. Callixtus again attempted to escape by jumping overboard, he was dragged out of the water by the sailors and handed over to Carpophorus, who set him to work on the treadmill. But hard work was not to his taste, and he contrived to spread a report that, by his confinement, he was prevented from collecting money due to him from various creditors, which might enable him to satisfy the claims of some of the defrauded depositors in his bank. Several members of the congregation represented this so strongly to Carpophorus that he was at last persuaded to release his slave. Callixtus, who knew very well that he could not recover the money, determined, says Hippolytus, to get himself into trouble with the authorities, and so become esteemed as a martyr—a very common trick at that period. He, therefore, created a disturbance in a synagogue; and was haled by the Jews before the Prefect. Callixtus loudly declared himself a Christian, in order to raise the sympathies of his co-religionists. But Carpophorus came forward, and demonstrated that the alleged sacrilege was only an artifice on the part of the slave, who had made away with his money; and, as the Jews loudly demanded justice, Callixtus was scourged and condemned to the mines of Sardinia.

Some time after this Marcia, the concubine of the Emperor Commodus, being herself a Christian, was persuaded by Victor, the Bishop of Rome, to obtain an imperial decree, releasing all Christian criminals in the mines. When Callixtus returned, however, Bishop Victor, who knew all about him, ordered him to betake himself to Antium, and paid him a small monthly allowance to keep away from Rome, where his banking transactions were too unpleasant a subject for the Church. But about A.D. 197 Callixtus returned to the metropolis, on hearing of the death of Victor, and the election of his friend Zephyrinus to the bishopric. Carpophorus had now disappeared from the scene, having probably perished in some of the commotions after the death of Commodus. St. Zephyrinus is represented by Hippolytus to have been an ignorant, covetous man; and Callixtus, with his native cunning, and experience of financial methods, soon gained entire influence over him, and made himself a strong party in the Church; so that, on the death of Zephyrinus, about A.D. 217, Callixtus was elected to the vacant chair. Little or nothing is known about his pontificate, and about A.D. 222 he was thrown out of a window of his palace and killed during a popular tumult. The cause of the murder is obscure. It can hardly have been religious; even Alban Butler points out that at this time—in the reign of Alexander Severus—

there was no persecution, and the emperor was favorably inclined to Christianity. Nevertheless, on October 14 Callixtus is honored as Pope, Saint, and Martyr. We may know, by the history of this saint, that such scandals as the City of Glasgow Bank and the Liberator Building Society are merely the following out of the examples set by the blessed saints in the early, uncontaminated days of the primitive Church, who then cloaked their frauds with piety, even as their successors do to-day.

As St. Callixtus is an example of the early Christian gentleman, so his patroness, Marcia, is an example of the early Christian lady. She is first heard of as the mistress of Ummidius Quadratus, a wealthy Roman, great-nephew of Antoninus Pius. Quadratus was executed, after an attempt to assassinate the Emperor Commodus. Marcia was taken over by the emperor, who had such amorous tastes that he kept three hundred such ladies. Commodus was a very religious man also, and patronised all the superstitions of his time—Serapianism, Mithraism, Christianity, and all. Suetonius tells us that he fell into disrepute with the Mithraists by foully murdering a man in performing one of the mysteries, where only the form of stabbing at a man was required. Marcia was a lady after the tyrant's own heart, and quickly rose to be chief of his harem, and the companion of all his orgies. Fearing, however, that the emperor had determined on her removal, she poisoned him; but, as the poison did not work quickly enough, Eclectus, one of his freedmen, had him strangled by a professional wrestler. Marcia then married Eclectus, who was killed, with the Emperor Pertinax, three months later. Didius Julianus, who succeeded, learning that Septimius Severus was marching against him, suspected Marcia of being in correspondence with his enemy, and put her to death. Thus she gained an incorruptible crown, for she had "loved much" (Luke vii. 47). So much for "the pure and austere morals" of these early saints.

D. McCASKY.

### CHRISTIANITY IN PRACTICE.

By Christianity I here mean what is accounted such by all churches and sects—the maxims and precepts contained in the New Testament. These are considered sacred, and accepted as laws by all professing Christians. Yet it is scarcely too much to say that not one Christian in a thousand guides or tests his individual conduct by reference to those laws. The standard to which he does refer it is the custom of his nation, his class, or his religious profession. He has thus, on the one hand, a collection of ethical maxims, which he believes to have been vouchsafed to him by infallible wisdom as rules for his government; and, on the other, a set of every-day judgments and practices, which go a certain length with some of those maxims, not so great a length with others, stand in direct opposition to some, and are, on the whole, a compromise between the Christian creed and the interests and suggestions of worldly life. To the first of these standards he gives his homage; to the other his real allegiance. All Christians believe that the blessed are the poor and humble, and those who are ill-used by the world; that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven; that they should judge not, lest they be judged; that they should swear not at all; that they should love their neighbor as themselves; that if one take their cloak, they should give him their coat also; that they should take no thought for the morrow; that if they would be perfect they should sell all that they have and give it to the poor. They are not insincere when they say that they believe these things. They do believe them, as people believe what they have always heard lauded and never discussed. But in the sense of that living belief which regulates conduct, they believe these doctrines just up to the point to which it is usual to act upon them. The doctrines in their integrity are serviceable to pelt adversaries with; and it is understood that they are to be put forward (when possible) as the reasons for whatever people do that they think laudable. But anyone who reminds them that the maxims require an infinity of things which they never even think of doing would gain nothing but to be classed among those very unpopular characters who effect to be better than other people. The doctrines have no hold on ordinary believers—are not a power in their minds. They have an habitual respect for the sound of them, but no feeling which spreads from the words to the things signified, and forces the mind to take them in, and make them conform to the formula. Whenever conduct is concerned, they look round for Mr. A. and B. to direct them how far to go in obeying Christ.

—J. S. Mill, "On Liberty," p. 24.

### CHRISTIAN PEDESTRIANISM.

"Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain."—CHRIST (Matthew v. 41).

A FRIEND once requested young Tommy to walk,  
One morning in spring-time so cool;  
Said he: "You'll have time to come half of my way,  
Returning in time for your school."

They started; and when they had travelled a mile,  
The friend said: "You'd better go back,  
Or else you'll be late for your school, and you know  
The master would give you a whack."

"Oh, no!" said young Tommy, "I'm not, such a fool!  
My duty I perfectly know;  
I'm only half-way, we have come but a mile,  
Which leaves me another to go."

"So, let us get on! I must think of my soul,  
And do what my Savior commands;  
My Maker can burn me for ever in hell,  
The master can hurt but my hands."

"Why, what in the world are you talking of now?"  
His friend, in astonishment, cried;  
Said Tommy: "Of what I must do—or be damned;  
I'd rather be smacked than be fried!"

"The youngster is 'dotty,' or ditto am I!"  
In fright, said the friend of the lad.  
"Come on, then, and try to explain what you mean;  
I hope that we're none of us mad!"

So onward they went for a mile or so more,  
When Tommy said: "Now I'll go back."  
He went to the school, but was late, and received  
A jolly good whacking, alack!

When Tommy explained that obedience to God  
Was cause of his lateness at school,  
And quoted the solemn commandment of Christ,  
The "Dominie" called him a fool!

Because he was absent from pray'rs, he was thrashed  
By him that "for Christ's sake" had prayed;  
Although 'twas "for Christ's sake" the youngster was  
late!  
No wonder the lad was dismayed.

Young Tommy was very much puzzled and pained;  
But now he is puzzled no longer;  
By using his brains he was cured of his faith,  
And daily grows brighter and stronger!

G. I. MACKENZIE.

### ACID DROPS.

MR. READER HARRIS, who does a lot of exhorting for the Christian Endeavorers, puts forth in the *Methodist Times* a new solution of the Armenian problem. "Let Christian England," he says, "unite in prayer for the immediate conversion of the Sultan." Bookmakers would probably lay long odds against the efficacy of this prayer. Nevertheless, we are bound to say that Mr. Reader Harris is a true Christian in making the proposal. The editor of the *Methodist Times* advises England to go for the Turk, and trust to God for our defence against any combination of European powers. But that is risking too much. We decidedly prefer Mr. Reader Harris's suggestion. One thing is as easy as another to God, and the conversion of the Sultan would be the cheapest for us.

Mr. Harris sent his suggestion to the *Daily Chronicle*, where, however, it was received with ridicule, as being calculated to cast doubt on prayer as much as Professor Tyndall's suggestion for a prayer test in hospitals. The *D. C.* stopped the correspondence at once, saying most of its readers were of opinion that the Sultan was past praying for.

The Christian Endeavor people in America took to praying for the conversion of Colonel Ingersoll, everybody knows with how much success. Their organ in England is *Tongues of Fire*, edited by Mr. Reader Harris, a gentleman, we believe, who combines Law and Gospel. Evidently he is a great believer in prayer. His organ is full of it. Special prayers are recommended on behalf of the Armenians, and similar

prayers against the "heathenism" which is said to be "gaining upon Christianity by giant strides." Mr. Hermann Harris writes from gay Paris, saying: "I thank God that he has sent me the gift of a bicycle." Another gentleman writes from Stoke Newington that before a camp-meeting he "prayed that no one attending the meeting should take cold." He does not say whether anyone did. Perhaps he didn't stay long enough to find out. On the whole, we like that bicycle prayer the best. There is a practical air about it. The proverb says it is better to be born lucky than rich, and if a man can get his bicycles and other conveniences from Providence, he doesn't want much of a balance at the banker's.

The Salvationists, it is authoritatively stated, object to dancing because it is such a staunch ally of the ball-room and the brothel—which is rather rough on the Prince of Wales's swell parties at Marlborough House. There is dancing, however, which is of the Lord. "David," we are told, "was intoxicated with the Spirit when he danced before the ark of God." But as he danced in the "altogether" condition, so that his wife had to rebuke him for his indecency, it is to be hoped, after all, that the Salvationist flog will not take the place of the valse or polka.

Jesus Christ plucked corn on the Sabbath, but a South Moulton miller, his name too being Miller, has been fined for grinding corn on that day. It is a remarkably fine distinction.

The Catholic Truth Society (what a curious name!) has been holding a Conference at Hanley, and among the papers read was one by the Rev. J. Gerrard on "The Church and Science." The reverend gentleman said nothing about his Church's persecution of Galileo or its murder of Bruno—incidents which would certainly be repeated if the Catholic Church ever rose again to supremacy. Father Gerrard talked a lot of nonsense, which was no doubt very agreeable to his auditors. Naturalism he described as a "gospel of misery," as though making the best of this life were worse than regarding it as a vale of tears, with everlasting hell for most of us at the end of the journey. Then came the audacious assertion, that the leaders of modern science, everywhere, look upon the existence of deity as "absolutely self-evident." Finally, it was asked whether the first hen came from an egg, and, if so, who laid it? Evolutionists can only laugh at such puerilities. Father Gerrard does not understand the first principles of the science about which he talks so glibly.

The next Conference of this Catholic Truth Society is to be held at Ramsgate. We therefore beg to suggest that some outsider should take the members to view the chalk cliffs in the neighborhood, and explain their formation. It would then be an interesting problem for the Conference to reconcile geology with the Bible, especially in the matter of chronology. A visit to the Goodwin Sands would also be an excellent preparation for a discussion on "Providence."

The Rev. W. M. Howard issues a prospectus of a grand book he has written, and is bringing out, on *The Evolution of the Universe*. It is dreadfully slated in a leader in the *Liverpool Post*, which calls it "puff and bluff." The reverend gentleman has gone to the depths of the question, farther than almost anybody has gone before him. His book will "upset scepticism" and "overthrow doubt." It is also full of "a rich, religious spirit," and "to read it is to feel oneself in the presence of God." We wish the author no worse fate than to go to the presence of God as soon as possible.

The revival of mysticism and spiritual nonsense in France tells in favor of Catholicism. Despite the spread of Free-thought, priests are still found who recommend medals of the Virgin to be placed in the vintages as a cure against blight. Shade of Voltaire! Is this the end of the nineteenth century?

At the Anti-Masonic Congress at Trent the alleged confessions of Miss Diana Vaughan, the alleged ex-Palladiste, were trotted out, but only to be denounced by Monsignor Kratzfeld, the representative of the Archbishop of Cologne. He said plainly that there was no such person as Miss Vaughan, the lady being one of the many inventions of St. Leo Taxil, who, according to Monsignor Kratzfeld, is boasting the Catholic world only that he may afterwards have the laugh at them.

Miss Vaughan is said to belong to a Welsh family of gentle birth, "in which the worship of Satan has been hereditary for centuries." She made so many mistakes about her alleged ancestor, Thomas Vaughan, the Silurist, that it is suspected she must belong to the branch represented by Cardinal Vaughan.

It would be a thousand pities if Miss Diana Vaughan should turn out to be a non-entity. She is, according to her own

account, or that of her creator, not only a female Freemason, but has actually met the Devil in the lodges, who treated her exactly as he did St. Juliana. The Devil, it is satisfactory to learn, is still young and handsome, and since Miss Marie Corelli—another good Catholic—agrees in this description, it is doubtless correct. The Devil, of course, is an eminent Freemason, and many minor demons are also in the order. The *Daily News*, commenting on the Congress, says: "It seems safe to say that the Pope will never recognize the validity of these demoniacal orders. It is, therefore, to be hoped that no inconsiderate application to that effect will put him to the pain of a public declaration on the subject."

Pope Clement XII. issued a bull against the Freemasons on April 28, 1738, wherein he excommunicated all who joined the order. On May 18, 1751, Pope Benedict XIV. renewed the bull of Clement XII. by another, beginning with these words: "*Providas Romanorum Pontificum*." In consequence of these tales, Masonry was declared to be high treason in Spain, and many members of the order were sent to the galleys.

J. W. B. writes to the *Liverpool Post* denying a statement made by Mr. Foote, that Protestants executed Catholics for their religion. He, however, virtually gives away the case, for he says: "Under Henry VIII. Catholics who refused to acknowledge the King's supremacy as head of the Church were beheaded or hanged as traitors, but they were never burned as heretics." But it was their religion which compelled them to refuse to acknowledge the King's headship, and, therefore, they were killed for their religion's sake. The Catholic Church, in proclaiming their beatification, acknowledges them as martyrs for religion. J. W. B. also allows that two Socinians were burnt under the Protestant, James I.—itself a sufficient instance of Mr. Foote's contention that Protestantism could be as persecuting as Catholicism.

Mr. Elworthy, the author of *The Evil Eye*, gives some instances of superstition still existing in the west country. A young Exeter shopkeeper of the same name has herself been an example. Emily Lee, a hawker from Plymouth, told Mrs. Elworthy she was looking ill, and was bewitched by a former sweetheart of her husband's, and would pine away and die, and her husband would marry the other girl, unless the planets were ruled—a feat she offered to perform for a consideration. To rule the planets for this purpose, and also to bring wealth from Australia, needed a lot of money, and altogether Mrs. Elworthy was wheedled out of £64.

In Cape Colony they still believe in meeting the rinderpest with a day of humiliation and prayer. We thought the British Colonists left such superstitions to the Boers.

Great storms in America have destroyed an immense deal of property, and even moderate estimates place the death roll at at least fifty. Among other recent items of divine benevolence is a prolonged drought in India, where grain riots have already taken place. A plague at Bombay and a malignant fever raging among the Turcomans have carried off nearly ten thousand persons.

A memorandum by Dom Gasquet and Canon Moyes has been published stating the reasons which induced the Pope to pronounce on Anglican orders. The following is perhaps the most noteworthy passage: "Throughout England the conversions are numerous. The already large number of converts will increase without doubt if it is made more evident that the Roman Catholic Church is the only one in England which has the right to the prerogatives and name of Catholic."

The bull seems to have been the dictate of policy. If the Romanising section of the Church of England can be frightened into believing that they can only be true priests by entering the Church of Rome, it may precipitate their conversion.

The issue of the Papal bull has been followed up by the formation of a fund to assist Anglican clergymen who may be dissatisfied with Anglican orders and go over at once to the Mother Church. His Holiness Pecci and His Eminence Vaughan are very kind, but there does not seem too many Church of England sky-pilots who care to resign the bird in hand for what they in their benevolence may provide under the Roman bush.

The *Singapore Free Press* speaks out pretty plainly on the Christian missionary dodge of getting money from the Chinese for schools on the pretence that they will teach only secular education, and then using the schools as agencies to bring heathen souls to Jesus. It observes: "The whole trouble is due to that occasional, often chronic, spirit of crooked dealing that not unfrequently makes the

average layman look askance at the practices of many professional professors of religion—no matter what the church or creed be. In the case of the particular religious agency concerned, the difficulties are due to the fact that funds were raised from Chinese subscribers on one pretence, and applied to an object carefully disclaimed when the funds were applied for, and obnoxious to the religious feelings of the subscribers. The ordinary law of the land calls that 'obtaining money under false pretences,' and the criminal code provides a scale of appropriate penalties."

The *Calcutta Sunday Times*, commenting on this, says: "The worst of this sort of thing is, that the natives of the East lump us all up together, and hold the average European responsible for all the tergiversations of the missionary, the Devil-dodger, and the religious crank. From one specimen they judge us all, and when that specimen happens to be a missionary with his pockets full of subscriptions, the estimate that is formed by the heathen of the European character cannot, in the nature of things, be a flattering one."

The *Sunday Times*, of Calcutta, is not a very religious paper, as may be gathered from the following extract: "We are all acquainted with our own dear seven-hundred-rupee-per-month power missionaries, who are one thing to the old women subscribers in Scotland who pay them their salary, and another thing in Calcutta, where they spend the same. They are wise and wary birds. One must be just to them. They keep the commandments and everything else they can lay their hands on. They are 'all things to all men.' In Scotland they are zealous missionaries, enthusiastic for converts and subscriptions. In Calcutta the 'wisdom of the serpent,' another Kerristian institution, comes upon them; but it does not destroy their desire for subscriptions."

A decent-looking young woman was arrested for sleeping on the steps of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne, the other night, and appeared next day on a charge of vagrancy. In defence she said: "I have tried my very best to get work and keep myself respectably, but latterly I've failed. There seems to be no work anywhere this winter." A Wesleyan man then offered to take charge of the young woman, if she would sign an agreement to remain in the Home nine months and work without pay! The accused declined this awful sweating offer, and went to gaol for a month instead.

"Lightning out of a clear sky," say the reports, "struck a Methodist church in Berea, Ark., on August 10, seriously injuring two preachers and killing a communicant." W. W. Cochran earnestly petitioned God to do something on that Sabbath day that would convince all doubters of the danger they were in. And he did, instantly, demolishing the roof of the church and killing Cochran outright, besides giving two preachers a gentle hint that "the throne of grace" had fiery darts for those who claim they are saved, as well as for the other folks. Will Talmage tell of this special dispensation of Almighty God in answer to prayer?—*Progressive Thinker*.

He was a leading member of the church, and was in love with a sweet little girl who sang in the choir and had a class at Sunday-school. His love was returned. He had not always been a good young man. There was a time when he sowed his "wild oats," and on one occasion in too prolific soil, which cost him seven-and-six a week. As he gazed on the innocent little face, he made up his mind to tell her of his wickedness in the past, and ask her forgiveness. When he told his story she readily forgave him, saying she knew it was the girl's fault. "Oh, darling," he cried, "I could be thoroughly happy but for the hole that seven-and-six makes in my income." "Never mind, dear," she said, with a sweet little blush, "I have an income of seven-and-six a week."—*Sydney Bulletin*.

Mrs. Claude Falls Wright, the American Theosophist, who, after waiting some millions of æons, was at length united to her affinity, is now said to understand the reason. She is seriously said to be producing a re-incarnation of the late-lamented Mahatma wire-puller, W. Q. Judge. The babe may turn out a girl, but that will not be more wonderful than Judge's own assertion, that Madame Blavatsky's next incarnation would be as a man. Some think that she is re-incarnated in the person of Mr. Ernest Hargrove. Why not?

Romulus Cotell, recently on trial at Akron, Ohio, for the murder of a whole family named Stone, and who is to be hanged November 6, after being examined for ten days, finally shielded himself behind the Devil: "The Devil told me to do it, and he told me to hide the weapon under the woodshed." Inasmuch as the Bible tells us that Jesus Christ was tempted by the Devil, it is not to be wondered at that this green young scapegrace should charge his misdemeanors upon his Satanic majesty. "Thus spake the fiend, and with necessity, the tyrant's plea, excused his devilish deeds."

Sydney Presbytery finds the Rev. George Hay guilty—

*inter alia*—of "erecting a church within the charge of Canterbury in opposition to the two churches already existing therein." The rival gospel-shops! "No connection with the alleged soul-saver over the way!" Yet the parson says he isn't a tradesman!—*Sydney Bulletin*.

A Congress of Religions has been called by some Moslem reformers to be held at Delhi, India, during the autumn of 1897. Meantime it is feared that the unfurling of the green banner by the *sheik ul Islam* would far sooner rouse 80,000 Moslems to a new crusade against Christians than any amount of congresses would lead to religious reunions. Indeed, it is only Unitarians who could be expected to join in such a parliament.

An announcement of a sermon by the ex-Moderator of the General Assembly appeared as follows in the *Belfast News Letter*: "On Sabbath next the Rev. Dr. Lynd will occupy the pulpit of May-street, Belfast, Church. Morning and evening. Subject: 'The Armenian Atrocities.' A collection will be lifted for the sufferers at both services." This is too delicious for comment.

October 15 is to be a Day of Humiliation at Cape Colony on account of the rinderpest. It is astonishing that the keen men of business out there can patronize or tolerate such an absurdity. Does anybody outside a lunatic asylum, or a church, really believe that prayer will have any effect on cattle disease?

The Rev. William Arthur has issued a new defence of the Sabbath. A Methodist paper calls it "the ablest tract on this subject in the language." We have not seen it, but there is a significance in its title—"The People's Day." It used to be "The Lord's Day," but to save its life, apparently, it has to be rechristened. The multitude must be taken in by a new method of deception. The day is *theirs*, but they are to give it to the Lord for *their own sakes*.

A malignant fever has been raging among the Turcomans at Merv. Nearly ten thousand persons have been carried off by the disease in two months. Most of the victims were children. "He doeth all things well." But when the Turks do this sort of thing we get up indignation meetings. When it comes to "the act of God" we have to do more than grin and bear it; we are expected to be sincerely thankful.

Colonial bishops, who assume the air of princes, are sometimes rudely snubbed. Dr. Harmer, who succeeded Bishop Kennion at Adelaide, persists in signing himself "J. R. Adelaide." This signature the Government declined to accept, holding that the Bishop must use his proper personal signature, like all other ministers of religion in the colony, where there is no Established Church. It was urged on the Bishop's behalf that all his predecessors in the See used the territorial signature; but the Government remains obdurate, and refuses to license the Bishop as a person duly qualified to celebrate marriages until he sees fit to apply in a letter signed "J. R. Harmer." Evidently the Government has the logic of the situation, and the right-reverend father-in-God will have to cave in.

The Rev. Father Kileen has been removed from the Catholic Church of Bayonne, N.J., for using indecent language in the pulpit, for keeping a mistress, and for other conduct not officially endorsed by Papal authority.

Mr. J. Standing writes to the *Retford and Gainsborough News* on "Storms and Thanksgivings." He says: "I can understand men feeling grateful for kindness shown or benefits conferred, either by fellow men or by a Power they look upon as the ruler of all things. But when, after months of weary toil, anxiety, and expense, they see ruin rained down upon them by the Power they declare able to restrain the cause and give sunshine and abundance, it, to me, appears a mockery and worse to return any thanks, and not likely to be received as honest expressions of feeling by any intelligence, human or divine." To this the editor appends the note: "We should be sorry to endorse the views of the writer. The Almighty rules the elements for the benefit of the human race as a whole, not for individuals." Evidently the editor is in the counsels of Omnipotence.

### Possession by Devils.

The general doctrine of disease-spirits and oracle-spirits appears to have its earliest, broadest, and most consistent position within the limits of savagery. When we have gained a clear idea of it in this its original home, we shall be able to trace it along from grade to grade of civilization, breaking away piecemeal under the influence of new medical theories, yet sometimes expanding in revival, and at last in lingering survival holding its place into the midst of our modern life.—*Dr. E. B. Tylor, "Primitive Culture," vol. ii., p. 124; third edition.*



### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 11, Athenæum Hall, at 7.30, "War to the Knife Between the Church of England and Rome."

### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—October 11, Camberwell.—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.
- THE National Secular Society's new office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.
- J. FLIN (Liverpool).—Not sure we have your signature right, but have thus acknowledged your 5s.
- F. W. SWAIN, sending a second subscription from the Derby Branch for Shilling Month, writes: "We consider your Blasphemy and Lecture Schemes absolutely invaluable in the cause of Secularism. That you and Mr. Watts will have a fine time in America is the earnest wish of all our members."
- J. SEDDON.—Mr. Foote will be very happy to visit Manchester on his return home. Liverpool has the last Sunday in January. Suppose you take the first in February.
- T. FISHER.—Such things will happen. Pleased that you don't take them too seriously.
- JAMES CLARK.—We shall have to tell Ingersoll that he *must* come over, if only as an act of kindness to thousands who long to see him in the flesh, and will never have any other opportunity.
- G. WHITE.—Our best thanks to the South Shields friends on whose behalf you send remittance. We hope your wishes for an "enjoyable trip" will be realized.
- F. BULL.—All right. Better late than never—much better.
- J. KIMBERLEY.—Thanks for your pleasant letter.
- L. (Southampton).—Glad to have your good wishes. When Mr. Foote returns from America he will try to wake up the district south of the Thames.
- G. PROCTOR.—If Colonel Ingersoll does come to England, there are many who will travel long distances to hear him—like yourself. Will you write again to Mr. Foote about lecturing at Gainsboro', after his return? Something might be done with halls so reasonably rented.
- A. A. W.—Thank the subscribers on our behalf.
- J. BATTERSBY.—Acknowledged as desired. Pleased to have your good wishes for the American delegation. Mr. Foote will not forget Bolton in the new year. He has good friends there.
- E. L., sending cheque for the American delegation, hopes Messrs. Foote and Watts will have a good time and be able to do much for the Freethought cause on the other side of the Atlantic.
- MR. F. P. COOPER, Norfolk House, High-street, Shoreham, Sussex, would be glad to hear from any Freethinker residing in the neighborhood who would assist in forming a branch.
- N.S.S.—Miss E. M. Vance calls attention to the fact that Mr. P. Sabine's name was inadvertently omitted from the report of the Executive meeting appearing in last week's issue.
- OMMIN DIVAD.—The *Lion* was published by Richard Carlile in 1828 and '29, and contained many letters from Robert Taylor, then in Oakham gaol for blasphemy. It can only, of course, be picked up secondhand. We are not quite sure, but fancy you might obtain the reading of a copy at the library of the Glasgow Secular Society, or you might communicate with Mr. Forder.
- O. K., sending subscription, writes:—"I take the opportunity of thanking you on behalf of myself and wife for the vast amount of time and labor you have expended as President of the N.S.S., and hope you will be President for many years to come."
- J. STANWAY.—You cannot wish for Colonel Ingersoll's coming to England more than we do.
- BLACKBURN BRANCH.—Your lady secretary is very zealous. Mr. Foote hopes to pay you a visit about the end of January.
- LECTURE SCHEME.—J. W. B. (Bombay), 10s. 6d.; J. Hindle, 1s.; J. W. F., 2s. 6d.; J. and G. Brady, 10s. *Per R. Forder*: B. Waterhouse, 5s.; A. C. Brown, 1s.; "Avalon," 7s.; G. H. (Berlin), 5s. *Per C. Watts*: W. McLean (Dundee), 10s.; S. McCormack, 2s.
- G. CRUDAS.—We wish the friends success in the new effort at Ox Hill.
- J. POTTER.—There was no postal order in your envelope. Very sorry to hear of the illness in your house, and hope you will soon have better news.
- J. HOWARTH.—Have placed to credit of American delegation. Pleased to have the Tadmorden Branch's good wishes.
- J. D. LEGGETT.—Thanks. Accept our best wishes.
- JUVENIS.—You can join the N.S.S. through Miss Vance, at the Society's office, 377 Strand. The minimum subscription is one shilling per year. Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C., could supply you with any books you require.
- J. W. F.—Yes, we will bring Ingersoll over if we can. We think it probable.
- J. and G. BRADY.—Sorry to hear of your trouble. It is a very mixed world, in spite of "Providence."
- A. FRAZER.—We are too busy at present, preparing for America. Thanks.
- W. PRATT.—William Morris was well known in private as a most pronounced Freethinker.

JAMES STERRY.—Sir R. Ball's *Story of the Heavens*. Any bookseller will tell you the price.

QUID PRO QUO.—A good letter, but the fellow is really too contemptible.

TOM TAYLOR.—Pleased to hear from you again. We remember you quite well in the old days at Shipley. It is good to know that you and your wife would sooner miss your dinner than the *Freethinker*. We hope you will always enjoy both.

W. J. EVANS.—We share your wish that something more might be done in the way of Freethought propaganda at Wolverhampton. Why are not the local "saints" more active?

CATHERINE ENRIGHT.—Thanks for your good wishes.

J. R. (Manchester).—We have acknowledged all sums received. Letters do go astray occasionally.

A. GILBERT.—Thanks. The requisite amount for the American delegation is not yet made up.

T. WILLIAMS.—Our compliments to the Swansea friends who remit through you. Pleased to have their confidence.

D. F. GLOAK.—Mr. Foote will be most happy to pay Dundee a visit when he visits Scotland after his return from America. Pleased to know you are instructed to convey the sympathy and confidence of the Dundee friend.

G. BASAN.—Will deal with enclosures next week.

SHILLING MONTH.—F. Bull, 2s.; L., 2s. 6d.; A. S. Coleman (2nd sub.), 5s.; W. T. Alfrey, 2s.; G. Grizzell, 1s.; J. Flynn, 5s. *Derby*:—Fletcher, 2s. 6d.; Ford, 2s.; Whitney, 1s.; Barker, 1s.; Welling, 1s.; C. Watkinson, 1s.; S. Edmonds, 2s. *Leicester* (per E. Pinder): S. Leeson, 10s.; E. Pinder, 1s.; C. Pell, 1s.; T. Hurst, 1s.; H. Swisham, 1s.; G. Woodford, 2s. 6d.; H. Wooley, 1s.; G. Payne, 1s.; A. Letts, 1s.; R. Tarry, 1s.; S. Wooley, 1s.; J. H., 2s.; Brooksby, 1s.; C. J., 3s.; J. Hindle, 1s.; J. W. F., 2s. *Per C. Watts*: H. Thomson 2s.; J. Goocham (Paisley), 1s.; R. Webster, 4s. *Per Miss Vance*: Members of Blackburn Branch, £1 3s. 6d.; R. L. Smith, 2s.; J. Evans, 1s.; S. James, 1s. *Per R. Forder*: W. Tippet, 2s.; J. Stitt, 1s.; W. H. Putz, 1s.; B. Waterhouse, 10s.; R. Gibbon, 2s.; Avalon, 7s.; A. Wood, 2s.; S. H. Munns, 10s.; J. M. Munns, 10s.; T. T., 1s.; F. J. Voisey, 2s. 6d.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Ourselves—Freedom—Zoophilist—Crescent—People's Newspaper—Isle of Man Times—Helensburg News—Western Figaro—Oxford Times—Derby Daily Telegraph—Post—Workers' Friend—New York Public Opinion—Sydney Bulletin—Aberdeen People's Journal—Liberator—Open Court—Secular Thought—Freethought Ideal—Nya Sanningar—Freidenker—De Dageraad—Dor Arme Teufel—Freethought Magazine.

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

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.

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

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

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.

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*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

### SPECIAL.

I HAVE to thank all who have responded to my threefold appeal for subscriptions. Next week I will state in the *Freethinker*—which will be practically seen through the press before I leave—the precise amount I have received, and the exact disposition of the money. Meanwhile I have to remark that the funds available for my visit to America with Mr. Watts are not quite adequate. We shall go, of course; but we ought not to be dependent on pot-luck across the Atlantic. Our travelling expenses will be heavy, we shall be nine weeks away from home, and we shall require to return. I need not say more. A dozen of the wealthier Freethinkers could easily supply another £30 for this object.

G. W. FOOTE.

FOR MESSRS. FOOTE AND WATTS'S AMERICAN TOUR.

J. Kimberley, 1s.; Mrs. Kimberley, 1s.; J. Edey, 1s.; F. Simmons, 1s.; Brooker, 1s.; T. R. Almond, 2s.; E. G. H., 2s. 6d.; T. R. H., 2s. 6d.; Two Gainsborough Friends, 5s.; collection in the Central Telegraph Office, 9s. 6d.; J. Hargreaves, 1s.; West Houghton Friends, 5s.; J. Hague, 2s.; E. L., £3; G. Marsh, £1; J. H., 4s. *South Shields* (per O. White): J. Sanderson, 2s. 6d.; Horsman, 1s.; J. Fothergill, 1s.; Captain Duncan, 2s. 6d.; G. White, 2s. 6d.; J. G.,

1s.; J. Norman, 2s. 6d.; J. Charlton, 1s.; Captain Profit, 2s. 6d.; J. Wilson, 1s.; T. Johnson, 6s.; Philipson, 1s.; Watson, 1s.; J. Dodds, 1s.; W. Cook, 1s.; W. Moir, 1s.; Potts, 1s.; J. Brown, 1s.; S. M. P., 2s. 6d.; G. Smith, 1s.; G. Henri, 1s.; D. Bon, 1s.; Marshall, 4s.; Handslip, 2s. 6d.; Barlow, 1s. Mrs. Jane Hooper, 5s.; James Hooper, 5s.; R. S. Smith, 2s. 6d.; T. H., 2s.; Port Glasgow Friends, 4s.; S. Edmonds, 2s.; T. Fisher, 2s.; J. Clarke, 2s. 6d.; J. Kelsey, 2s.; H. Porter, 1s.; Todmorden Branch, 10s. 6d.; J. W., 5s.; W. Basan, 2s.; J. D. Leggett, 3s.; J. Bannister, 5s.; J. W. F., 2s. 6d.; J. and G. Brady, 10s.; Mr. and Mrs. Turnbull, 2s. 6d.; O. K., 2s.; J. Stanway, 2s.; W. J. Evans, 2s.; C. Enright, 2s. 6d.; A. Gilbert, 5s.; Mrs. Ainsworth, 2s. 6d.; M. A. Davies, 2s. 6d.; J. Hindle, 1s. *Swansea*.—G. Parkyn, 2s. 6d.; T. Williams, 2s. 6d.; J. Camp, 2s.; W. Thomas, 1s.; D. Davies, 1s.; D. Beavan, 1s.; D. Bandy, 1s.; S. Griffiths, 1s.; J. Baxter, 1s.; W. C. Mitchell, 1s.; J. Cooke, 2s. 6d.; Dundee Friends (per D. F. Gloak), 11s. *Barnsley*.—G. Parkhurst, 2s.; G. Almond, 1s.; T. Wombwell, 2s.; C. Birdsall, 2s. J. Ralph, 1s.; W. Patterson, 1s.; Tom Taylor, 1s.; Mrs. Taylor, 1s.; Muriel, 1s.; S. A. K., 5s.; Sydney Gimson, £5; W. W., 5s.; A. Caunt, 2s. 6d.; W. Caunt, 2s.; W. L. M., 5s.; W. J., 2s. 6d.

*Per Charles Watts*: A. B. W. (Dundee), 10s.; W. McLean, 10s.; collected at Mr. Watts's meeting at Glasgow, £2 5s.; Mr. Marr, £1; Mr. Prosser, 1s.; Mr. and Mrs. Glendinning, 10s.

*Per Miss Vance*: Blackburn Branch, 5s.; Hanley Branch, £1.

*Per R. Forder*: "Avalon," 7s.; A. J. Hooper, 1s.; B. Waterhouse, 5s.; A. C. Brown, 1s.; G. H. (Berlin), 5s.; S. Newson, 2s. 6d.; S. H. Munns, £2; J. M. Munns, £2; J. W., 1s.; W. Bland, 1s.; W. Westwell, £2; E. D. H. Daly, 10s.; A. Waymark, 2s. 6d.; Charles Smith, 1s.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE delivers his last lecture before leaving America at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, this evening (October 11). No doubt there will be a large attendance. His subject will be "War to the Knife Between the Church of England and Rome," with reference to the Pope's reply to Gladstone's letter and the speeches at the Church Congress.

Mr. Forder lectured at the Athenæum Hall last Sunday evening. There was a good meeting, which gave him a cordial reception. Mr. Forder will occupy the platform again during Mr. Foote's absence in America.

Mr. Foote lectured twice on Sunday last in the Secular Hall, Leicester, Mr. Sydney Gimson presiding on both occasions. There was a capital audience in the morning, although it was raining spitefully. Had the weather been decent, the meeting would have been phenomenal. In the evening the hall was densely packed, every inch of room being occupied. The lecture on "Turks and Christians: An Object Lesson in Religious Brotherhood," was followed with rapt attention. Mr. Gimson, on behalf of the meeting, wished Mr. Foote a good time in America, and hoped he would be able to induce Colonel Ingersoll to visit England. This was heartily applauded.

The Leicester Secular Society has a capital winter program of Sunday lectures. Mr. Foote opened the ball. The next lecturer is Mr. J. M. Robertson, who discourses this evening (October 11) on "Socialism and Secularism." Mr. Robertson's undoubted ability should command a large audience, and the subject is one of considerable interest.

Large audiences gathered at Liverpool, in Hope Hall, on Tuesday and Wednesday, September 29 and 30, when Mr. G. W. Foote and the Rev. W. T. Lee debated the question, "Christianity or Secularism: Which is the Better System?" The Christians were, of course, in the majority, but a very considerable section of both audiences was evidently in sympathy with Secularism. Mr. Lee opened on the first evening, and closed on the second. His speeches were much applauded. Mr. Foote's were much applauded too. A good deal of strong feeling was manifested, but no ill-temper. In one sense, it was the "warmest" debate these two gentlemen have yet held. The Liverpool Branch of the National Secular Society distributed a large number of its handbills at the doors, and the Secular friends are confident that the debate will be of great assistance, both as an advertisement and otherwise, to their winter propaganda.

Mr. Watts had capital audiences last Sunday at Glasgow, by far the largest he has ever had in that city. In the evening the hall was crowded to the doors, all standing room being occupied. The morning and afternoon meetings were also very good. Mr. Black occupied the chair morning and evening, and Mr. MacLeish in the afternoon.

Mr. Charles Watts reports a most successful week's lecturing tour in Scotland. On Monday, September 28, he lectured to a fine audience in Motherwell, the Town Hall being filled. There was no opposition. On Tuesday, September 29, another large audience assembled at Paisley. Friends attended from the surrounding districts. A brief debate took place. Messrs. Black, Robinson, and Lindsey accompanied Mr. Watts from Glasgow. The meetings were exceedingly enthusiastic, and the sale of literature was good.

On Wednesday and Thursday, September 30 and October 1, Mr. Watts lectured in Dundee. He had a very hearty reception, and the audiences were the largest he has had there for some time. A good audience mustered the first evening, and on the second the large Victoria Hall was filled. Previous to the second lecture Mr. Watts publicly named Agnes Brown Bricknall, a sweetly pretty baby, three weeks old. Such a ceremony was quite a novelty in Dundee, and all present were much interested in the proceeding. The *Dundee Advertiser*, in giving a report of the lecture, said: "The proceedings were inaugurated by an incident of a kind which is said never to have occurred in Dundee before. This was the public naming of a child according to the ceremony of the Secular Society, to the Dundee Branch of which the parents of the child belong."

All the above lectures were given by Mr. Watts under Mr. Foote's Lecturing Scheme. At each of the meetings wishes were expressed that Messrs. Foote and Watts would have a safe voyage to and from America, and that they would secure Colonel Ingersoll's promise that he would shortly visit Great Britain on a lecturing tour. Mr. Watts has been in splendid form all the week, and, apparently, speaking nearly every night and three times on Sunday has in no way impaired his vitality.

This week Mr. Watts is debating with the Rev. Mr. Waldron at New Brompton, Kent. Some account of the meetings will be given in the *Freethinker* of next week.

This evening, Sunday (October 11) Mr. Watts gives his farewell lecture, prior to his departure for the States and Canada, in the Secular Hall, New Church-street, Camberwell. He takes for his subject, "The Church, Science, and Mental Freedom." The friends in South London will no doubt muster in good force to take leave of Mr. Watts.

On Sunday, September 27, Mr. William Heaford wound up the outdoor lecturing season at Northampton with two lectures, both of which were well attended and highly appreciated. The "Evidence" missionary struggled vainly to get an audience, but his eloquence was a ghastly failure. The Society here goes into winter quarters next Sunday at their hall in Exeter-street.

Mr. Heaford went to Oxford on the Tuesday and delivered an outdoor address near the Martyrs' Memorial. The audience was very large and, except at intervals, fairly quiet. A religious rowdy, well dressed but half drunk, aroused the elements of disorder always found in a cathedral city, and made the discussion an unfair combat of reason against noisy clamor. Some silly opposition was offered, and replied to amid the most unfair interruption. A fine commentary on the culture of Oxford and the toleration of Christians!

Mr. S. P. Putnam sends us a copy of the circular sent round by the American Secular Union re the Chicago Congress in November, which will be attended by Colonel Ingersoll and Messrs. Foote and Watts. The proceedings of the Congress are to be published in book form, with portraits of the principal speakers. A copy will be forwarded to every contributor of one dollar to the campaign fund. The Congress is to be held in one of the largest halls in Chicago, and will probably be the biggest gathering of the kind ever seen in America.

In the *Open Court*, of Chicago, Mr. Moncure D. Conway gives an account of the persecutions of "Jacques Gruet, Calvin's Ethical Victim." In Gruet's commonplace book were found the words: "The world is eternal. Moses could not have known positively all that he has related about the creation. There is neither paradise nor hell. All that is in man dies with the body. The Christian religion is a fable." This was sufficient. He was tortured to make him name his accomplices, which he refused to do, and finally he was executed on July 26, 1547. Mr. Conway calls him the proto-martyr of Protestantism. Calvin witnessed the execution, and wrote to Viret: "He showed an amazing courage in meeting death." M. Henri Fazy, a very learned member of the Institute of Geneva, says that Gruet appears to have been a Voltaire before Voltaire. That Gruet was in religious opinion quite as heretical as Voltaire was discovered three years after his death. In repairing the Gruet mansion there was unearthed a manuscript by him of twenty-six closely-written pages, which Calvin declared was enough to bring

down the divine wrath on Geneva. What was really in that treatise must remain unknown, as only the minister and some of the council saw it. According to the hostile report, Gruet's essay spoke of Christ as a fantastic rustic, of the miracles as tricks, of the apostles as vagabonds with little brains, and of the Scriptures as containing less sense than *Aesop's Fables*. A brief account of Gruet, giving the main facts, will be found in Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*.

The *Derby Daily Telegraph* reports a meeting of the local Secular Society on the Armenian question, at which a resolution was passed deploring the Armenian horrors and all such crimes perpetrated under the banner of superstition.

We notice that *De Dageraad*, of Amsterdam, is now under the sole editorship of A. H. Gerard, who, we trust, will receive the support of the whole Freethought party in Holland. *De Dageraad* is in its eighteenth year, and has done good service in the cause of freedom.

Our Swedish contemporary, *Nya Sanningar*, gives a portrait of the Swedish astronomer and Freethinker, Hjalmar Strömer, author of many works popularizing astronomy, and also of *The Confessions of a Freethinker*.

The *Banner of Light* says: "The marble bust of Thomas Paine, which was rejected twenty years ago, and since that time has remained in the office of Mrs. Carrie B. Kilgore, Philadelphia, Pa., will, some time during the coming autumn, be brought before the mayor and council with the hope that time has brought a change in the city feeling, and that the offering will now find acceptance."

No. 1 of *The Avenue*, a monthly magazine devoted to Association, Education, and Social Progress (Simpkin, Marshall; 3d.), opens with a paper on Robert Owen, by George Jacob Holyoake. Two excellent portraits of Owen accompany the article, which is written with all Mr. Holyoake's old spirit. The other contents of the magazine include articles on "International Co-operation," "Education and Commercialism," and a well-illustrated paper, "With the Channel Islanders." The magazine, which is designed for family reading, is likely to be an acceptable one to co-operators. We wish it a prosperous future.

The editor of *The Avenue* says that Mr. George Jacob Holyoake and Dr. Frederick Hollick—who is in America, where he has recently published some Freethought verse, entitled *The Devil's Visit*—are the only two remaining of all the missionary advocates of Robert Owen. We join in his hope that they may live long in the enjoyment of this honorable distinction.

Conjointly with the Leigh Brown Trust, the Humanitarian League, which has now been in existence for six years, and has done much to rouse and educate healthy moral sentiment, has arranged a most interesting series of five Humane Science Lectures, to be given at St. Martin's Hall, Trafalgar-square, W.C. The special aim of the course will be to show that "an uncorrelated department of science tends to lose either life or balance." In particular reference to biology, the promoters of the lectures, while holding no aggressive position, affirm that any blunting of the sense of sympathy or coarsening of the moral instincts must necessarily tend to deaden that response of the mind to the unity of nature which is essential to the highest order of scientific insight. The program is as follows: October 27, "The Need of a Rational and Humane Science," by Edward Carpenter; November 17, "Natural Selection and Mutual Aid," by Peter Kropotkin; December 8, "The Humane Study of Natural History," by J. Arthur Thomson, M.A.; January 19, "The Treatment of Criminals," by Rev. W. Douglas Morrison; February 9, "Suggestion: its Place in Medicine and Scientific Research." Full information concerning the lectures may be had from Mr. Joseph Collinson, 75 Clovelly Mansions, Gray's Inn-road, W.C.

The Committee of the Manchester Branch, at its last meeting, unanimously passed a vote of confidence in Mr. Foote as President. This is forwarded to us with the Committee's hope that Messrs. Foote and Watts will have "an enjoyable trip to America."

One of Mr. George Anderson's parcels of Freethought literature has been received and much appreciated by some soldiers at Bombay. A letter from one of them to Mr. Anderson lies before us. He returns thanks on behalf of himself and comrades, and encloses a postal order for half-a-guinea, which he wishes to go to Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme.

An effort is being made to reorganize Secularism in connection with the Ox Hill Branch of the N.S.S. There will be a special meeting this afternoon (October 11) at 2 o'clock at Mr. G. Maines's, 49 Ox Hill, Stanley. All friends of the movement are earnestly invited to attend.

The Leeds Branch, after many difficulties, has obtained suitable quarters at the Victoria Hall, Victoria-road. A series of lectures has been arranged, beginning to-day (October 11), when Mr. Cohen delivers three addresses. We hope the local Freethinkers will rally round him on this occasion, and support the Branch generally afterwards.

The *Oxford Times* reports a Freethought meeting, addressed by Mr. W. Heaford, at the Martyrs' Memorial in the city of colleges. Mr. Heaford received a good deal of interruption, but managed to hold the meeting to the end.

## THE PROVIDENTIAL VIEW.

OF all the illusions to which the orthodox faith has helped to give credence, perhaps that one deserves the closest attention which affirms that the order of the world is arranged by the Almighty. This is doubtless an agreeable notion enough to those privileged people who enjoy so much of the fruits of the collective labor, while sharing so little in the necessary burden of its production; and who are accustomed to express their appreciation of the same amid the sophisticated atmosphere of the fashionable Church. Apart from the iniquitous support to tyranny and injustice of all kinds for which this view of things is largely responsible, it has done incalculable harm by frustrating in various ways the study of the art of right living. And by right living is implied all those forms of conduct, and methods of doing things, which will result in the maximum of attainable well-being for the community—intellectual, material, social—both individually and collectively. It has stood in the way, for instance, of the general acceptance of the all-important Law of Population; and is quaintly reflected in the popular, if somewhat imbecile, saying: "That where the Lord sends mouths he sends meat." And we see a further example of its influence in the paralysis and decay which have overtaken so much of Mohammedan civilization, where such teaching has been really followed out to its logical conclusion; while it has darkened counsel on the troubled question of human destiny by its fatuous interpretation of the decline of nations as being due to a Divine judgment on their "sins." Certainly there has been clear and undeniable gain to Humanity in the degree to which, already, the providential view has been quietly superseded by the growth of a body of reasoned knowledge concerning the origin and development of Human Society. It is mainly to modern Humanists and Rationalists—among whom a high place must be given to the name of Voltaire—that we owe the beginnings of such studies.

—*The Free Review*.

## An Unfair Advantage.

"Brethren," said the sad-featured man who had arisen at the experience meeting, "I wish to unburden a heavy heart. I am the manufacturer of the Bangup bicycle. For years I have stated in the public prints that my wheel is the only first-class bicycle in the market. Alas! brethren, in those words I did grave injustice to many of my rivals in trade. The 'Bangup' is not the only first-class wheel in the market. True, it is the best—by far the best. An experience of twenty-five years has enabled me to make the 'Bangup' a perfect wheel. Catalogues will be sent free on application. I have testimonials—"

But, as he brought forth a package of letters from an inside pocket, there was a storm of interruption. Seventeen sinners and two just men who did not need repentance rose to shut him off, and to explain that they rode other wheels.

He sank into his seat wearily; but there was a faint smile of satisfaction on his lips. He felt that he had done his best.

It is my firm conviction that the more a man knows, the less he believes—that is to say, the more we learn of the natural, the less we believe of the supernatural. The reverse is also true. The firmest believer in the supernatural is one who knows but little concerning the physical laws of the world we live in. And as this vast system of natural existence is beginning to be better understood, it is easier to investigate and decide upon the asserted supernatural and miraculous, and ascertain what is and what is not entitled to the dignified title of "plenary inspiration."—*Andrew Jackson Davis, "Free Thoughts Concerning Religion," p. 15.*

The Leicester Secular Society has put out an attractive list of lectures and musical and literary evenings for the ensuing quarter. We are pleased to notice that Mr. Feroza, whom we have lost sight of for some time, is still lecturing.

## WILLIAM MORRIS.

By the death of William Morris on October 3, at the age of sixty-two years and six months, England has lost one of her foremost poets, and the living example of a man who, having achieved success for himself, came out as an active member of the Social Democratic party. As a decorative artist Morris belonged to the very class who are supposed to be a mere retinue of attendants administering to the luxuries of the wealthy. It was, however, his artistic sense of the repulsiveness of modern life which made him, like Ruskin, seek for a fairer ideal of society, and those who consider his ends unpractical must yet recognize the noble generosity of his aims.

Morris, in one of his best-known poems, had described himself as the idle singer of an empty day. One had only to look at his sturdy, independent figure to see he was something far other than that. He was a big-hearted man, full of warm sympathy with the poorest of his kind, hating all shams and wrongs and oppression.

Morris had the true spirit of the artist, and touched nothing he did not adorn. It is a satisfaction to know that one of the earliest appreciations of his poetic worth appeared in the columns of the *Reasoner*—as early, I think, as 1858.

It was in comradeship with men like Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and Ford Madox Brown that Morris set up a factory of art decoration, in which he attempted to carry out his principles of art workmanship, the cardinal one of which was the transfusion of the workman's thought into his work, and the disuse of machinery, which tended to make man a machine.

In his lecture on *Art and Socialism*, delivered before the Leicester Secular Society in 1884, Morris pointed out how, in its haste to gain material prosperity, the world left its masses with scarcely any share in Art. They worked more laboriously than ever, but without that solace which springs from intimate interest in the labor of their own hands. He claimed that "all men should have work to do which shall be worth doing, and be of itself pleasant to do; and which should be done under such conditions as would make it neither over-wearisome nor over-anxious."

To have living, true, and popular art, we must be done with luxury and its concomitant useless labor, and live simple, useful, decent lives, taking pleasure in our daily toil. To forward his views, Morris joined, first, the Social Democratic Federation, and, afterwards, the Socialist League—an example of principle which did much for the cause he had at heart.

With the Socialist League, Morris gave time and money to the establishment of the *Commonweal*. Many excellent poems, besides his "Dream of John Ball" and his "News from Nowhere," appeared first in that journal. Some of the Socialists, however, wanted Morris to pay for the paper, and they to run it. Edited for a while by his son-in-law, Holiday Sparling, it had a measure of success; but editing a paper by committee was about as sensible as navigating a boat by committee, and could hardly result in anything but disaster. Of Morris's work as a poet this is hardly the place to speak. Few pleasanter works can be taken up than *The Earthly Paradise*, and it may be noted that throughout the work of Morris there is hardly a touch of religious sentiment. His poems may yet reach a wider circle than they ever moved in his lifetime, and to the rest of the world he leaves the example of a noble-hearted and many-sided man.

J. M. W.

## Texts.

Two oxen were one day travelling along a country road, when one saw a swarm of bees in the road ahead. Sticking his tail out behind him as straight as a pump-handle, the bovine darted into the bushes.

"The wicked flee when no man pursueth," said the other animal, "but the righteous are bold as a lion." And he calmly went on his way.

He soon encountered the swarm of bees, and they lighted on him and perforated his hide with their stings. As he snorted and plunged backward and forward, thrashing the air with his tail, the other ox called out from a safe position: "The wise man seeth the danger and turneth aside, but the fool passeth on and is punished."

Moral—Texts will prove anything.

The aim and end of society are the development of the moral, physical, and intellectual faculties in mankind. The harmony of our faculties constitutes the ideal of life. This life is holy, for it is a moment of the eternal life: this earth is holy, for it is a part of the infinite universe. There is no life to come which should make us despise the actual, present life, for heaven and earth are but one.—Professor Laurent, "Studies in the History of Humanity."

## SOME QUESTIONS.

- (1) Is God infinite in all his attributes?
- (2) If so, could infinite wisdom make a mistake?
- (3) If not, why did God "repent that he had made man"?
- (4) Was it a sin for Adam and Eve to partake of the fruit of the tree of knowledge?
- (5) If so, for what purpose was it put in the Garden of Eden?
- (6) If God did not design to have Adam and Eve learn both good and evil, why did he put the tree there, make the fruit "good to the taste," make them with an appetite for it, and create a "tempter" to induce them to eat it?
- (7) Did Adam and Eve have any desires which God did not implant within them, and did he not know all that was within them when he pronounced them "good"?
- (8) If the "serpent" was evil, where did he get it from?
- (9) If the serpent did not act the part designed for him, why did not Omnipotence prevent him?
- (10) If Adam and Eve did not act the part designed for them, why did not God prevent them?
- (11) If they did as Omniscience knew they would, and as Omnipotence allowed them to do, and as all the circumstances compelled them to do, and if they knew not that they were doing evil before learning it, why did an infinitely good and just God curse them and all of their descendants?
- (12) Would a wise and benevolent earthly parent punish his weak and ignorant children eternally for one act of disobedience, and that, too, when he had put a temptation before them which he knew would cause them to disobey?
- (13) If so, would it be the duty of those children "to love him with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength," for his great justice and goodness in preparing a way by which a few of them might escape his wrath?
- (14) Is an eternal hell consistent with infinite goodness and justice?
- (15) If the object of punishment is the good of the punished, is it justice to either party that the innocent should suffer for the guilty?
- (16) If Jesus made a full atonement for the sins of Adam and all his descendants, why are we still under the curse?
- (17) If Jesus was God, or a third part of him, did not God punish himself to reconcile himself with himself?
- (18) If only the human nature of Jesus suffered for our sins, could it be an infinite atonement?
- (19) If Jesus made an infinite atonement, could our final salvation be conditional? In other words, if Jesus answered all the demands of the law, what have we to answer for?
- (20) Is belief a matter of volition, and can we believe what our reason repudiates?
- (21) Is a person's belief of greater merit than his character or actions?
- (22) If God made our salvation dependent upon an article of faith, and he wishes to save all of his children, why require them to believe what their reason rejects?
- (23) If reason is in the way of salvation, is not the less we have of it the better?

## Religious Hysteria.

Religious enthusiasm and proneness to the mystic and the occult formed, even in the highest antiquity, an important factor of those degenerate and hysterical individuals who entertained the delusion that they were in communication with good or with bad spirits, and who by that channel influenced the masses not a little. A great number of the priestesses who delivered oracular responses to the Greeks "with strong quaking of their body" were psychopathic subjects undergoing the hysterical convulsions well known to us to-day. Hence epilepsy, which in those days was not discriminated from hysterical cramps, came to be called the *morbus sacer*, or sacred disease.

Plutarch, in his description of the Pythian priestess, delineates the typical image of a hysterical subject who, in ecstatic convulsion, stammered unintelligible words, into which the priests injected some sense. But hysteria, with its inclination to religious enthusiasm, was not limited to separate persons. On the contrary, we meet with it among all peoples and in all periods of history; and among all peoples we meet it in the form of epidemics of various kinds. But never did this disease find a better or a more fertile soil in which to thrive than in the middle ages of northern Europe, marked as they were by ignorance and by superstition; and, accordingly, we find that epidemics of hysteria then assumed dimensions surpassing those of any similar outbursts in other centuries. A great many fine books have been written about the individual and the epidemic crazes of those ages. The French have made particularly careful researches into the matter.

—Dr. W. Hirsch, in Appleton's "Popular Science Monthly."

BOOK CHAT.

REALIZING the importance of humane instruction for the young, the Humanitarian League has published a series of *Lectures for Children*, by Mrs. F. H. Suckling, with illustrations by J. R. Warren-Warren (79 Great Queen-street), at the price of fourpence. The lectures are designed to accompany lantern-slides, the use of which can be obtained, on moderate terms, from the League. Apart from this, the lectures are clearly and most interestingly written. They are well calculated to instruct, amuse, and humanize our sentiments towards the animal world, which to many remains an unknown one.

From a book published by the *Truthseeker* Company, of New York, entitled *The Crimes of Preachers*, it appears that in the United States, within five years, 3,668 men of God committed crimes which got recorded in the papers. Of these, 1,497 were crimes against women. Since the days of holy David, the wicked daughters of Eve have been the great agents of Satan in laying low the piety of the godly. No wonder Paul exhorted the brethren: "It is good not to touch a woman." We, however, should exhort the women: "It is good not to touch a preacher."

*Queen Moo and the Egyptian Sphinx* is an extraordinary work, by Augustus Le Plongeon, M.D., who, with his wife, has spent many years exploring Maya remains in Yucatan. He has come to the conclusion that the civilization of Egypt and India was derived from the Mayas of Central America, and he even discovers the story of the temptation of Eve in the wooing of Queen Moo with a present of fruit. Apart from his far-fetched analogies and theories, there is no doubt that Dr. Le Plongeon throws valuable light upon an ancient civilization which existed in America, even if it did not affect other continents.

*The Song of the Respectables, and Other Verses*, by Henry S. Salt (Manchester Labor Press, Tib-street; 6d.), contains a selection of democratic pieces, all with considerable point, and of far superior quality to the average modern verse. A lively wit and delicate satire mark the majority of them, notably the one which gives the title to the little book. The following, entitled "The Joy that Never Palls," may be cited as giving a slight taste of Mr. Salt's quality:—

It is the Sabbath morn. Soft smiles the heaven,  
Far o'er the fields a blessed stillness falls:  
Now to the weary soul once more is given  
The joy that never palls.

Anon the welcome peal from belfry tower  
On reverent hearts a perfect peace bestows,  
Preluding service sweet. I note the hour,  
And breathe a rich repose.

In grave procession to the house of prayer  
The pious people flock, genteelly drest;  
Nor need'st thou ask if I myself be there  
On this, the day of rest.

Let others tread the paths where pleasure calls,  
For trivial, worldly joys let others search;  
To me the bliss divine that never palls  
Is—not to go to church.

Mr. Wheeler's satirical *Types of Religionists* is being issued as a twopenny pamphlet.

An American novelist, named Alfred Clark, has published a romance entitled *The Finding of Lot's Wife*. The monument of the unworthy lady is said to be still near the Dead Sea in all its saline purity. The early Christian fathers said as much, and added that it still gave evidences of its feminine character. Mr. Clark adds that those who look on it become insane. It should have been: Those who believe in it are off their balance already. Though Mr. Clark's book is wholly a work of fiction, the people who look forward to the discovery of Noah's Ark may be ready to receive it all as literal gospel.

Obituary.

DIED at Down, on Friday, October 2, at the age of eighty-eight, Mrs. Emma Wedgwood Darwin, the beloved wife of Charles Darwin, the naturalist. She was a daughter of Darwin's uncle, Josiah Wedgwood, and the granddaughter of the founder of Etruria Works, and leaves several sons, who have already attained a distinguished place in the paths of science.

I REGRET to have to report the death of so earnest a Freethinker as our late friend, Thomas Hulin, who died on Monday, September 28, after a long and painful illness. He died firm in the faith of reason. He was buried at the Unitarian burying-ground, the Unitarian service being used. It was our friend's wish to have a Secular funeral.—J. WATTS TREASURE.

DECREED.

CASSELL'S *Saturday Journal*, of September 9, gave currency to the following:—

"A long continuance of droughts in Brazil once gave rise to the issue of the most curious document ever published, which is now preserved in the public library of the city of Zacatecas, in Mexico.

"In this country, prayers of congregations are offered up for rain, and only recently in Spain there was a remarkable religious procession of eight hundred priests, with lighted tapers and gorgeous banners, carrying the body of St. Isidra through the streets of Madrid, to make intercession for rain after long-continued drought; but in Brazil, in 1820, the chief alcalde of the Brazilian town of Casthanas thought that threatening the Powers above would be more effectual, so (as the document referred to above attests) he decreed as follows:—

"(1) If within eight days from the issuing of this decree it shall not have rained abundantly, no one shall go to Mass or say prayers.

"(2) If the drought shall then continue eight days longer, the churches and chapels shall be burned, and missals, rosaries, and every other article of devotion destroyed.

"(3) And, lastly, if during a third period of eight days it shall not rain, all priests, friars, monks, nuns, and other zealots shall have their heads cut off.

"And in the meantime everyone is granted free and unrestrained permission to commit every class and kind of sin, in order that the Supreme Maker of all Things may have a proper conception of the class of people with whom He has to deal."

PROFANE JOKES.

ON a recent Sunday evening in Belfast a young man in church looked frequently at his watch during the sermon. Just as he was doing so for the fourth or fifth time the pastor, with great earnestness, was urging the truth upon the conscience of his hearers. "Young man," said he, "how is it with you?" Whereupon the young man with the gold repeater bawled out, in the hearing of nearly the whole congregation: "A quarter past eight." As may be supposed, the gravity of the assembly was very much disturbed by the occurrence.

Clergyman—"No; Sunday was not intended to be spent in fishing." His Little Son—"Isn't it strange, papa, that the fish bite on Sunday?"

An examiner asked the Bible lesson class to tell him what was the chief difference between Elisha and Elijah; and, after a pause, a little lad held up his hand, and said: "Please, sir, Elisha walked with God; but the carriage was sent for Elijah!"

"See, Mary, are not these flowers beautiful?" "'Deed and they are, miss! Many a time 'ave I seen jist like 'em in bunnits!" Ain't it wonderful how nat'ral the Lord can make things!"

Tommy—"Paw, who was it said that an Irishman never dies until there is an angel needed in heaven?" Mr. Figg—"I don't know his name. All I know is that he was an Irishman."

"The path of righteousness is very, very narrow," said Miss Prunes, severely. "Is that why you never see anyone there but yourself?" inquired Miss Daisy Miller, innocently.

Johnnie Chaffie—"Come, Mamie, let us play Adam and Eve." Mamie—"How will we play it?" "You tempt me with an apple, and I'll eat it."

First Summer Girl—"Are you going to that old Christian Endeavor meeting this evening?" Second Summer Girl—"Yes, indeed! Haven't you heard the subject to be discussed?" First Summer Girl—"No; what is it?" Second Summer Girl—"How to Hold Our Young Men."

See that dainty lady going down the aisles of the cathedral! She looks in her silks and loveliness the very picture of purity and innocence. But look closer, and you will discern in her faultless art the disfigurements of crime. See those furs! They did not fall like snowflakes from the bounteous lap of Heaven. They were stripped from the quivering form of some outraged northern creature to whom life and happiness were as dear as to her. Look at her head-dress! Those fluttering wings are the remains of song-birds, whose beauty and joy once filled the woods and fields. But their throats were silenced, and their beautiful and happy lives ended forever, to amuse the vanity of this spiced and be-ribboned worshipper.—J. Howard Moore.

## 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.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "War to the Knife Between the Church of England and Rome."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, A. B. Moss, "Evolution of Christianity." October 13, at 8.45, Social party. October 14, at 8.30, Lecture and debate.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. Watts, "The Church, Science, and Mental Freedom."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Libra-road, Old Ford): 7.30, F. J. Gould, "Wilson Barrett's 'Sign of the Cross.'"

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): H. Silverstein, "The Teachings of C. Bradlaugh."

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "The Philosopher Socrates."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY, Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road: 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Zola's 'Lourdes' Miracles."

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Sun in Splendor," Portobello-road, Notting Hill Gate): Tuesday, at 8.30, Business meeting.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Zola's 'Lourdes' Miracles."

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, W. Heaford, "The Figment of Immortality."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): J. Fagan—11.30, "Secularism v. Christianity"; 3.30, "How I Became a Secularist, and why I Remain One."

LIMEHOUSE (Triangle, Salmon's-lane): 11.30, E. Pack, "Miracles."

MILE END WASTE: E. P. Ward—11.30, "The Teachings of Jesus"; 6.30, "Christianity."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Life and Times of Voltaire."

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3.15, Mr. Ward will lecture.

### COUNTRY.

BOLTON (Borough Chambers, Rushton-street): 7, T. Holstead, "Socialism not Workable."

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, H. Baker, "Plagiaristic Christians." Preceded by recitation, "The Devil's Walk."

DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market place): 7, H. MacGuinness, "Abraham Lincoln."

LEEDS (Liberty Hall, Victoria-road): O. Cohen—11, "Charles Darwin"; 8, "Christianity and Medical Science"; 7, "Foreign Missions," October 13 and 14, at 8, O. Cohen will lecture.

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, John M. Robertson, "Socialism and Secularism."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, A lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, W. Simpson, "Our Debt to Herbert Spencer."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): W. Dyson—11, "Tales and Wonders of Jesus"; 7, "Adam Smith and the Wealth of Nations"—the morning lecture will be given near the Monolith, weather permitting. 3, Members' quarterly meeting. Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting; 7.30, Mutual Improvement Class.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—October 11, Leeds.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—October 11, Bradlaugh Club; 18, New Brompton.

## POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

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