

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

JEWES AND ZIONISM.

BURKE said with truth that you cannot draw up an indictment against a whole nation. It is equally true that praise or blame of an entire people must be taken with many deductions. Most races are so fused that any off-hand characterization is pretty sure to be misleading. But in the case of the Jews there are two circumstances connected with their past history which have powerfully contributed to give them marked, though, as I should argue, not irradicable, characteristics. Firstly, under the spell of their Law, ascribed to Moses but apparently unknown to Solomon, they have steadfastly refused to intermarry with Gentiles. Secondly, they have endured such cruel persecutions at the hands of Christians through so many ages that a large proportion of the perennial fool-crop have been weeded out. Only those have survived who have been fitted to do so by superior brains and superior vitality. On the other hand must be set down the fact that, dwelling in all lands, they are subject to the modifying influence of varying surroundings, so that what is true of the English Jew is by no means necessarily true of the Russian or of the Oriental Jew.

The Jew everywhere is largely what centuries of Christian love have made him.

By the torture prolonged from age to age,
By the infamy—Israel's heritage,
By the Ghetto's plague, by the garb's disgrace,
By the badge of shame, by the felon's place,
By the branding tool, the bloody whip,
And the summons to Christian fellowship.

The mass of Continental Jews still know what persecution is. Their bond of common race and religion is the only thing which enables them to hold together. It is small wonder, then, that the project of establishing a Jewish state, where the children of Israel may develop their lives without external constraint, has excited hopes among the poor and oppressed of Abraham's descendants. This makes the recent Congress on Zionism at Bale a notable feature in the history of the race, the more remarkable since the conference was denounced by the leading Rabbis in each country. In this the Rabbis have less regard to the practical difficulties of the scheme than to the fact that it offers them no particular opportunities of leadership. Themselves in fairly comfortable circumstances, it may be questioned if they are quite as anxious as they ought to be for the fulfilment of the prophecies.

Dr. Herzl put forward among the reasons for his scheme the fact that the Jews will not really assimilate with the nations among whom they live. No doubt this is largely so everywhere, and especially on the Continent, where for the most part they still live in a state of repression and disability. Surrounded by an unsympathetic, if not hostile, Christian community, it could not well be otherwise. But where Jews are not only granted the rights of citizens, but are treated as fellow men, they have little desire to return to Zion. Could they surmount the difficulties in the way of inducing the Sultan to sell or forego his claim upon Palestine, which is as much holy to the Moslem as to the Jew, it would still be only the refuse of Israel who would migrate there. The rest would, as Rothschild said, apply for the post of ambassadors to other countries. What probably will be done is that a considerable sum will be raised (if not the ten millions asked for), sufficient to buy an extensive tract of territory, whereon principally

the lower class of Russian Jews will settle. Of the results of their colonizing efforts the future will have to speak.

Every country has the Jews it deserves to have. The Russian Jew is usually a bad specimen, just because Christian oppression has made him so. He is now looking forward to Zion. The persecuted Jew is the orthodox, bigoted Jew. Spinoza, greatest of Jews, long since pointed out that persecution tended to make his race conservative and tribal, while this very tribalism in turn made them hated. The Jew who is treated as a man and a brother is, as may be seen in France, England, and America, in a fair way to become a Freethinker. To him Zionism and Messianic hopes are alike ideals of the past, while to the genuine orthodox Jew the Zionism of Dr. Herzl is defective, because it looks rather to the social and political side of Judaism than to its religious element. It is noteworthy that the Congress should have chosen the well-known Freethinker, Dr. Max Nordau, to be its co-president along with Dr. Herzl. The orthodox Jew, so Rabbi Adler informs us, still expects the advent of a Messiah, but what that Messiah is going to do for them is not so certain, though a return to the Promised Land to make Zion the centre of the religious world is certainly a prominent item.

The orthodox Jew looks forward to the days when Messiah—no reformer, but a veritable King—shall gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the spherical earth, and shall make them one nation in the sterile land upon the mountains of Israel. Then "the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising," for Messiah shall sit upon the throne of brigand David, and that throne shall be established for ever. "And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying: We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel, only let us be called by thy name" (Isaiah iv. 7). But the time for a harem is not yet, for the blessed prophet Zechariah (xiv. 4) gives a physical sign. "The Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south." When that great day arrives, the Jews can safely go back to Jerusalem with the sure and certain hope of a glorious seraglio. Meantime they are likely to find their account in trading among the Gentiles.

The cultured Jew is of a quite different stamp. He has departed, not only from Rabbism, but from Mosaism itself. He would never think, for instance, that death was the proper penalty for gathering sticks on the Sabbath (Numbers xv. 32-36). Indeed, Mr. Claude Montefiore, in his *Hilbert Lectures*, goes as far as Bishop Colenso in denying the Mosaic authorship of the law. The decently-treated Jew becomes the enlightened Jew, and he is practically a Secularist. He has found that in the long history of the sufferings of his race the only salvation has come from self-reliance. He aims at making his paradise in this world, and he usually succeeds fairly well. With him the Messianic delusion is nearly extinct, and Zionism is considered, on purely humanitarian grounds, on the same level with Baron Hirsch's scheme of a Jewish colony in the Argentine Republic. It is the enlightened, the Freethinking Jew who will really be the salvation of his race. To his brother who looks forward to supernatural supervision he may say, in the words of Amos (v. 18): "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord!

To what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darkness, and not light." There is a better mission for the Jew than that of setting up a separate kingdom in Palestine. It is that of infusing Jewish ideals into a circle far beyond the limits of Judaism.

J. M. WHEELER.

MR. HALL CAINE'S "CHRISTIAN."

III.

MR. CAINE'S book is primarily a polemic. His theory of fiction, according to the "Author's Note" at the end of the volume, is that the artist should "present a thought in the form of a story." I will not stop to discuss whether this is a true theory of fiction, and whether it can be justified by an appeal to the highest examples of that art. It is Mr. Caine's theory, and in its light he must be understood and judged. What then is the "thought" of this novel? It is clearly indicated in the title, which is not *John Storm*, but *The Christian*. This is how Mr. Caine's intention is read by Mr. Gladstone in the eulogistic letter already referred to. Any other reading of it turns at least half the book into pretentious clap-trap. Mr. Caine presents John Storm as a true Christian, who shatters himself against a Christian society which is so organized as to make it impossible for a man to live the life of Christ. This, indeed, is avowed in his statements to the *Daily News* interviewer.

In carrying out this object Mr. Caine denies that he "intended to paint anybody's portrait." To do this would be "to wrong" his theory of fiction. But is the disclaimer true in the case of Canon Wealthy, of All Saints', Belgravia? He is a preacher of great parts and much eloquence, who in the course of the story rises to be an Archdeacon. As is crudely indicated by his name, he is rich (for a cleric) and fond of luxury. His apartments are "sumptuous" enough to disgust John Storm, who becomes one of his curates. His sermons are literary as well as eloquent, containing "many references to great writers, painters, and musicians." The first of his sermons that John Storm listens to includes a panegyric on Michael Angelo and a quotation from Browning, and ends with "a passage from Dante in the original." Now we have Mr. Caine's word for it that this is not a portrait, but it will be surprising if many readers do not exclaim, "Dean Farrar or the Devil!"

Canon Wealthy assists in the expulsion of a pretty hospital nurse who is in a certain "condition," through her intimacy with Lord Robert Ure. Of course it is all the man's fault in the eyes of John Storm, though Polly confesses afterwards to her own share in the transaction. "To tell you the truth," she says, "I was as much to blame as he was. I wanted to escape from the drudgery of the hospital, and I knew he would take me when the time came." John Storm preaches the young lord a stiff sermon, the burden of which is, "Why don't you marry the girl?" But his lordship does not see the matter in that light. He takes a house for Polly at St. John's Wood. This is a terrible take-down for poor John, who resigns his curacy, and denounces Canon Wealthy as the worst prostitute in London, for, if a woman sells her body, he sells his soul, by shielding the man and treading on the woman. Of course our sympathies are all with John Storm in this business; but he must have been very green, nevertheless, not to know that the Polly-and-Robert incident was anything but novel, and very heady to go straight off and join the Society of the Holy Gethsemane, an Anglican monkish establishment in Bishopsgate. A man will never reform the world by flying at it, or out of it, on every provocation. John Storm, indeed, acts too much like Jesus Christ did in Jerusalem, whipping dovesellers, over-turning money-changers' tables, and calling quieter religionists very ill names. If that is how a Christian should go through the world, the fewer real Christians we have the better. Give such people power, and they would soon be imitating the performances of a Torquemada, all in the interest of righteousness and sound belief.

John Storm begins as a "Christian Socialist," and ends as a madman; and some will say it was a perfectly natural progression. Leaving his father, Lord Storm, and resisting the advice of his uncle, Lord Erin, the Prime Minister, he takes a curacy under Canon Wealthy, and acts

as chaplain to a hospital. What with his disillusionment there, and the frivolous conduct of Glory Quayle, who seems to be as fond of the men as poor Polly Love, although less recklessly, John Storm is driven into the Gethsemane Brotherhood, where he serves a painful apprenticeship to the life of vowed poverty and chastity. But he is haunted by the vision of Glory Quayle, and at length he leaves the Brotherhood to find her. To his horror and dismay she has become a music-hall artist, and a star of the first magnitude. He tries in vain to persuade her to leave the profession. Then he obtains money from his good-natured uncle, and starts a Christian Mission in Soho, beginning with street-processions of three, consisting of himself dressed in a cassock, a converted waiter carrying a little harmonium, and a converted pawnbroker carrying the banner. He sets up a refuge for fallen women and a home for abandoned children—all very good in its way, but having as much effect on the great social problems of city life as the waltzing of a flea produces on the pachydermatous elephant. It does not occur to John Storm, the Christian—nor indeed to Mr. Caine, his creator—that behind all social evils there are material and economical as well as moral and personal causes. He does not see that the purification of cities is chiefly to be effected by sanitation, municipal improvements, the multiplication of open spaces, the extension of education, the increase of wages and the shortening of the hours of labor through trade organization, and the opening of fresh avenues for the employment of women, so that absolute economical dependence may not force them into premature marriage or into the slough of prostitution. It is to the credit of the working-classes that they have always looked askance at clerical rescue work as bearing no real promise of social regeneration. The upper and middle classes patronise such agencies, and John Storm (that is to say, Mr. Caine) looks at the matter from their point of view, though probably with a most unconscious bias.

In the midst of this, Glory Quayle leaves the music-hall stage and goes back to the Isle of Man, following the advice of "the Christian" John Storm. But she is dragged back to London again by its irresistible fascination for one of her temperament. This time she is to figure as an actress on the boards of a regular theatre. She is now John Storm's *fiancée*, and they make love in the usual fashion of second-rate novelists, who have a special language for this pastime. "My love," "my life," "my soul," they exclaim to each other. But the human love in John Storm is mixed up with so much of the "Christ-like" that, on hearing of the death of Father Damien, he seriously proposes to marry Glory Quayle (for he doesn't want any one else to have her) and take her out with him to the South Sea lepers. By this time he has come to the conclusion that "The lusts of the flesh were the most deadly sins, absolute chastity the most pleasing to God of all virtues." Accordingly, he proposes to Glory that, while they go out as husband and wife, they shall live together as brother and sister. "For the sake of those poor doomed beings cut off from earthly love," he says, "we'll love each other as the angels love." Glory does not find the prospect alluring. She loves John profoundly, but her love is natural and healthy; and, not feeling equal to the lofty enterprise of sistering it among the lepers, she bids him a passionate adieu.

John Storm, however, does not go out to the South Seas. He does not leave London. After all it holds Glory Quayle. He finds the Church incapable of reformation, his "woman movement" in Soho is only "another dream," and on receiving Glory's letter of refusal to be the sister-bride of a second Father Damien he rushes back to the Gethsemane Brotherhood, where the Father receives him with great joy. "John Storm," we are told, "was standing with bowed head. He had made the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and surrendered his life to God."

This time, however, he does not live in one of the Brotherhood cells. As vicar of a Westminster parish, he resumes his old work among the poor. Always accompanied by the bloodhound, he attracts universal attention. It is believed that he has the gifts of prophecy and faith-healing. Finally, he becomes the centre of the craze about the impending destruction of London. He goes to Epsom to preach there on the Derby day, which, according to the popular superstition, is to be the day of doom. Glory Quayle happens to be there too, in not very reputable

company. John Storm sees her, and the thought enters his head that he must slay her body to save her soul. He conceives this to be a divine mission. Accordingly he goes to Glory's house and waits for her in the drawing-room. She does not return till very late, and a scene ensues which is far and away the most powerful piece of writing in the book. Glory fights for her life with a woman's weapons. She conquers her would-be slayer by tenderness. He tells her to say her prayers, for God has sent him to kill her. But with her arm round his neck, and her lips inviting his, the homicidal maniac is conquered; and as John Storm creeps like a thief through the streets of London in the dark hours before the dawn, he says to himself, "I thought it was God's voice—it was the devil's."

Mr. Caine is now face to face with a problem which might well tax the resources of a greater intellect than his. What is he to do then? How escape from the terrible difficulty? Easily enough. Death is always at the beck and call of distressed novelists, and Mr. Caine gets rid of John Storm and the difficulty together.

This is done very clumsily. John Storm is wanted by the police: in the first place, for endangering the peace through the craze about the destruction of London; in the second place, for complicity in manslaughter, because one of his followers knocked down and mortally injured a soldier who "insulted the name of the Father." After appearing before the magistrates he is "committed for sedition," with the probability of being brought up again on the charge of complicity in manslaughter. All this is ridiculous enough. It is an outrage on law and common sense.

John Storm, being liberated on bail, is set upon by a lot of rougns, including the converted pawnbroker, who leave him with a mortal wound on the back of the head; from which it appears that the "Christ-like" method of converting sinners is just as successful as that of the orthodox machinery.

Glory Quayle now appears for the last time upon the scene. She has left the theatre for ever, and taken up John Storm's deserted refuge-work at Westminster; and now, by the Archbishop's licence, she marries him on his death-bed, the last words of this book being a passage from the Church of England marriage service, ending with that pious and consolatory word "Amen!"

Surely this is a very cheap and easy device. Moreover, it seems to be borrowed from the sublime Christian drama of Mr. Wilson Barrett. Just as Marcus takes Mercia's hand in his, and goes forth to martyrdom with the glad assurance that she will be his bride in heaven, so John Storm and Glory Quayle are "united for all eternity." Mr. Barrett and Mr. Caine may know their New Testament thoroughly, but they forget the saying of Jesus Christ about the absence of marriage in kingdom-come, where all are "as the angels of God"—that is, without distinction of sex.

After the "happy" death of John Storm, whose life has been a great failure, Glory Quayle—or rather Glory Storm—is left to carry on his "glorious work" to a triumphant success, which is more easily achieved in imagination than in reality.

Mr. Caine does not leave the reader without finally emphasizing the Christ-like life of John Storm. On the death of this Christian hero, a London journalist of Jewish extraction contributes an article to an evening paper, which makes "a deep impression." The following extract will show its quality:—

"The unhappy man who has been miserably murdered in the slums of Westminster was a follower of Jesus, if ever there lived one, and, whosoever the actual persons may be who are guilty of his death, the true culprit is the Christian nation which has inflicted mockeries and insults on everybody who has dared to stand alone under the ensign of Christ. Let us not be led away by sneers. This man, whatever his errors, his weaknesses, his self-delusions, and his many human failings, was a Christian. He was the prophet of woman in relation to humanity as hardly any one since Jesus has ever been."

Here, then, is the one definite merit which Mr. Caine is able to assign his Christian hero. *He was the prophet of woman in relation to humanity*—and the greatest in this line since Jesus Christ!

One stares in astonishment at the ignorance and impudence of this tribute. I invite Mr. Caine to specify in what way Jesus Christ himself was the prophet of

woman in relation to humanity. I do not want sentimental inferences, but plain evidence from the Gospels. Where the Founder of Christianity is silent, I do not need Mr. Caine's explanations. I have access to a nearer and more authoritative oracle—the apostle Paul, in whose writings I find the subjection of woman to man taught most explicitly and with tremendous emphasis.

As for the John Storms, the Hall Caines, and all other incarnations of the spirit of Jesus Christ, I beg to tell them that they merely come in at the eleventh hour, and usurp the credit which belongs to those who bore the heat and burden of the day, besides doing their best, or rather their worst, to spoil the cause with their pious sentimentalities. What were these modern Jesus Christs doing when John Stuart Mill published his great essay on *The Subjection of Women*? Sneering at him as an infidel! And that was less than thirty years ago. It is needless to ask what they were doing when Shelley, the Atheist, was singing his passionate plea for woman's emancipation.

Preach! Preach! Preach! That is the Christian method, the method of John Storm, the method of Hall Caine. But eighteen centuries of this performance is enough to prove its futility. It is not in this way that woman's relation to humanity will be determined. Mill brought head as well as heart to the discussion of this problem. He knew that the first requisite was justice, and that justice depended on conditions. He did not waste his time in railing at the inevitable evils of wrong conditions. He proposed the substitution of right conditions. And whether he was right or wrong in detail, he was at least on the right road; whereas these gentlemen who come in when the battle is half won, with their "Christ-like" platitudes, are a certain element of confusion and a possible cause of disaster.

If, however, one desires to see the "woman problem" dealt with in fiction, one may turn to George Meredith and Thomas Hardy, in whose works intellect and imagination go hand in hand with knowledge and art. Thomas Hardy does not preach in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, any more than he calls that work "colossal." The same may be said of *Jude the Obscure*. But the lessons are there all the same, only they have to be extracted by the reader for himself, as he must extract the lessons that Shakespeare imparts in the still greater *Macbeth*, *Othello*, or *King Lear*. Nor does George Meredith preach in the magnificent later works which he has devoted to the sexual problem, from *Diana of the Crossways* to *The Amazing Marriage*. Certain characters, with certain ideas, in certain circumstances, move along logically, the mirror being held up to nature all the while. And at the finish the reader has learnt precisely what he is fit to learn, just as if he had gazed upon a great picture, or listened to a great piece of music.

Compared with the work of such masters, that of Mr. Hall Caine is crude and meretricious. But, in spite of the popularity of his books, this fact will not surprise those who know what intellectual, as distinct from emotional, vitality is left in the Christian religion. Minds of the calibre of George Meredith and Thomas Hardy are not to be imposed upon. The victims of Christianity in its hysterical decadence may, however, be easily found among temperaments like that of Mr. Hall Caine; unless, indeed, this gentleman is not carried away as much as is supposed, but is merely exploiting the fashionable religious taste of the hour by the coarsest flattery. G. W. FOOTE.

PROVIDENCE: OLD AND NEW.

It has been truly said that the supposed supernatural of one age becomes the natural of another. This really means that the reliance which was once placed upon a God is now bestowed on science. Such a transfer is a marked indication of increased faith in natural forces, and it is also a striking proof of a corresponding decrease of the influence of theology upon human conduct. Despite the many frantic efforts that are now being made to perpetuate old and to start new delusions, this is, no doubt, a practical, matter-of-fact ago. It is a period of intellectual unrest, a desire to know more and more of the great secrets that have hitherto remained hidden in the womb of nature. People are no longer content, as their predecessors were, to rely upon something of which they know nothing. Hence

as the late Professor Huxley once remarked, "every new discovery in science pushes the supernatural further from us by enlarging the boundary of human knowledge."

The old idea of Providence was that of a Divine superintendence, a manifestation of care by a Supreme Being over the lives and actions of men. Thus, Milton wrote: "The world was all before them, where to chose their place of rest, and Providence their guide." The new idea means that Providence implies prudence, foresight, the dependence upon natural resources for the prevention and remedying of the evils of existence. The former is the theological view, and the latter is the rational. Dr. Watts, we are told, once exclaimed:—

"Diseases are thy servants, Lord;
They come at thy command."

Secularists consider that this notion was a delusion, inasmuch as disease is the parent of pain and misery, and that it comes too often in consequence of neglect of obedience to natural law, or imperfect physical conditions. The "Peculiar People" depend upon their "Divine Providence" to cure disease, and premature death is often the result of their folly. Secularists rely upon the lessons of science to ward off disease and to limit its ravages, and for their secular prudence they are rewarded by a prolongation of life. "No human pursuits make any material progress until science is brought to bear upon them.....Look at the transformation which has gone on around us since the laws of gravitation, electricity, magnetism, and the expansive power of heat have become known to us. It has altered the whole state of existence—one might say, the whole face of the globe. We owe this to science, and to science alone" (Prince Albert's speech, 1855).

Orthodox Christians profess to put their trust in God, having, if they are consistent, confidence in such Bible promises as the following: "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart" (Psalm xxx. 3, 4); "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark xi. 24); "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up" (James v. 14, 15). In "God's Word" it is stated that the prayers of Elisha raised to life a child who had died through certain injuries he had received (2 Kings iv.), and that the supplications of Peter restored the dead Dorcas to life (Acts ix. 36-40). Secularists have no faith in such "idle tales," believing as they do that the prayer of supplication, notwithstanding Christ's statement to the contrary, is a snare and a delusion. Human energy is the lever that ensures all progress, and secures for mankind the means of gratifying their natural needs, and of supplying an anodyne for the pain and woes of life.

The old Providence was an active factor in the doings recorded in the Bible. He led the Jews for forty years in the wilderness (Deuteronomy viii. 2); he secured for his people dry land in the midst of the sea (Exodus x. 19); he guided them "by day in a pillar of cloud," and "by night in a pillar of fire" (Exodus xiii. 21); he made the sun and moon stand still "until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies" (Joshua x. 13); he sent his spirit upon Samson, and "he rent a young lion as he would a kid"; and under the same providential influence this same Samson "went down to Askalon and slew thirty men of them," and took their spoil or apparel (Judges xiv. 6, 19). Under the tender care of the Christian Providence both the Jews and the Egyptians were made to endure the severest trials, and to bear the keenest cruelties during the Jewish captivity. God hardened Pharaoh's heart (Exodus iv. 21; vii. 13), and then inflicted upon him and the people punishments for sin which this Providence was responsible for. The Jews were his special favorites. He was their ruler and guide, and they were a curse to all with whom they came in contact. From the day in which, it is said, Miriam celebrated their safe passage through the Red Sea, to the time when it is alleged that the sun was darkened at the crucifixion, they were disturbers of the public peace and the destroyers of human life. Moses, their providential leader, according to the Bible, carried on the most reckless, cruel, and unjust wars at the bidding of his God, whose immoral conduct was as glaring as his government was delusive.

The theological idea of Providence is as palpable in the New as it is in the Old Testament. Reliance upon the supernatural dominated the whole life of Christ, although, just previous to his death, faith in God's protection seems to have forsaken him. While belief in "Special Providence," based upon the notion of "Divine government," has within the last few years rapidly declined, it was for centuries tenaciously adhered to by the various Christian sects. On October 18, 1853, the Rev. Newman Hall preached an official sermon, in which he said: "With us prayer is not a mere decent, comely ceremony, but the actual presentation of petitions to an omnipotent and gracious Prince, who has promised that, in answer to our requests, he will bestow inestimable blessings upon us, and manifest himself to us as he does not unto the world" (Holoake and Grant Debate, p. 122). Fortunately for the welfare of the race, this delusion is not extensively entertained in this practical and scientific age. Experience has shown us that Bonaparte was right when he said, "Providence is on the side of the largest battalions"; and the advice of Cromwell contained a secular lesson—namely, that if you "trust in God" you should "keep your powder dry."

Secular providence consists in relying upon science and its application; in learning the facts of existence, and applying them to our needs. We agree with Huxley that "the foundations of all natural knowledge were laid when the reason of man first came face to face with the facts of Nature." Let those who attempt to depreciate science ponder over the following words of one of the greatest thinkers of our time: "To ask the question which more immediately concerns our argument—whether science is substantially true?—is much like asking whether the sun gives light. And it is because they are conscious how undeniably valid are most of its propositions that the theological party regard science with so much secret alarm. They know that during the two thousand years of its growth some of its large divisions—mathematics, physics, astronomy—have been subject to the rigorous criticisms of successive generations; and have, notwithstanding, become evermore firmly established. They know that, unlike many of their own doctrines, which were once universally received, but have age by age been more frequently called in question, the doctrines of science, at first confined to a few scattered inquirers, have been slowly growing into general acceptance, and are now in great part admitted as beyond dispute. They know that men of science throughout the world subject each other's results to the most searching examination, and that error is mercilessly exposed and rejected as soon as discovered; and, finally, they know that still more conclusive testimony is to be found in the daily verification of scientific predictions, and in the never-ceasing triumphs of those arts which science guides" (Herbert Spencer, *First Principles*, pp. 15, 16).

CHARLES WATTS.

FASHIONABLE HERESY.

A NOTABLE novel of recent times is Mr. F. Frankfort Moore's *Phyllis of Philistia* (Hutchinson & Co., Paternoster-row). It is not exactly a Freethought novel, though it abounds in Freethought views. Oddly enough, they are allotted for expression to a clergyman of the Established Church. But, by whomsoever presented, they are not only intrinsically very sensible, but are most effectively advanced. No unprejudiced reader could withhold his acquiescence in their pertinency and truth. The impression conveyed is that, if there were more thinkers of the Rev. George Holland's type in church pulpits, the Establishment might hold on a little longer to life. But, alas for the Church, the plain-speaking of that imaginary but typical cleric is, perforce, represented as being too strong for the ecclesiastical taste. Consequently Mr. Holland finds it necessary eventually to relinquish orders, and to establish a Rationalist Church of his own. Obviously, in such cases the manly course is to "come out." To remain, with the vain idea of effecting vital reforms within, involves too many sacrifices of self-respect—too many irksome restraints upon the utterance of truth. The effective lever is to be applied from without.

This Freethinking cleric portrayed by Mr. Moore may certainly claim some amount of sympathy, for he suffers

both in love and war—the latter with his bishop. Phyllis breaks off her engagement with him on account of his heterodox opinions. That, however, is not much of a loss to him. She is but a fashionable miss of vacant mind, with merely what is commonly, though not very gallantly, called “a woman’s reason” for the faith that is in her. And when she has rejected her heretical suitor, she fails to win the approval of her Society friends, who, sad to say, seem to regard heresy as rather an agreeable novelty.

It is not in incidents, however, but in dialogue, that Mr. Frankfort Moore presents aspects of Freethought for which, it may be assumed, he believes the fashionable world is prepared, if not exactly hungering. The dialogue sparkles with humor and irony, mostly of a man-of-the-world stamp. One extremely well-drawn character is Phyllis’s father—a Member of Parliament who is always “asking questions of a questionable House.” His sublime indifference to the Rev. Holland’s heterodoxy, as contrasted with his daughter’s hysterical horror, leads to a most entertaining breakfast chat.

The congregation of S. Chad’s, Battenberg-square, have been thrown into a pleasurable state of excitement by their pastor’s newly-published book entitled *Revised Versions*. Therein Mr. Holland has set forth the true lives of some of Jahveh’s favorites—as Freethought writers have done, time after time, and, in former years, to their cost.

“I think there is good cause to grieve when we find a man like George Holland turning deliberately round from truth to falsehood,” said Phyllis, sternly.

“And, what’s worse, running a very good chance of losing his living,” remarked the father. “Of course, it will have to be proved that Moses and Abraham and David and the rest of them were not what he says they were, and it strikes me that all the Bench of bishops, and a Royal Commission or two thrown in, would have considerable difficulty in doing that now-a-days.”

He admits, however, somewhat sadly, that the clerical biographer might have “left us Ruth, the heroine of the harvest festival. Besides, she was a woman. Heavens above, is there no chivalry remaining among men?” Says Phyllis: “Ah—if it was only chivalry! But—the Bible!” To which replies this cynical, unconcerned heathen: “Quite so—the—yes, to be sure. But don’t you think you may take the Bible too seriously, Phyllis?” In further conversation of a highly diverting kind, Mr. Ayrton expresses his wonder that any man should give up a thing of flesh and blood like Phyllis for the sake of “proving, or trying to prove, that some people who lived five or six thousand years ago—if they ever lived at all—would have rendered themselves liable to imprisonment without the option of a fine if they lived in England since the passing of certain laws—recent laws, too, we must remember. A man who can’t see that crime is usually a question of temperament, and sin invariably a question of geography—well, we’ll say no more about it.”

The book—“strikingly modern in design and in tone,” though so very reminiscent—which gives Phyllis bitter heart-burnings is described in detail, and a shocking catalogue of Hebrew infamies it is. “It purported,” we are told, “to deal with several personages and numerous episodes of the Old Testament, not from the standpoint of the comparative philologist, not from the standpoint of the comparative mythologist, but from the standpoint of the modern man of common sense and average power of discrimination.” The rev. author “dealt with the patriarchs in succession, and they fared badly at his hands. He showed that Abraham had not one good act recorded to his credit, and contrasted his duplicity with the magnanimity of the ruler of Egypt whom he visited.” And so on with other of Jahveh’s favored friends, including David, who is described as a “loathsome, senile sensualist.”

Of course, upon the publication of this book, the bishop of the diocese—who “knew something of men, and knew something of the Church; he even knew something of the Bible”—is asked to take immediate action. But that particular prelate is a man who had never been known to err on the side of rapidity. Nearly a week passed before he made a move in the matter, and then the move he made was in the direction of the Engadine. He crossed the Channel with the book under his arm. A later chapter, which describes the long-deferred interview between the bishop and the offending clergyman, may be regarded as a triumph in the way of smart dialogue and knowledge of the devious ways of ecclesiasticism behind the scenes. The

bishop admits at the commencement that the book reflects in no inconsiderable measure what he had himself long thought. There are some complaints, he says, in the human system—nervous complaints—that require to be startled out of the system. “But the Church is not neurotic. You cannot apply the surprise method to her system with any chance of success.” And the bishop suggests caution. His subordinate’s views are quite right, but it is inadvisable to proclaim them. In fact, if he remains in the Church, it is his duty to preach exactly their opposite. And he may do so without let or hindrance, it apparently being no concern of the Church to inquire whether any of its ministers are hypocrites.

The rector’s defence of himself to Phyllis might be an article from the *Freethinker*, so drastic is its treatment of the Church’s idolatry of the Bible, and her impotent opposition to scientific research. “The intolerant attitude of the Church, still maintained in these days when the spirit of science pervades every form of thought, has been productive of probably the largest body that ever existed in this country of sensible men and women who never enter a church door. They want to know whatsoever things are true; they do not want to be dredged with the mummy dust of dogma.” There is a long summary, too, of Mr. Holland’s sermon to his parishioners in justification of his heterodox principles—which summary shows, as indeed do many other parts of the book, that Mr. Frankfort Moore is an original thinker, besides being exceedingly well versed in the points of Freethought attack. Some of the congregation were disappointed. “Why could Mr. Holland not have followed up the course indicated in his book, by showing up some of the other persons in the Bible? it was asked. There were quite a number of characters in the Bible who were regarded as estimable. Why could he not, then, have followed up his original scheme of ‘showing them up’?—that was the phrase of the critics. There was Solomon, for instance. He was usually regarded as a person of high intellectual gifts, but he was susceptible of piquant treatment. And then someone said that Noah should have had a chapter all to himself, also Lot; and what about the spies who had entered Jericho? Could the imagination not suggest the story which they told to their wives on their return to the camp, relative to the house in which they had passed all their spare time? They supposed that Jericho was the Paris of high-class Jews of those days.”

It is, however, impossible to mention here a tithe of the witty and true sayings and common-sense reasonings on matters theological which appear throughout the book. Of genuine humor there is an abundance. Take, for example, the following guileless chatter of a fashionable beauty, lured out of her depth into religious controversy. “I’m no judge,” said Ella to Phyllis, “of what is horrible in theology or metaphysics, or whatever it is. But I do profess to know when a man has made a hit, whether in theology or anything else. Who cares, now-a-days, for what is dully orthodox? Whoever heard of a hero in orthodoxy, now-a-days? A man was telling me about one Colenso; he was, so far as I could gather, a first-class man at algebra and heresy, and things like that. He was Bishop of Zanzibar or Uganda, or some place, and he wrote a book about Moses showing that Moses couldn’t have written something or other. Well, he took a lot of prosecuting—five or six years, I believe—and he didn’t go nearly so far as Mr. Holland does in that book of his. All this time people talked about little else but Colenso, and his books made him a fortune. Yes, I think I’ll try some more of that lovely cake; it’s like warm ice, isn’t it? No, I’ll never believe that you will turn Mr. Holland adrift because he wrote something disparaging about Solomon—or was it David?”

To add to his iniquities, Mr. Holland contributes to the *Zeit Geist* an article, of which a summary is given. One passage is as follows: “And yet with such a record against it—a record of the murder of innocent men and women who endeavored to promulgate the divine truths of nature—the Church still arrogated to itself the right to lay down a rule of life for intelligent people—a rule of life founded upon the impossible amalgamation of Judaism and Christianity. The science of the Church was not equal to the task of amalgamating two such deadly opponents. Was it any wonder, then, that church-going had become practically obsolete among intelligent men and women? the writer asked. But what he most fully dealt with was

the indiscriminate selection of what were very properly termed the 'Lessons' from the Hebrew Bible. It was, he said, far from edifying to hear some chapters read out from the lectern without comment, though, fortunately, the readers were, as a rule, so imperfectly trained that the most objectionable passages had their potentiality of mischief minimized. He concluded his indictment by a reference to the sermon preached by the average clergyman of the Church of England. This was usually, he said, either a theological essay founded upon an obsolete system of theology, or a series of platitudes on morality delivered by an unpractical man. The first was an insult to the intelligence of an average man; the second was an insult to the intelligence of an average school-girl."

There is, too, an admirable portraiture of the Church in the present day as it appeared to this heterodox cleric: "The Church had surely become, he said, like unto the giant pagan in *Pilgrim's Progress*, who, when incapable of doing mischief, sat mumbling at the mouth of his cave on the roadside. The Church had become toothless—decrepit—either for evil or for good. Its mouthings of the past had become its mumbblings of the present. The cave, at the mouth of which this toothless giant sat, was very dark, and intelligent people went by with a good-natured and tolerant laugh."

Apart from its controversial matter, Mr. Frankfort Moore's book is a novel of fascinating interest, sparkling epigram, and quaint observation. To turn to its bright and entertaining pages—after a surfeit of religious fictional trash—is indeed a pleasure, for which Mr. Moore is to be heartily thanked.

FRANCIS NEALE.

ACID DROPS.

THE Catholic Church is always shrewd enough to stoop to conquer. Wishing to retain its hold upon France, and to continue enjoying the two millions or so a year which it receives from the Government, it now affects a certain regard for the Republic. President Faure's return from his successful visit to Russia, where he has secured the blessed word "alliance," has been celebrated in Paris, and the Church has associated herself with the popular rejoicing by singing a Te Deum in the Church of the Sacred Heart. As most Frenchmen look upon the Russian alliance as a means of recovering Alsace and Lorraine, possibly through a bloody war, it will be seen that the Church is not over-scrupulous in its proceedings.

Abbé Gayraud has been elected again by a large majority in the Third District of Brest. His previous election was invalidated on the ground of undue clerical influence. He is described as a Christian Socialist Republican. A very pretty mixture!

Admiral Field, besides being a member of Parliament, is also a Justice of the Peace at Gosport. In that capacity he had to assist in trying a Sunday League excursionist who got into the water somehow, and was charged with attempting to commit suicide. The prisoner was discharged, but Admiral Field, as though he were on the quarter-deck, proceeded to denounce the Sunday League, which he said was "for Sabbath-breaking." He said that people ought to go to church or chapel instead of taking excursions on Sunday. Well, perhaps they would if Admiral Field would only get up and preach. He would be sure of a good congregation. It would beat a pantomime.

The Rev. S. W. Thackeray, on behalf of the Curates' Union, sent a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury protesting against the appointment to St. Mary's Vicarage, Kennington, of the Rev. John Darlington, who is a curate of but three years' standing, passing over the claims of curates of long service and faithful work. His grace, in reply, says he is sorry there are so many clergymen unemployed, and thinks "the proper remedy for the trouble is to be found in the encouragement of a pension fund for clergy after a certain age. And," he concludes, "I advise your society to look in that direction." That is, the head of the Church, instead of promising the curates justice, recommends them to beg for charity. It is announced that the Rev. Mr. Darlington, who has dropped into the good billet, is engaged to marry the daughter of the Dean of Canterbury.

A former curate of Kennington asks in the *Times* of August 30: "Is the real explanation that Dean Farrar has practically appointed his future son-in-law? If so, why not make Kennington a family living, with a presentation vested in Dr. Farrar? Through his influence his son-in-law,

the Bishop of Tasmania, was formerly appointed vicar; he was succeeded by Mr. Bowman, a former curate of St. Margaret's, Westminster; and now the Archbishop arranges that Mr. Darlington shall make the third of these Farrar-esque appointments."

E. P. Scymgour also writes to the *Times* on this shameless perversion of patronage. He asks what people will think of this passing over of men who have served from ten to thirty years, for the favor of one who has only been three years in the Church. "What a comment on the clergy from the lips of their head!"

Even the *Church Times* says the Archbishop's answer to the Curates' Union is unsatisfactory, "and drags a red herring across the trail, in the hope that the pursuers may be thrown off the scent."

Intense excitement has been stirred among the negroes of South Carolina by the constant ringing of a bell at a new chapel for colored people at Mountville, accompanied with the declaration that the Devil is dead. The exhorters declared that Old Nick has been tried by the Almighty and a jury of twelve angels, and has been consigned to the negroes of Mountville to be interred for all eternity. A throng of negroes shout, yell, shriek, and dance in an ecstasy of religious excitement until exhausted and unconscious.

The occasion should be one for singing Béranger's *Mort du Diable*; or, as we have them handy, Denton's *Radical Rhymes* may serve:—

Sigh, priests; cry aloud! hang your pulpits with black,
Let sorrow bow down every head;
The good friend who bore all your sins on his back,
Your best friend, the Devil, is dead.

Your church is a corpse—you are guarding its tomb;
The soul of your system has fled;
The death-knell is tolling your terrible doom—
It tolls us the Devil is dead.

You're bid to the funeral, ministers all,
We've dug the old gentleman's bod;
Your black coats will make a most excellent pall
To cover your friend who is dead.

Camp-meetings henceforth will be needed no more;
Revivals are knocked on the head;
The orthodox vessel lies stranded on shore—
Their captain, the Devil, is dead.

After one of Sam Jones's characteristic revival sermons, an old negro woman rushed up, and, grasping him by the hand, exclaimed with emotion: "I likes to hear you preach, Brudder Jones. You're a white man, but yo' preaches mo' like a negro than I ebber hear. You have got a white skin, Brudder Jones, but, t'ank de Lawd, you'se got a black heart."

Here is a verse of a genuine "Negro Hymn of the Judgment Day," the full hymn being given in the *Journal of American Folk-lore*, September, 1896:—

Done yo' see de King a-comin' in de clouds?
See de nail-prints in his han's how they shine!
O dat mornin' yo'll hyar a mighty roarin',
Dat'll be de earth a-burnin',
When de heabens fly away.

A new American magazine is called *Monumental Records*. It is edited by the Rev. H. Baum, and its first number gives a translation of both the Moabite Stone and the Siloam inscription. It is not mentioned that the Moabite Stone expressly contradicts Scripture in making Mesha, King of Moab, overcome Jahveh, and indirectly refutes the statement in Joshua xii. 6, 7, xiii. 8-25, and 1 Chronicles v. 11, that the Hebrews conquered that territory several hundred years previously. As to the Siloam inscription, it in no way helps the old book, and a writer in a recent number of *The Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* has conclusively shown that, instead of belonging to the time of Hezekiah, it must be placed in that of Herod.

The Pope is said to have permitted priests to use the bicycle; but in the orthodox Greek Church it has been pronounced an unseemly practice for clergymen, and it has therefore been forbidden.

American sky-pilots complain that their churches are empty by reason of the congregation having gone "biking." They have, therefore, formed a league, the members of which sign the following pledge: "Remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy. Sunday wheeling has become a popular mania, and is now one of the most subtle foes of the Lord's Day. Desiring to throw all my influence against its desecration, I pledge myself that I will not ride my bicycle for pleasure on Sunday, and, further, that I will not use my wheel for any purpose on that day if my reasons for

doing so are likely to be misunderstood by others." It is not stated what percentage of wheelers have joined the league.

The *Church Times* urges the London clergy to prepare for the coming School Board elections. "What is wanted," it says, "is a compact body of members on the Board—whether Moderates or Progressives—who, on the religious question alone, will speak and vote as Churchmen." It hopes for "the formal adoption by the Board of the Apostles' Creed." Teach the children the nonsense in this forgery, and the parson may hold his own for a long time to come.

What a pretty state of things obtains in many of the "People's Schools" under the control of the clergy! The rector of Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire, advertised for a certificated master and mistress, the salary of both together being £100 a year, with a "nice house and garden, rent and rates free." In reply to an applicant the man of God stated the necessary qualifications for the post. The applicant and his sisters were (of course) confirmed and regular communicants, and would be expected to lead the way in opposition to the spirit of dissent, which was rather too prevalent in the parish. They would all have to attend Sunday services and train the choir. The applicant himself would have to superintend the Sunday-school, morning and afternoon, and teach a class of boys. One of his sisters would also have to teach every Sunday afternoon. In short, the schoolmaster was expected to carry on the day school, and to devote all the rest of his time to acting as factotum to the clergyman. And this is the sort of thing which the Tory government is fostering deliberately by paying another £600,000 per annum to these *soi-disant* Voluntary Schools.

Father Bernard Vaughan calls Board School Christianity "the thin end of nothing whittled down." If he could only introduce the thin end of Romanism, he would soon ram in confession, indulgences, and the absolute power of the priest.

The French Canadian paper, *L'Electeur*, supported the return of the Liberal Catholic premier, Sir Wilfrid Laurier. It was, in consequence, excommunicated by the priests. One M. Fafard, an educated man of good social standing, refused, though a Catholic, to give up *L'Electeur*. Shortly afterwards he was run over by a railway train, through the neglect of the company controlling the line. Thereupon two anti-Liberal curés preached sermons, in which M. Fafard's death was cited as a terrible consequence of his obstinate persistence in taking *L'Electeur*. His family, who are good Catholics—one of them himself a curé—appealed in indignation to the ecclesiastical superiors of the two priests. In one case they were successful, and the offender, Father Barolet, had to make a complete retraction from the pulpit, and pay the injured family 400 dollars. In the other case the appeal was not attended to, so an action at law was brought. Priests rarely stick at slandering the dead, or anything else, in the interests of the Church.

On high authority, the announcement is made that Dr. Joseph Parker, of the City Temple in London, "takes a cold bath before he enters his pulpit." There are reasons for believing the statement to be correct. Dr. Parker's sermons often give people the shivers.—*Leeds Daily News*.

Five demented, religion-crazed women were lodged in jail at Omaha, August 10, to serve out a sentence in default of payment of fines for disorderly conduct. They are said to be reputable residents of Gretna, Neb., and showed no symptoms of demoralization until they became converted to religion. They entered a Methodist meeting, dancing about the church, screaming at the top of their voices, denouncing the preacher and his congregation as "lost," and charging all of them with being possessed with the devil. In court they danced about the justice and shouted: "God told us to do it. We are his servants. Hallelujah!" They told the justice that he was the devil, and went shrieking to jail. They will probably live to be ashamed of themselves if they recover their reason, but meanwhile the same fanaticism will be wrecking intellects in other quarters. If a decent God governed this world, how quickly he would stop the mouths of the clerical impostors who profess to speak in his name.—*Truthseeker*.

An extraordinary incident was witnessed at a certain church in a remote part of Anglesey on a recent Sunday. While the service was in progress a large number of ducks entered the church and paraded the aisle, uttering loud and continuous quacks, which caused several of the congregation to burst into laughter.

It seems that the Goose Fair at Nottingham is not to be dispensed with, as desired, on account of the meeting of the Church Congress. It remains to be seen which of the rival assemblies will be the more productive.

Borderland gives a portrait of the spirit Katie King—or is it the medium, Florrie Cook, who so egregiously duped Sir William Crookes? No wonder "Aretas," the chief writer of the *Theosophical News*, of Boston, says: "Periodicals like *Borderland* make me blush to think that human beings are capable of such folly."

Mrs. Longley, the medium, to the question, Where is the spirit located in the human organism? replied: "In every part and atom of the organic structure." If this be so, the old witches were not so far out when they thought they could influence the lives of people by getting hold of pieces of their hair or cuttings of their nails.

Under the new United States tariff law, sacramental wafers as well as Bibles may be imported duty free. This rouses the patriotism of F. H. Shrock, who writes thus to the *Truthseeker*: "Here in America we pay god-makers princely wages, and the factories are thus forced to compete with the pauper-made gods of Rome. Another glaring inconsistency in this villainous law is that the blood of Christ is taxed to prohibition, altar-cloths pay a heavy tax, while pancake-gods come in free. I want to know how our infant industry of god-making is going to flourish under such a law. The home market for gods is already at the lowest ebb, and our export trade is limited to Hindoo and Chinese gods made in Connecticut. Unless McKinley knows no other god but 'Protection,' he will call an extra session of Congress to expunge this insult to our domestic God. Let American labor be protected."

"A Sufferer," who is also a bookbinder, writes to the *Chronicle* anent the Jubilee Bible, which was sold at 2s. under cost. He says he was asked for a price for binding, which of course was too high, and adds that, if subscribers to the Bible Society only realized the harm it does, he is sure they would insist on its being stopped. The publisher, to meet the competition thus created, sweats the binder, who, in turn, is compelled to sweat, as far as possible, his employees. The men have a strong trade society to protect them, but the woman's trade society is not strong, and it is they who suffer.

While London is again patronizing the wall-poster piety of the *Sign of the Cross*, Berlin has prohibited Herr Sudermann's drama *Johannes*, on the ground that it would offend the susceptibilities of pious people by its introduction of John the Baptist before the footlights.

A story is told of Parson Whistler, of All Saints, Hastings, that, once going into the belfry, he found a whitewasher whistling a dance tune while at his work. "Is that a proper tune for a place of worship?" shouted old Whistler, and the young chap was took aback, and sort of shamefaced. "Beg your pardon, sir," he said, "but I forgot where I was"; and then, to show he was sorry, he started whistling the "Old Hundredth." Now, you see, being a member of the band, his hand kept time with the music, and so the "Old Hundredth" made the whitewash brush go wonderful slow. "Oh, get back to your dance tune," the old parson shouted, "or the job'll never be done."

The Rev. Douglas Randolph, curate of Sudbourne and Orford, shot himself through the heart in a wood, and the evidence showed that he had been ill and depressed for some time owing to financial difficulties. The jury returned a verdict of "Suicide while temporarily insane."

The Rev. A. R. W. Seton, formerly incumbent of Elsted, Petersfield, Hants, has had a varied financial experience, which he detailed in the Bankruptcy Court. He bought his living for £2,800, and, after enjoying it and its £250 a year for eight years, sold it for £4,000. He, however, had to pay for dilapidations to the tune of £1,200, which left him what he had originally paid. This encouraged speculations on the Stock Exchange, which resulted in disaster, and liabilities returned at £4,506 against assets £1,440.

In a sermon by Canon Gore, reported in the *Phonetic Journal*, he says: "Jerusalem was destroyed because she rejected Christ. That is an historical fact." Canon Gore knows he has no historical fact to bear him out, so he adds: "I mean the temper which caused her final destruction was simply the same as the temper which caused her to reject Christ." This sudden shifting from one statement to a totally different one is characteristic of the school to which the Canon belongs.

Canon Gore goes on to say: "Brethren, I believe this in particular is our intellectual vocation and duty to-day, to realize that natural laws are God's methods, and that it is not the less, but rather the more, his working because he works by ordinary sequences, and by what we call natural causes in the government of men as of the world." Our intellectual vocation yesterday was to swallow all the miracles the parsons used to tell us; but things have altered

to-day. Providence, he says the cynic remarks, "is to be observed generally on the side of the strongest battalions." "Perfectly true" is the Canon's comment. Canon Gore is a big gun, but he does not see that the cynic, who, by the way, was Napoleon, meant that Providence had nothing to do with human affairs at all.

The Zionist Congress at Basle, which is discussing the resettlement of the Jews in Palestine, has addressed a telegram to the Sultan thanking him for the good treatment accorded to the Jews in Turkey. From all we have read, however, it appears that the Jews in the Turkish empire play the part of jackal to the Mohammedan lion, and batten on the spoils of murdered or persecuted Christians. A plague on all their houses, say we. Every religion is a curse in its own way.

"Providence" has afflicted poor Japan with another earthquake and tidal wave. Hundreds of buildings were wrecked on various parts of the coast, and a great many persons killed or fatally injured. Hofuka colliery was flooded by the wave, and a hundred colliers were drowned like rats. "His tender mercies are over all his works."

Providence is afflicting many parts of Ireland with the potato-blight, and in West Cork the greater portion of the grain crop is also lost. This, with dear bread, means a hard winter for Ireland.

One hundred and thirty-five lives have been lost in Northern Bohemia through floods, many women and children being among them. In Hungary the incessant rain has so softened the dykes that the workmen who are strengthening them are in constant danger.

Sir James Clerk-Rattray was shot between the shoulders during the Indian Mutiny. His condition was so bad that he was told he had probably only an hour to live. He was also asked what he would like. Of course he ought to have asked for a Bible, but he didn't. He asked for a big cigar. And the cigar seems to have pulled him through. Anyhow, he didn't die; in fact, he is still living, and has recently been knighted.

Louis Becke, in the *Westminster Gazette*, gives an interesting account of Niue, an island in the South Pacific. This is the native name of the place, but Cook called it Savage Island on account of the ferocity of its inhabitants, and by this designation it is still known among mariners. The natives are "a grasping, avaricious race, and in their outward lives display much hard-shell piety." They were long ago converted to Christianity, and Louis Becke speaks highly of the resident missionary, the Rev. Frank Lawes, who is generally respected and beloved. It appears that he has to restrain the bigotry of his flock on some occasions. During the time that Louis Becke was staying on the island the native Parliament passed a law that no white man must have a fire lit for cooking purposes on the Sabbath day. This was a terrible prospect for the half-dozen white traders there, and Mr. Lawes had to remonstrate with them. They only yielded after a stubborn resistance. The fact was, we take it, that the unsophisticated islanders thought keeping the Sabbath meant keeping the Sabbath. They did not understand the refined interpretations of the more subtle civilises of Europe, who make all sorts of accommodations with heaven.

The Rev. E. Husband, vicar of St. Michael's, Folkestone, takes his text from 2 Timothy iv. 14, "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil," and announces in a placard that during the Folkestone season coppers must not be placed in the plate, but omits to say whether he prefers buttons or lozenges as a substitute. Probably he does not want to preach the gospel to the poor during the season. Their coppers may be welcome in the winter.

In Georgia, the other Sunday, the services in a church were adjourned for ten minutes to allow the congregation to lynch a nigger. After the execution the crowd returned to church and resumed its devotions.

It has transpired that the fire at the Grand Hotel at Baden-by-Zurich was the outcome of religious mania. A servant-maid was responsible for it. She declared that the Almighty commanded her to do what she did. The unhappy creature, after the fire broke out, attempted to throw herself into the river.

While the bells were being chimed for service at the parish church of St. Mary, Dover, on Monday evening, one of the clappers of the bells broke and fell on the head of a lad named Wilson, severely injuring him. He was removed to hospital, suffering from concussion of the brain.

Another attempt to sell the goods of Morecambe Nonconformists for not paying the Vicar of Lancaster's tithes was

made at Lancaster. Considerable excitement prevailed but, with the exception of one lot, the sale was boycotted, the bailiff who acted as auctioneer being subjected to continual jeering and hooting by the crowd.

Mr. Hilliary, the West Ham coroner, in the case of a member of the "Peculiar People" at Silvertown who allowed his child, aged nine weeks, to die without medical attendance, pointed out that, whatever the tenets of a religious body, neglect on their part to call in medical aid for their children might, according to the law, amount to manslaughter. The jury found that "the parents did not neglect the deceased by not calling in medical aid, or that the death was accelerated by their not doing so; but, in our opinion, they are deserving of severe censure." The coroner remarked: "That is not a very consistent verdict, gentlemen." Perhaps the jury felt that St. James was really responsible, since he gives the instructions on the treatment of the sick which the Peculiar People follow.

Dr. H. R. Oswald, the deputy coroner for Central London, also had to point out that in England the law of man takes precedence of the alleged law of God. A Mr. Cohen excused himself from acting on the jury on the ground that he was a descendant of the High Priest Aaron, and was forbidden by the Pentateuch to enter the presence of the dead. The coroner said there was another law, called the law of England, which he thought was superior to the Jewish law. The officer would therefore have to summon Mr. Cohen to attend at the next inquest, so that he could explain the matter.

The German police regulations for the outward sanctification of Sunday require that all articles offered for sale, if not removed from their customary places, shall be covered during the church hour. Their Sabbatarianism is nearly as rich as that of Ruskin's mother, who used to insist on his pictures having their faces turned to the wall on Sundays.

Thomas Osborne, a Strand beggar, waits on the attendants at Exeter Hall, and tells them: "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver. Those who give to the poor lend to the Lord. The birds of the air have nests, and foxes have holes, but, like the Son of Man, I have nowhere to lay my head." The mendicity officer, instead of acting on the precepts of Jesus, "to give to him that asketh," has the pious Thomas run in to Bow-street.

Frank M. Browne, an artist residing at Cold Norton, has been arrested and brought before the magistrates at Maldon. He is accused of sending "indecent and obscene" postcards through the post, and is committed for trial. We understand that the postcards contain quotations from the Bible. Mr. Browne seems to be a man of a somewhat erratic and excitable temperament, and his action is not at all wise; indeed, it is worse than foolish if it be true that one of these postcards was sent to the vicar's daughter. On the other hand, Mr. Browne pleads that he has been exasperated by petty persecution, in consequence of his refusal to have his children dosed with religious teaching. On the whole, it seems advisable to make further inquiries on the spot, and Mr. Forder, the N. S. S. honorary secretary, is running down, with the President's sanction, on a visit of investigation.

Many people wonder where all the gold that has been discovered goes to. The Church certainly uses up a good quantity in ornaments. It is stated that the gold contained in the medals, vessels, chains, and other objects preserved in the Vatican would make more gold coin than the whole of the present European circulation. No wonder there is a cry for bimetalism.

Dr. Conan Doyle is reported to have told a humorous story at a recent dinner in London. A friend of his contended that every house, even the most respectable, had a skeleton in the cupboard; and he determined to put this opinion to the test, selecting for the subject of the experiment an irreproachable archdeacon of the Church of England. A telegram was dispatched to the reverend gentleman: "All is discovered. Fly at once." And the venerable archdeacon disappeared, and has never been heard of since.

A MISTAKE.—The Brighton Electrical Railway does not run on Sundays, so the station at the Aquarium end, it is said, is appropriated by psalm-singers, who decorate it with banners, on which texts more or less suitable for the occasion are inscribed. A correspondent says he read on one occasion: "'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found.' Electric cars every five minutes."—*Electrical Review*.

One blade of grass, rightly understood, destroys the orthodox creed.—*Ingersoll*.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, September 5, Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints', Manchester; at 11, "Who was Moses? A Reply to the King of Siam's Question"; at 3, "Is Christ Possible?"; at 6.30, "God and the Devil."

September 26, Birmingham.

October 10, Glasgow.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—September 5 and 12, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London; 15 and 16, debate at Athenæum Hall, London; 19, Plymouth; 21, 22, 23, 24, debate at Plymouth. 26, Athenæum Hall. October 3, Sheffield; 10, Birmingham; 24, Halifax Sunday Society; 31, Stanley, Durham. November 2, 3, 4, and 5, debate at Stanley; 7, Glasgow. December 5, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

J. G. DOBSON.—Thanks. It was a clerical blunder, but your remittance pleasantly rectifies it.

J. M. GIMSON (Leices'er) writes:—"I enclose cheque for £2 2s. as a donation towards the Spanish Exiles Fund. I suppose I am as far from being an Anarchist or a Socialist as any one living, but such tortures as these poor people have been subjected to put the matter outside the question of opinions and make it one of simple humanity. And we do not know that they are worse than the bulk of other peop'le, after all."

DAVID HUGHES (Swansea), promising a subscription towards the Treasurer's Scheme, says:—"If I can double it, I certainly will. I hope the needful amount will be subscribed towards this excellent fund."

E. H.—You are misled. The wish was father to the thought. Did you ever hear of the tremendous fish caught in an American lake? It was so big that when it was landed the lake fell six feet. Every now and then a man leaves a Society imagining himself to be as great as that fish; and occasionally he spends most of his spare time in telling strangers of the prodigious subsidence caused by his departure.

G. J. HOLYOAKE.—Thanks. T. C.'s tract shall appear.

E. C.—Mr. Wheeler's articles on Tacitus and Pliny appeared in the *Freethinker* for January 31 and February 28 this year.

CHILERIC points out that, in his letter on page 557, it should read חַרְוֵךְ, not חַרְוֵךְ. Thanks for extract.

SAINT CHARLES.—Your verse is not without merit, but it is hardly up to our mark for publication. No doubt you will do much better in time by continued practice.

J. KEAST.—(1) Our position is clear enough, as you perceive. Sympathy for the victims of brutal tyranny is possible without the least agreement with particular forms of political opinion. (2) We do not think Mr. Grimstead's opinion of the late Charles Bradlaugh is of any importance. Mr. Bradlaugh did know Hebrew, as a matter of fact; but even if he did not, it would not have incapacitated him from criticising the Bible. How many clergymen know Hebrew?

J. W. WHITEHEAD.—Whoever assures you that Charles Bradlaugh, speaking at Cogers' Hall in 1870, denied that he was or ever had been an Atheist, must have a fertile imagination. He should write stories for Christian magazines. The statement is inherently absurd. The person you refer to might just as well allege that Mr. Gladstone once denied that he was or ever had been a Liberal.

T. MARTIN (Pontypridd).—Thanks for the reports of the debate at Porth. Mr. Foote hopes to visit you shortly and make Mr. Cox's acquaintance. Please present him our congratulations.

J. H.—Subscription acknowledged elsewhere. Thanks for cuttings.

G. J. SAUNDERS.—We have not received a marked copy of the *Age of Reason*. We never heard of the existence of such a paper. If it contains a "vile attack" on Messrs. Foote and Cohen, we cannot reply until we see it. Even then it may be beneath our contempt. We utterly dissent from the view that public men are bound to answer every vilifier. When would they find time for their work?

J. LEWIS.—We are unable to give you any authority for the statement that there are from six to seven million sceptics in this country. If there are, most of them lie very low.

A. DEIST.—We expect you will be considered orthodox soon.

A. G. W.—Thanks. The *Citizen* is always welcome.

J. PARTRIDGE.—The Birmingham Branch is acting generously. We wish all Branches were animated by the same spirit.

H. LEES SUMNER, subscribing to the Spanish Exiles Fund, says: "I hate bomb-throwing, and I hate cruelty to man and beast." This correspondent was sorry to see such meagre reports of the Trafalgar-square meeting in papers like *Reynolds's*, and no mention of it at all in the *Clarion*. The fact is, a good many "advanced" people were a bit frightened. It was amusing to see the large number of letters of sympathy from those who couldn't come. It reminded us of the New Testament passage about certain invited persons: one had bought oxen, one had married a wife, and another had to attend a funeral.

ALERT.—Thanks for cuttings.

G. BRADY.—Thanks for your good wishes and generous support of the movement.

SYDNEY A. GIMSON (Leicester), sending a cheque for the Spanish Exiles Fund, says: "I have no sympathy with the bomb-throwing fraternity, but I send this relying on your assurance in the *Freethinker* that the men are not violent fanatics, but heretics to Spanish governmental ideas of religion and politics." That's it precisely. It couldn't be put better.

C. HEALD, who sends a subscription to the Treasurer's Scheme, states that twenty years ago he was a Methodist lay preacher, and in trying to convert an Atheist he got converted himself, and has been a Freethinker ever since.

C. DAVIES vouches for the truth of the following story:—When the Darwin Memorial was first proposed at Shrewsbury a thunder-storm damaged the roof of the church, and the parson in his next sermon said it was a visitation from God for contemplating a memorial to such a wicked man as Darwin.

P. D.—You will probably have to pick up a copy of George Eliot's translation of Strauss's *Life of Jesus* as you can—perhaps second-hand. This translation is the best. The published price of the one-volume edition was 15s.

F. J. BOORMAN.—Your letter, etc., shall be laid before the Executive. We fear that the London press, which gave publicity to Sir Charles Warren's order, and to the falsehood behind it, is very unlikely to publish your correction. Any stick is good enough to beat Freethinkers with.

J. C. JORDAN.—Thanks for the cutting. We have no room to notice it this week, but will do so in our next issue.

E. S. ROBERTS.—Let the old sky-pilot go. e shouldn't think the worse of him even if he played a good game of billiards and was a judge of a good smoke.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—G. Brady, 10s.

SPANISH EXILES FUND.—We have received:—J. M. Gimson, £2 2s.; J. H., 1s.; Birmingham Branch, £1 1s.; H. Lees Sumner, 2s. 6d.; Sydney A. Gimson, £2 2s.; C. H. Gask, 2s. 6d. *Per R. Forder*:—A. J. Marriott, 2s. 6d.; A. Lewes, 2s. 6d.

E. M. VANCE, N. S. S. secretary, acknowledges the following subscriptions to the Spanish Exiles Fund:—H. J. Stace, 2s. 6d.; W. H. Harrap, 2s. 6d.; W. Leat, 2s.; E. L., 10s.; collection at Mr. Foote's lecture (August 22), 14s.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Torch of Reason—Islamic World—Crescent—Animals' Friend—Liberty—De Dageraad—English Mechanic—Echo—Isle of Man Times—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Blackburn Times—Blue Grass Blade—Boston Investigator—Two Worlds—Liberator—Ourselves—Theosophy—Birmingham Argus—New York Public Opinion—Progressive Thinker—Chester Chronicle—Humanity—Christian Commonwealth.

THE National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 23 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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, 6s. 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.

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.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE lectures at Manchester to-day (Sept. 5), re-opening the Secular Hall, which has been closed for repairs and decoration. The subjects should attract the general public, and no doubt there will be a good gathering of the local "saints" on this occasion.

"God's Prison" was the subject of Mr. Foote's lecture at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, Mr. Marriott occupying the chair. There was another fine audience, and the lecture was much applauded. This evening (Sept. 5) the Athenæum Hall platform is occupied by Mr. Charles Watts, who takes for his subject "The Triumph of Reason." We hope he will have a good audience and a hearty reception.

The National Secular Society's Executive, at its last meeting, appointed a sub-committee to look after the Treasurer's Scheme. This committee was to report at the next Executive meeting (September 2), particularly with regard to the employment of a financial and organizing Secretary, who would have as a part of his duty to call upon sympathizers throughout the country, with a view to obtaining their subscriptions towards the Scheme. No doubt we shall be in a position to announce something definite in our next issue. Meanwhile we prefer to let another week slide before

amplifying and emphasizing our appeal to the Secular party.

A fresh list of promises reaches us from Mr. Swain on behalf of the Derby Branch:—J. Martin, 5s.; E. Barker, 5s.; O. Ford, 5s.; G. Heritage, 5s.; R. Wellings, 2s. 6d.; G. Lander, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Lander, 2s. 6d.

Further separate promises have reached us as follows:—C. Heald (paid), 5s.; C. Davies, 5s.; G. Brady, £6 (10s. monthly).

The following promises have been sent to Miss Vance, secretary, at the N. S. S. Office, 376-7 Strand London, W.C.:—H. Smith (paid), 10s.; W. Ingram (paid), 10s.; C. Mascall (paid), 10s.—all three from Stanningly; W. Stewart, 5s.; J. F. Hampson, £1; Mrs. J. F. Hampson, £1.

The Spanish Exiles Fund will not be continued after next week. All subscriptions received will be acknowledged in our next issue, and the whole amount, with the two guineas voted by the Executive, will be paid over to the Atrocities Committee by Mr. Hartmann (treasurer) on behalf of the N. S. S.

Local papers report the public debate at Porth, South Wales, between the Rev. R. Mon Evans and ex-Rev. J. W. Cox, on, "Is the God of Creation the God of the Bible?" the chair being occupied by the Rev. W. Hindes. The hall was crowded on the first evening, and there was a good attendance on the second, when the subject discussed was, "Has Christianity Benefited the World?" Mr. Cox appears to have had a good hearing during a portion of the debate, but at one point his voice was drowned by hisses. The *Glamorgan Times* honorably complains of this treatment. "Although Mr. Cox's ideas did not fit in with those of the audience," it says, "the people at least might have shown him some civility. If they did not wish to hear his views, why did they trouble themselves to attend the meeting?"

Mr. C. Cohen was married on Tuesday. We wish him and his wife a long lifetime of happiness and usefulness together. Our esteemed young colleague has been through the philosophical stage. When he gets a pair of soft little arms round his neck, with a pair of half-moulded little lips near, trying to say "Dada," he will pass into another stage which will give new life and color to his lectures.

Dr. Bruno Wille, the Freethinker of Berlin, who has more than once come into collision with the authorities, was arrested at Graz for delivering a lecture on "Religion and Joy." Subscriptions for his support in prison are asked for by the German *Freidenker Bund*, and may be sent to the treasurer, J. Hoch, 23, 1 Markt-strasse, Wiesbaden.

The *English Mechanic and World of Science* is now in its sixty-sixth volume. The fact speaks definitely to the purpose it has fulfilled, and its pages are certainly as interesting and as useful as ever. The reports of the British Association are well worth the price of the September number.

The *Sketch* of August 28 has a very good portrait of Mr. G. J. Holyoake, who bears his age wonderfully well, being as sprightly with tongue and pen as ever.

The *Torch of Reason*, of Silverton, Oregon, shows that they are pushing on with the Liberal University there. By the way, Mr. B. F. Underwood, in an article on "Meliorism," quotes the words at the end of *Romola*, ascribing them to "Dr. Liddon." This is the more extraordinary, as Mr. Underwood is acquainted with the works of George Eliot.

The Liverpool Branch opens its winter campaign this evening, when addresses will be delivered by several local friends on "The Principles of Secularism." On the following Sunday Mr. J. M. Robertson begins a course of lectures extending from September 12 to October 3.

The Camberwell Secular Hall, 62 New Church-road, re-opens for its winter season this evening by a lecture on Egypt, which will be illustrated with an oxy-hydrogen lantern. On the following Sunday the subject will be "Athens and Greek Civilization," also with illustrations. We are informed that our South London friends have had splendid meetings on Peckham Rye this summer. We understand that the various Christian bodies are getting up a united counter-demonstration for to-day.

Friends who intend to be present at Mr. Watts's two nights' debate with the Rev. Mr. Waldron at the Athenaeum Hall, on Wednesday and Thursday evenings, September 15 and 16, will please remember that tickets must be secured beforehand, as no money can be taken at the doors. The prices of the tickets are sixpence and one shilling, and they can be had of Miss Vance at the office of the National Secular Society, 376 Strand, and at 17 Johnson's Court, Fleet-street.

THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES.

IV.—MANUFACTURED PROPHECIES OF THE NATIVITY.

THROUGHOUT the Gospel narratives we find it over and over again asserted that various events and circumstances in the life of Christ were foreseen and foretold by ancient Hebrew prophets, and in the accounts of the Nativity we encounter no less than five such alleged predictions. Before proceeding further, it will be well to consider some of these so-called "prophecies." By so doing we shall not only obtain a better idea of the character of the Gospel stories, but we shall be able to disprove, once for all, the ridiculous claim of inspiration. I will now briefly examine some of these inspired predictions.

I. The writer of the First Gospel, after stating that Mary, the betrothed wife of Joseph the Carpenter, was with child by the Holy Ghost, says that this interesting event occurred in fulfilment of a prophecy of Isaiah:—

"Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Behold the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which is, being interpreted, God with us" (i. 22, 23).

The quotation is from Isaiah vii. 14. From the context we learn that Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, made war upon Ahaz, king of Judah, and laid siege to Jerusalem. Isaiah then received the command to go to Ahaz, and tell him that the two confederate kings should not prevail against him, and also to predict that they should, within a short period, be deposed, and taken captive to Assyria. Ahaz was, further, told to ask a sign, as a proof that the prediction should certainly be fulfilled. Upon his declining to do so, "the Lord" persisted in giving one. A young woman, he said, should give birth to a son, and before this child should have arrived at an age to distinguish between good and evil, or even before he should be able to say "My father" or "My mother," both the king of Syria and the king of Israel should be removed from their kingdoms. This was the sign, and the fulfilment took place a few years later.

"And the Lord spake again unto Ahaz, saying.....the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.....For before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken" (vii. 10-16).

This child, it will be seen, was to be a sign to king Ahaz, and to him only. Some of the words in the passage quoted by Matthew have, however, for obvious reasons, been mistranslated. The Hebrew word rendered "virgin" was used to designate simply a young woman, or a young wife; also the words, "shall conceive," denoted an existing condition. The sentence should read: "Behold a young woman is with child, and beareth a son," etc.

We find, also, from the next chapter that the birth of this child actually took place, and that he was Isaiah's own son. That writer says (viii. 3, 4):—

"And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said the Lord unto me, Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz. For before the child shall have knowledge to cry My father and My mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be carried away before the king of Assyria."

From this passage it is quite clear that the child born to "the prophetess" was the one promised to Ahaz as a sign; for the prediction concerning the two kings is stated as about to be fulfilled in him, and we find, as a matter of Bible history, that the fulfilment shortly afterwards took place (2 Kings xv. 29; xvi. 9). The child, it is true, was not called Immanuel; "the Lord" appears to have altered his mind upon that point. He named him instead "The spoil speedeth, the prey hasteneth," in order to show that the prediction, like a charm, was working its way to the desired end. We find, also, a few verses further on (viii. 8), that the name Immanuel is employed to designate the whole kingdom of Judah.

Leaving the name out of the question, it will be plainly seen that the prophecy and sign which were made to Ahaz had no more reference to Christ than to the man in the moon. Even had the carpenter's wife named her son Immanuel, instead of Jesus, the prediction would still have no reference to the latter personage.

In order to make up his "prophecy," Matthew has dishonestly taken some words in the narrative of Isaiah away from their context, and, wilfully disregarding both the sense of that context and the fact that the prediction was fulfilled in the days of Ahaz, he unblushingly declares that those words were written concerning a child who was not born until seven hundred and thirty years after that time—to wit, Jesus Christ. A grosser fraud it is scarcely possible to imagine. Inspiration in this case means nothing less than deliberate falsehood and unscrupulous misrepresentation.

II. The same veracious evangelist states that when certain Magi came to Jerusalem, and inquired where the newly-born king of the Jews was to be found, Herod called the chief priests and scribes, and put the question to them. The reply is thus recorded (ii. 5, 6):—

"And they said unto him, in Bethlehem of Judea; for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, land of Judah, art in no wise least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come forth a governor, that shall be shepherd of my people Israel."

The quotation is from the book of Micah (v. 2-6):—

"But thou Bethlehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from ancient days. . . . And this man shall be our peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land, and shall tread in our palaces; then shall we raise against him [*i.e.*, the Assyrian] seven shepherds and eight principal men. And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof: and he shall deliver us from the Assyrian when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders."

Micah lived in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, in whose reigns the Assyrians several times invaded the land of Canaan. We find from the cuneiform inscriptions that during this period Ahaz paid tribute to Tiglath Pileser III.; that Sargon carried into captivity 27,280 of the inhabitants of Samaria; that Ashdod was taken and burnt by the same king; that Hezekiah was besieged in Jerusalem by Sennacherib; and that the last-named king carried away from all the principal cities of Judah 200,150 captives.

This being the state of affairs, Micah, in a burst of patriotism which he mistook for inspiration, predicted the advent of some great man, a native of Bethlehem, who, with the assistance of fifteen other heroes, should deliver his countrymen from their Assyrian oppressors. The reference is plainly to a great military leader, like Judas Maccabeus, who should not only repel the invaders, but should carry the war into the enemy's country and lay waste the land of Assyria.

This prediction was doubtless very comforting to the Jews of Micah's time; but, unfortunately for the credit of that prophet, it was never fulfilled. No such leader ever appeared. Bethlehem was selected as the locality from which the deliverer should come, simply because that city was supposed to have been the birth-place of David, the ideal king.

It goes, of course, without saying that this false prophecy could in no case refer to Jesus of Nazareth; for that personage was never a "ruler in Israel," nor did he ever deliver the Jews from the Assyrians. As a matter of fact, those troublesome invaders of Canaan had passed away as a nation several hundred years before Christ was born.

The words, "whose goings forth are from of old, from ancient days," appear to be a later addition, probably by some copyist who thought of David as living "in ancient days," or who intended to signify that the coming leader should be a descendant of David, in the same way as Isaiah foretold a deliverer of the "root of Jesse" (xi. 10-16). In any case, the predicted ruler was to be a man who should deliver his people from the Assyrians; that is the only point necessary to be considered.

Here, then, we have a second case of deliberate misrepresentation on the part of the writer of the First Gospel, who must have known perfectly well that Micah's prediction could in no possible way refer to Christ.

III.—Matthew, after stating that Joseph the Carpenter, with his wife and child, had fled into the land of Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod the Great, says that they returned to Palestine in order to fulfil another Old Testament "prophecy."

"And he arose and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt; and was there until the death of Herod: *that it might be fulfilled* which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt did I call my son" (ii. 14, 15).

The quotation is from Hosea xi. 1, and reads:—

"When Israel was a child then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt."

This passage Matthew has the audacity to say referred to the child Jesus. Now Hosea, throughout his book, almost invariably speaks of the Jewish nation by the name "Israel." Thus we read:—

"For Israel hath forgotten his maker, and buildeth temples" (viii. 14).

"I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness" (ix. 10).

"By a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved" (xii. 13).

In the passage quoted by Matthew, Hosea reminds the Israelites that when they were young as a nation "the Lord" loved them, and delivered them from the bondage of Egypt. The words have no other meaning. The familiar title "son," which Hosea applies to Israel, did not originate with that prophet. He took it from Exodus iv. 22, in which verse Yahveh is represented as saying to Moses:—

"And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, my first born; and I have said unto thee, Let my son go that he may serve me."

Hosea has simply adopted the same figure of speech in speaking of the nation. Thus the clear, plain, and only meaning of the passage quoted by Matthew is, that "the Lord" had led his people, the Israelites, out of Egypt. The assertion of that veracious evangelist, then, that the child Jesus was taken to Egypt, and afterwards brought back again, in order to fulfil this "prophecy," can only be characterized as a gross case of lying and deceit. The fact that he carefully omitted the first part of the sentence—"When Israel was a child I loved him"—and only quoted the words, "and called my son out of Egypt," proves that he knew he was committing a fraud. So, also, in the other two which we have examined; in the first he has omitted all mention of Ahaz and the other matters which showed the nature of the prediction, and that it had been fulfilled; in the second he has been careful to omit all that was said about the ruler delivering his people from the Assyrians. Matthew was thus a systematic perverter of the truth, who unscrupulously deceived the ignorant Christians of his time, not one in ten thousand of whom, probably, was able to verify the statements for himself. All the New Testament writers, including Paul, employed the same dishonest methods, as did also the early Christian fathers.

There are two more of these manufactured prophecies of the Nativity to be examined; but, without waiting for any additional evidence, we have already more than sufficient to enable us to pass a judgment on the claim made on behalf of the Gospel-writers—that of writing under an influence which informed and directed them, and kept them free from error; in other words, of being guided in the matters they recorded by divine inspiration. This pretentious claim we find to be an impudent imposture.

ABRACADABRA.

After the Theatre.

The lovers are happy, the villain is slain,
And here we are out in the starlight again.

And was it not fair,
Mid the brilliance and glare
Of lights upon purple and spangles and prism?
Is it all just as bright

'Neath the stars and the night
As we see it in thought beside life's criticism?
The surface of tinsel, the heart with its pain,
Where villains are happy and lovers are slain.

R. M. W.

The Greek and Roman of pre-Christian times was a citizen *par excellence*; the best part of his self was identified with his city-state. Of the solitary and self-sufficient man, post-Hellenic times have made an ideal; he is either a saint or a Robinson Crusoe. With the Greeks he was—a Cyclope. All the sentiments and most of the intellectual forces of free men were engaged in, or absorbed by, their several States.—*Emile Reich.*

COLD IRON AND STEEL DROPS.

"And the Lord was with Judah, and he drove out the inhabitants of the mountain, but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron."—JUDGES i. 19.

DEARLY-BELOVED BRETHREN.—This remarkable passage is one deserving most prayerful consideration. Taken in conjunction with other verses of Holy Scripture, to which I shall draw your attention, it will, I think, assure us that the Lord Jehovah had as decided objections to cold iron as to cold pig. Marvel not at this saying. If it be true, as Hudibras sings,

Ah me! what perils do environ
The man who meddles with cold iron,

this may be no less true of God than of man. The Stone Age was the thriving age for gods, and that the Rock of Ages comes down to us from the Stone Age is evident from many considerations. When the Lord met Moses at the inn, "and sought to kill him" (Exodus iv. 24), Zipporah mitigated his wrath by taking up a sharp stone and there-with cutting off the foreskin of her son, offering it as a barbarous token of subjection at the feet of the deity. When Joshua circumcised the children of Israel at Gilgal, he did it, as the Septuagint informs us, with stone knives. When Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God on Mount Ebal, it was "of whole stone, over which no man hath lift up any iron" (Joshua viii. 31). According to the Deuteronomic law (xxvii. 5), "thou shalt not lift up any iron tool upon them." Even as late as the time of Saul "there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel" (1 Samuel xiii. 19); and in the days of Sultan Solomon, that wealthy monarch had to send to Tyre for workers in brass and in gold. For we are expressly told that the temple "was built of stone, made ready before it was brought thither, so that there was neither hammer nor ax, nor any tool of iron, heard in the house while it was in building" (1 Kings vi. 7). Evidently iron was a desecration.

If we revert to our text, we shall notice, dear brethren, the particular mention of iron. It would not have mattered if the vale dwellers had chariots of wood or of brass or of copper, or even of pewter. The Lord, and Judah with the Lord, and the Lord with Judah, could not drive them out, because they had chariots of iron. Some commentators and Christian Evidence men have suggested that the particle translated "because" might be rendered "although." I think those who give prayerful consideration to the texts I have mentioned will see that this is a perversion of holy writ. The Lord had lived so long in the Stone Age that he objected to the innovation of iron. Further, dear brethren, I think we shall notice that his objection was well founded. As iron comes in, God Almighty goes out. His greatest enemies to-day are the railway engine and the steel pen. Let us pray!

W. McLAN STEEL.

Obituary.

A VETERAN French philosopher of some note in his day has passed away in the person of Monsieur Etienne Vacherot. Born in 1809, he replaced Victor Cousin in the chair of philosophy at the Sorbonne in 1839. For his free opinions expressed in his *Critical History of the School of Alexandria* he was much attacked by the clergy, and lost his position. He afterwards wrote *Essays of Critical Philosophy* and *La Religion*. He was one of the mayors of Paris during the siege, and for many years contributed to the *Revue des deux Mondes*.

The death is also announced of Dr. Jules Bernard Luys, the famous French alienist and hypnotist, who was born in 1828. His work on *The Brain and its Functions* was translated for the International Scientific Series. He was a member of the Academy of "Medicine."

A Dutch Freethinker of some note has passed away in the person of Professor Antonius van der Leyde, the historian and philologist, who died on August 17 at Wiesbaden, where he was chief librarian. He was an expert in the bibliography of printing, of chess, and of all pertaining to Spinoza.

All priests have necessarily the desire of influencing the minds of others. From their very calling they have a disposition to be teaching. Women and children are the materials they like to work upon. Next to the Devil, they dread men of understanding.—*William Cobbett*, "Political Register," vol. xxxiii., p. 297.

Mr. Henry Seymour lectures, under the auspices of the Legitimation League, on "The Physiology of Love: a Study in Stirpiculture," at the Holborn Restaurant (Chinese Salon) on Monday, Sept. 6, at 8 p.m. Admission free; discussion invited.

BOOK CHAT.

IN Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*, acting on the best information then obtainable, he put the name of George Simson as that of the author of the remarkable *Refutation of the Argument à priori for the Being and Attributes of God*, by "Antitheos," in reply to Dr. S. Clarke, W. H. Gillespie, and others. This very acute work was published by the Glasgow Zetetic Society in 1838. Quite recently Mr. William Simpson, the eminent artist and author of *The Buddhist Praying-Wheel*, told Mr. Wheeler that he thought it should rather be James Henry, and mentioned that his grave might be found in the High Kirk-yard, Glasgow. Mr. T. Macleish has kindly visited the grave, which records that James Henry Simson died March 6, 1844, aged 54, and adds the quotation from *Hamlet*:—

How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world.

James Henry Simson was a frequent lecturer for the Zetetic Society. He had been in the Peninsular War, and had lost an arm. At the time of his death he was employed as a clerk by a large engineering firm in Glasgow. Though one of the little-known Freethinkers, "Antitheos" was certainly a remarkable man.

* * *

The *Tablet*, noticing the "Sayings of Jesus," says of the logion, "Lift the stone and there you will find me, split the wood and I am there": "Can it be there is some reference to the stone of the sepulchre and to the wood of the cross, or have we here the expression of some form of pantheistic belief? Or have we simply an assertion of the omnipotence of our Lord in his divine nature?" The *Tablet* is modest enough to say these cannot be determined. But Dr. Adolf Harnack, who has made a German translation of his own, is cocksure that pantheism is not taught. He contends that the meaning rather is that Jesus promises his presence to the man engaged in coarse day labor for his bread. He thinks this is a genuine, beautiful, and valuable utterance. Only it requires a deal of expounding. Dr. Harnack considers the *Logia* as extracts from the Gospel of the Egyptians and as belonging to the early part of the second century.

* * *

Louisa Twining, in her *Symbols and Emblems of Early and Medieval Christian Art*, gives specimens of early Christian baptism, in which Father, Son, and Ghost are all engaged in ducking the neophyte, while the Devil is bodily escaping from his person. Trees symbolize the resurrection, and so does the pelican.

* * *

In the September *New Century Review* Mr. E. H. Parker writes on "The Religion of the Chinese." This, with the exception of reverence for ancestors, appears to be almost a minus quantity. Mr. Parker tells us that priests and nuns are usually uncultured. "The social position of priests in the neighborhood of Peking is hard to define. The calling is universally despised, and they are almost invariably spoken of with good-natured contempt." The Chinese have a saying:—

When ill, embrace Buddha's feet;
When well, neglect to burn incense.

This, according to Mr. Parker, is the usual attitude of the Chinese mind with regard to religion.

* * *

Mr. Parker declares: "In no part of China have I ever found that the hope of happiness or fear of punishment in another world exercised the slightest influence over personal conduct," though he allows that there is a strong feeling that, if a gross neglect of family duty be committed, there will be vengeance from unappeased ghosts. Chinese prayers and sacrifices are commonplace and practical. "There is nothing ethereal, imaginative, ecstatic, sublime, or in any way holy about them; it is simply, like all other Chinese transactions, a question of bargaining or money's worth. They even thrash their gods if no results come of persistent prayer. The Emperor himself 'rewards' the gods if their succor comes sharp, and in one instance I remember reading a decree instructing the Governor to admonish a lazy deity."

* * *

In Southern China, where external religion is more in evidence than in the northern provinces, Mr. Parker tells us that many of the priests are stated to be, and have the appearance of being, debased criminals, who have fled to the monastery as to a sort of Alsatia or sanctuary. The local authorities forbid women to visit the temples, and a few years ago one of the finest monasteries in Canton was burnt down by an enraged mob, owing to some real or fancied misconduct of the priests during a popular "woman's holiday." Can we, then, wonder that they sometimes attack Christians who are supposed to kidnap women and children for unhallowed purposes?

* * *

Mr Parker says: "The true attitude of the intelligent

classes towards religion is that officially laid down by Tao-Kwang, grandfather of the present Emperor. It is, in effect: 'All religions are nonsense; but the silly people have always believed in ghosts and after life, and therefore, in order to conciliate popular feeling, we are disposed to protect every belief, including Christianity, so long as there is no interference with the old-established customs of the State.'

CORRESPONDENCE.

"TESTIMONY" FROM EXETER HALL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The "noontide hour of prayer" at Exeter Hall on Monday last was presided over by Mr. Oscar Owen, a well-known evangelist of the higher order of society, who holds forth in Hyde Park on a Sunday, when the weather is favorable.

At the mid-day meetings held within the sacred walls petitions for prayer are invited, and then comes forth the cadger. Among the petitioners on Monday, was a venerable-looking person, somewhat scrubby so far as his beard was concerned, and faded in his attire, which was composed, for the most part, of a heavy winter overcoat, a tall wide-awake hat, and a pair of spectacles. A policeman, so he represented, had *sworn falsely* that, in proclaiming the truth in Hyde Park, he had been led into mundane matters, and had solicited money; wherefore an unregenerate magistrate had convicted him of an offence, and had decreed that, unless he paid a certain amount of bullion into court by to-day (Saturday), he would have to expiate the error he had not committed in his own proper person in Pentonville, or other of Her Majesty's prisons. This grand chance of Christian martyrdom was not one bit to the liking of the petitioner, who did not care to go to prison gladly, as he of Tarsus did; so he decided to cadge the faithful through the Lord and Oscar Owen. And many and fervent were the prayers sent out, or up, that the chosen vessel might be delivered from the "dreadful punishment" awaiting him.

The chairman, in commending the case of the suffering brother to the faithful, stated that during the thirty years of his labors in Hyde Park he had "never known the power of the enemy—of infidelity and so-called Secularism—so strong as at the present day." Testimony, however unwilling or unconscious, from such a quarter is invaluable. It is not known whether the Lord answered the prayers offered on behalf of the impecunious convicted one, whose name, it is said, is the not uncommon one of Jones; but it was evident that the Lord's people were chary of parting with the shekels, if one could judge from the speedy exodus of Christians after the benediction. One man did tarry. He had reminded the Lord, in a previous prayer, that he had been eighteen times before rulers for bearing testimony to the Truth, and proffered a request that the immense audience of some two dozen should rise and sing "Praise God," etc.; whether in token of gratitude for his eighteen convictions, or for that of Jones, did not transpire. The Doxology was sung by the remnant.

J. D.

"WHY I ADMIRE JESUS."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—With your kind permission, I should like to reply briefly to Dr. Henry Smith's article under the above heading in your last issue. I take exception to Mr. Smith's first sentence. He says "Jesus dared to think and act for himself." But this is precisely what Jesus admitted he did not do. He declared that his words and works were not his own (John xiv. 10 and John viii. 28). Again, in John v. 19 he declared, "The Son can do nothing but what he seeth the Father do." If that, sir, is independent thought and action, words have no meaning. Dr. Smith says "Jesus taught us to love one another." True. He said "Love your enemies," but he had no mercy on his own (Luke xix. 27). Dr. Smith asserts "Jesus taught us pure religion." I have only to remark that I do not consider any religion pure that enforces its precepts with the threat of eternal damnation, as Christ did (Matthew xxv. 46). Again, "He taught that heaven must be within us." On the contrary, he taught that he was going to prepare a place, and would come again to receive his disciples (John xiv. 3). Finally Dr. Smith says, "His teachings are the teachings of the human mind." This sentence is really meaningless. "The human mind" teaches according to environment and knowledge, or it may be dominated by superstition and idolatry. Darwin and Spencer's are teachings of the human mind, but did Christ teach evolution? All teaching is representative of some particular bent of the human mind, but no special teaching can ever be properly designated the teaching of the human mind—at least according to my judgment.

ALERT.

THE MEN OF GOD.

FIRST PASTOR—"Do you attend the Church Conference to-day, Brother Haggis?" SECOND PASTOR—"No, I'm not feeling very well, and I've decided not to leave the house unless some matter of great importance calls me out." FIRST PASTOR—"Er, I suppose you know that the case of Brother Harkins, for undue familiarity with several sisters of his congregation, is to be tried in the conference to-day?" SECOND PASTOR—"Wait a moment, brother, and I will get my coat and hat."

A Free Church organist had been discharged for playing, though very slowly and solemnly, a march from an operabouffe. Seventeen deacons recognised it at once.

SKY-PILOT (to choir-leader)—"The collection this morning, Mr. Hotwater, was very small, and I am sorry to say that I think the meagreness was largely due to you." CHOIR-LEADER—"Largely due to me, sir?" SKY-PILOT—"Yes. Hereafter, while the plate is being passed, I wish you would try to make a better selection of music than 'Salvation's Freec.'"

Our surplus population—the sky-pilots.

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 Skilled in expounding the doctrines of sects,
 Arrange a collection of expletives sinister,
 Mingled with fragments of various texts;
 Take the last wailing of Christ in his agony,
 Latin, and Hebrew, original Greek—
 Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani—
 Howl it and chatter it, mumble and shriek;
 Of Moses and Joshua study astronomy,
 Copy the morals of Jacob and Lot,
 Practise each day in Ezekiel's gastronomy,
 Drink with old Noah, the bibulous sot;
 Fill your discourses with all that's fanatical,
 Rattle them off in a manner theatrical;
 Doubt every fact and believe every mystery,
 Meet modern learning with biblical history;
 Praise all the actions of pious rascality,
 Damn every heretic as a finality.
 These qualities constitute, blended in unity,
 The joy of the modern religious community.

PROFANE JOKES.

MINISTER (to elderly female crofter)—"I'm sorry to hear your potatoes are very bad this year, Janet." "'Deed they are, sir, but I've reason to be thankfu' to Providence that other folks are as badly off as mysel'."

NURSE—"Johnny, the stork has brought you a little baby. Wouldn't you like to see your little brother?" JOHNNY—"Naw: but I'd like to see the stork?"

PIP—"When the righteous man begins to swear—"
 QUIP—"The profane man should be around to take lessons."

"Speaking about childish blunders as to proper names," said one of a party of romancers, "your story reminds me of one which my wife's parents told about her when she was a little one. The folks were one evening commenting on the fact that there are no family names mentioned in the Bible, and she took exception to the statement. 'Why, you forget about the first chapter of Matthew, where it tells about Abraham Begat, and Isaac Begat, and the whole Begat family.'"

One paterfamilias, who started reading these genealogies for family worship, got tired of the names as soon as he had read "And Aram begat Aminadab, and Aminadab begat Naasson"; so he skipped, saying, "And so they went on begetting one another down to the seventeenth verse."

Bishop Field Flowers Goe, annoyed by the professions of friendship of a bibulous person on the platform at a railway, made his way to headquarters and confronted King Dicky at his desk. "Mr. Speight," said he wrathfully, "do you allow drunken persons to travel on your trains?" The chairman of the Railway Commissioners paused a moment to glance up and down at his visitor, and then, with a merry little twinkle in his eye, he said *sotto voce* and confidentially: "Just you take a seat about the middle of the train and keep *very* quiet; and you'll get into no trouble." The bishop goed—went, we mean.

A man had been up for an examination in Scripture, had failed utterly, and the relations between him and the examiner had become somewhat strained. The latter asked him if there was any text in the whole Bible he could quote. He pondered, and then repeated: "And Judas went out and hanged himself." "Is there any other verse you know in the whole Bible?" the examiner asked. "Yes, 'Go thou and do likewise.'" There was a solemn pause, and the proceedings terminated.

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, C. Watts, "The Triumph of Reason."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, H. P. Ward, "The Bible, the Child, and the Coming School Board Election." September 4, at 8.30, Concert.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, H. Snell, "Egypt and the Dawn of History." Limelight illustrations.

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): 8, Stanley Jones.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, H. P. Ward.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye): 8.15, H. P. Ward.

CLERKENWELL GREEN (Finsbury Branch): 11.30, W. Ramsey.

EDMONTON (Angel-road): 7, W. Heaford.

FINSBURY PARK (near band-stand)—Finsbury Park Branch: 8.15, A. Guest, "Christianity a Secondhand Religion."

HAMMERSMITH (The Grove, near S.W.B. station): 7, O. Durrant.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Life Hereafter";

8.30, A. B. Moss, "A New Age of Reason."

ISLINGTON (Highbury Fields, Highbury Corner): 11.30, A. Guest, "Christianity a Secondhand Religion."

KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, A. B. Moss, "Life Hereafter."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, E. Calvert, "Religious Symbolism."

LIMEHOUSE (Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, J. T. Thurlow. September

7, at 8.30, E. Pack.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, W. Heaford; 7, F. Haslam. September 8,

at 8.30, H. P. Ward.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 8.15, Stanley Jones.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The Evolution of Thought."

COUNTRY.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Addresses by local friends on "The Principles of Secularism."

PONTYPRIDD (28 Middle-street, Trallwn): Meetings every Sunday evening. Discussion invited.

PLYMOUTH (Co-operative Hall, Courtenay-street): 7, E. P. Luke, "Christianity a Failure."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street):

O. Cohen—11, "Ethics and Economics"; 8, "Religion at the Bar of Science"; 7, "The Priest and the Child." Tea at 6.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

ROCHDALE (Town Hall Square): S. R. Thompson—11, "Whence and Whither?" 8, "A Few of God's Favorites"; 6.30, "Why I am an Atheist,"

Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—September 5, Sheffield. 12 and 19, Glasgow. 26, Edinburgh. October 10, Gateshead. 16, 17, and 18, Stanley. 24, Newcastle.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—September 5, m. and a., Hyde Park; 12, Clerkenwell.

J. FAGAN, 48 Popham-road, New North-road, London, N.—September 19, e., Hammersmith. 26, m., Hyde Park.

J. T. THURLOW, 850 Old Ford-road, London, E.—September 5, Limehouse.

H. PERCY WARD, Leighton Hall, N.W.—September 5, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye; e., Bradlaugh Club. 8, e., Mile End Waste. 26, m., Clerkenwell Green; e., New Brompton. 29, e., Mile End Waste. October 3, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye.

E. PACK, 90 Camden-street, N.W.—September 5, e., Clerkenwell Green. 7, e., Limehouse. 12, Northampton. 14, e., Limehouse. 19, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 21, e., Limehouse. 26, m., Mile End; e., Limehouse; a., Finsbury Park. 28, e., Limehouse. October 17, m., Camberwell

POSITIVISM.

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

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 3.15.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, first Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

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