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PRICE TWOPENCE.

CHRIST AND THE CORONERS.

"PECULIAR PEOPLE" cases are multiplying. In addition to the fresh one which is dealt with in our paragraphs this week, there is a still more recent one which serves as the occasion for this article. Mr. G. E. Hilleary, the West Ham coroner, held an inquest last Monday evening on the body of a child named James Senior, aged four years, whose death was due to cardiac failure and pulmonary collapse. Mary Ann Senior, the child's mother, deposed that nothing was done for him beyond the "customary prayers" and the "laying on of hands" by the Elders of the Church. James Senior, the father, decided to reserve any statement. Dr. Charles Saunders, Medical Officer of Health at West Ham, believed that a doctor might have saved the child's life, but could not "say positively." Being asked by the coroner whether the neglect of not calling in a doctor accelerated death, he replied: "I cannot quite go so far as that." Yet in the very next breath he declared that he was "quite of opinion that medical advice and necessary medicines would have prolonged life." Perhaps he did not see the utter inconsistency of these two statements; and perhaps, at bottom, he really meant that, while prayer alone had not saved the child's life, prayer and medicine might have done it together. The jury consulted in private for nearly half-an-hour, and then brought in a unanimous verdict that if medical aid had been called in the child's life might have been prolonged. But this did not satisfy the coroner. He wanted to know whether the jury meant that the child's death was due to natural causes, or that the father should go for trial on the charge of manslaughter. The jury retired again, and after another absence of half-an-hour they returned a verdict of "Manslaughter" against the father, James Senior, who was accordingly committed for trial on the coroner's warrant.

This being the second case relegated to a jury in a criminal court, we think the matter is of sufficient importance to call for another article in the *Free Thinker*. The ordinary newspapers are too cowardly to speak out, and the religious journals are pursuing a policy of hypocritical silence.

Let us repeat the governing facts in the consideration of this matter. Christianity is the established religion of this country, and the Bible is declared by law to be the inspired Word of God. To bring either Christianity or the Bible into disbelief and contempt is to commit a crime punishable with twelve months' imprisonment like a common malefactor. The present writer has suffered that punishment, and has therefore a more than academic interest in the subject. What we desire to know is this. Will the law of England, and will judges and juries, while punishing a man for *disbelieving* the Bible, also punish him for *believing* it? Are the two extremes of sincerity to be rewarded with imprisonment, and are the intermediate multitude of hypocrites to lock up and torture both divisions of the honest minority?

It is not these poor Peculiar People, after all, who are being sent for trial by a judge and jury in a criminal court. It is *Jesus Christ*. That is the point to be pressed as firmly as possible on the attention of Englishmen. The verdict of manslaughter against these sincere Christians, if endorsed in a superior court, will really be a verdict against Jesus Christ, who taught them to do the very thing for which they are prosecuted. It is idle for the "Higher

Critics" to explain that the second half of the last chapter of Mark is not in the earliest manuscripts, and is probably an interpolation. It is in the English Bible, and until it is removed, with the sanction of parliament, every Christian is bound to obey it. Now it is distinctly stated by Jesus Christ himself, in that portion of Mark, that those who believed his gospel should not only be able to take up serpents and drink poison, but also be able to lay hands on the sick so as to heal them of their disease.

To keep this passage in the English Bible, to declare that book the word of God, and the utterer of this particular text to be the second person of the Christian godhead; to do this, and at the same time to send a man to prison as a criminal for believing it, not theoretically but practically, not with idle acquiescence but with active conviction, is a scandal that cannot be properly stigmatized in decent language. To do it justice would require the epithets and expletives of Aristophanes and Rabelais. It is too gross a scandal for the more delicate pen of a Lucian or a Voltaire.

We quoted in our previous article the passage in James, which elaborates the saying of Jesus Christ in the last chapter of Mark. James is alleged to have been the brother of Jesus, and in cases of sickness he distinctly says that the elders are to be called in, that they are to pray over the patient and anoint him with oil, and that this treatment shall ensure his recovery. James and Jesus ought to stand in the dock instead of these Peculiar People, and the sight would be worth seeing.

Furthermore, every clergyman of the Church of England (at least) should be prosecuted for instigating to a breach of the law; for this very fifth chapter of James is appointed to be read twice a year in every church of the Establishment. Every time a clergyman reads it he incites his congregation to do what coroners' juries are pronouncing to be manslaughter.

What a pity it is that some honest rural clergyman (we hope there is *one* left) does not bring this matter before the Church Congress at Nottingham. Many less important matters are being discussed there. Archbishop Temple, for instance, is talking unctuously about the *unity* of the Church, which is to be brought about more or less miraculously, some time before the day of judgment. But the *honesty* of the Church is far more serious. In the long run, the Church has a good deal to lose by being found out; and it *will* be found out if it goes on preaching from Christ and St. James, and keeps a decorous silence while poor men are punished as criminals for doing what Christ and St. James plainly tell them to do. There is no limit to clerical hypocrisy, but there is a limit to lay hypocrisy; and when the laity have had enough of it, they will turn upon the Church with passionate indignation. It is really of no use to pursue the ostrich policy. Wilful blindness to facts does not abolish them. The day of reckoning will come. And, as Carlyle said, the ostrich who buries his head is wounded more ignominiously in the rear.

We do not intend to drop the case of these Peculiar People. We shall deal with it again. It furnishes Free-thinkers with a splendid opportunity. It provides an object-lesson in the superstition of the Bible, and the futility of the Christian religion, and the decay of sincerity among the great mass of its professors. And presently, if it happens that one of these Peculiar People is imprisoned, it will be our duty to see whether the country cannot be flooded with an exposure of the Scripture—and Jesus Christ!

G. W. FOOTE.

WHEN WERE THE GOSPELS WRITTEN ?

IN the last number of *McClure's Magazine*, of New York, is an article with the above title, by F. G. Kenyon, M.A., purporting, as the secondary title has it, to give "The Evidence of Recent Discoveries, and What it has Done towards Answering the Question." The paper is, perhaps, only the beginning of a series, for it seems a somewhat belated one. The really important recent discovery of the *Logia* of Jesus is not as much as mentioned, and the only discovery dealt with is the very debateable one of the *Diatessaron* ascribed to Tatian, which, if genuine, is not so very recent, since, it is said, a copy has been in the Vatican since 1791. This, however, like a number of other things, requires proof.

The first person to mention a *Diatessaron* is the unvarnished Eusebius, who (*Eccles. Hist.*, iv. 29) tells us that Tatian was a heretic who said that "Marriage was only corruption and fornication. And he also devised arguments of his own against the salvation of Adam" Eusebius continues: "Tatianus, having formed a certain body and collection of gospels, I know not how, has given this the title *Diatessaron*—that is, the gospel by the four, or the gospel formed of the four." Baur and the author of *Supernatural Religion*, not having the ways of God before their wicked eyes, argued that Tatian's *Diatessaron* might not be constructed out of the canonical Gospels. But there is a special providence which looks after the interests of the Church, and when any ancient document is particularly wanted it is pretty sure to turn up. The humble instruments of Providence in these matters are usually Greeks, Syrians, or of the chosen race; but in this case it appears to have been a Catholic Copt.

"The story of the recovery of the *Diatessaron* is curious," says Mr. Kenyon. It is, indeed, and might be thought very strange had we not studied the wondrous ways of the Lord. Father Ciasca, Orientalist scriptor to the Vatican, in 1886 chanced to show the Arabic MS.—which, by the way, could not be by Tatian, since it begins with the second gospel instead of that ascribed to John—to the Vicar Apostolic of the Catholic Copts, then on a visit to Rome; and this gentleman at once remarked that he had seen another copy of the same work in private hands in Egypt, and could undertake to procure it. He was as good as his word, and the harmony of the Gospels—or, at any rate, a Latin version of an Arabic version of a Syriac version of a Greek harmony of the Gospels—was published to the world, to the confutation of all unbelievers! After this, who can doubt the Devil setting Christ on the pinnacle of a temple as related by Tatian (iv. 47), or the devils going into the pigs (xi. 43)?

The question, When were the Gospels written? as far as Mr. Kenyon's paper is concerned, resolves itself into When the *Diatessaron* ascribed to Tatian, and introduced to the world by Padre Agostino Ciasca, of the Guild of Writers, to the Vatican, was written. On this question there is always a safe basis to begin upon—viz., the date of publication. This was in the year 1888 of human redemption, being the jubilee of the priesthood of His Holiness Pope Pecci, whom may the saints preserve. It is quite safe to start there. How far Mr. Kenyon can safely get beyond this in crossing the gulf of sixteen hundred years, I leave him to decide. He may show it conforms to the statement of Bar-Salibi, and to the fragments of the commentary ascribed to St. Ephrem. Who would produce a Tatian that did not? But it does more. It conforms to orthodoxy. Dr. Hogg, its latest editor, says: "If the *Diatessaron* has been growing so as to represent the ordinary text of the canonical Gospels more completely, we have also evidence that suggests that it has been at some time or times purged of certain features that are lacking in these canonical Gospels."* What, then, is the worth of its evidence?

According to "Epiphanius" (*Hær.*, xvi. 1), the *Diatessaron* of Tatian was called the Gospel according to the Hebrews. But the fragments of that Gospel, reproduced by Mr. E. B. Nicholson, are quite distinct from this *Diatessaron*. Then Theodore (*Hær.*, i. 20) tells us that Tatian, in his *Diatessaron*, cut out the genealogies and whatever other passages show that the Lord was born of the seed of David according to the flesh. This concoction omits the genealogies, possibly from the impossibility of reconciling them in one narrative,

but gives the story of Christ's birth according to the flesh, and calls him the son of David, as in our Gospels. All the early Fathers who mention Tatian wrote of him as a heretic, and considered his *Diatessaron* heretical. Irenæus called him false, ignorant, and blind. Yet the *Diatessaron* produced is orthodox, and, although Tatian condemned animal food and wine, gravely records that the Son of man came eating and drinking. Its close conformity to our Gospels is curious, in view of Dr. Tischendorf's admission: "I have no doubt that very shortly after the books of the New Testament were written, and before they were protected by the authority of the Church, many arbitrary alterations and additions were made in them" (Introduction to the Tauchnitz edition of N. T., p. xv.). Still more strange is its conformity to Tischendorf's own Harmony of the Gospels, which is so close that it looks as if the compiler, in the second century, had been inspired to foreknow what Tischendorf would do in the nineteenth.

When the Lord takes to backing up Christian evidences we must look for such wonders. The sceptic asked for Tatian, and, lo, Tatian—or an imitation—is produced. Who knows but that some wandering Simonides may yet find the originals of the Gospels themselves; adorned, perhaps, with a photograph of their hero, and with Röntgen rays exhibiting the bones, blood, and nervous structure of the divinity?

What, if genuine, does the *Diatessaron* prove? Its date, the very language in which it was originally written, is uncertain. It gives no information concerning the evangelists, whose stories it copies; as to their personality, their character, or trustworthiness. Their yarns, inherently incredible, are no whit more worthy of credence if twisted together in a so-called harmony in the early days of the Church.

But the newly-found *Logia*? Aye, there is a discovery indeed. Henceforth no one can take it for granted that any quotations found in the fathers are necessarily from our Gospels. They may be from some similar *Logia* which may yet turn up. For the ways of Providence are very peculiar.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE PRESENT LIFE.

IN using the phrase "present life" we do not wish it to be implied that we have any belief in a future state of existence. Personally, we have no faith in any life "beyond the grave." We regard man as a combination of material parts depending for the manifestations termed life upon organic organization; and it appears to us that, when the conditions necessary to functional activity are gone, life will cease. Of course we do not deny a future existence, for the simple reason that we have no means of obtaining any knowledge upon the subject; and we hold that it would be unreasonable to either affirm or deny that of which we know nothing. All the teachings which we have examined in reference to "another world" seem to us merely speculations based upon emotional feeling, without any proof of their accuracy. The Agnostic position upon this question commends itself to us as being perfectly safe. With some knowledge of the present life, we are aware of certain duties connected therewith; the first of which we think is, to seek to attain the highest possible self-improvement—physically, morally, and intellectually—and thus secure a healthy and well-regulated body; and if we have a "soul" it should be all the better for being allied with superior conditions. Then, if we are to live again, that life will be the purer in consequence of our having realized a noble and exalted career on earth. We have not the slightest desire to condemn those who consider they have evidence to justify them in believing in another life. For years we have earnestly sought for that evidence, but have found it not; and we refuse to profess that to which our reason does not assent.

The present life, if properly regulated, is quite sufficient to satisfy the desires of Secularists. We do not believe that this world must necessarily be a "vale of tears"; or, as the Bible alleges, that we "were born in sin and shapened in iniquity," and that, therefore, a person possesses a "vile body." It has been well said by a writer, whose name we forget for the moment: "While Christians have quarrelled and fought each other on almost every other article of faith, they have always agreed that

* *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, additional volume, p. 38; 1897.

to be worldly-minded is a sin, and that no one could be fit for heaven without learning to hold in light estimation the things of this world. But why should we despise it? Is it not our home? Do not the sweet memories of our childhood cluster about its rocks and rills, woods and templed hills? Did not the very sunshine seem to bless us, as we roamed the fields or played upon its shores? With what delight we gathered flowers or reclined upon the sweet-scented grass in spring and summer, gathered fruit in autumn, tossed snow or skated over the ice in winter! As time flew on, did we not find a nobler pleasure in acquiring knowledge, and finding the world so much greater and more wonderful than we had been led to hope or dream? Are not these all made sacred by the remembrance of the brooding tenderness of a mother's love and a father's faithful and patient care? Was it not here that love first stirred our hearts with unspeakable emotion, and kindled us into heroic purpose and devotion? No; with all life's drawbacks we, as Secularists, do not despair of humanity if it can be once freed from the mischief and errors imposed upon it by kings and priests and their gloomy theology. We know that human nature is not wholly corrupt and abominable, incapable of good, and necessarily prone to wickedness. On the contrary, we are possessed with the inspiring confidence that within ourselves lie the potencies that we need; that it is possible to devote our energies to the task of successfully removing evil from our midst, in the sure and certain hope of reaping a good harvest, providing that good seed be previously sown.

The fact is that for nearly two thousand years mankind have been taught a radically false and mischievous theory of existence. We have been told that God has bestowed it on us as a trust or a pledge; need we wonder, therefore, that men have, like the man in the parable, buried their talents in the earth rather than wisely putting them to the best uses for their own welfare? If the old theological hypothesis of human life were the true one, such a life would, indeed, not be worth having. If the orthodox theory were correct; if we were environed by a subtle, tempting devil, by lusts and passions knocking perpetually at the heart, demanding admission; and if the penalty of yielding to these were to incur eternal damnation in hell, why then it would have been better ten thousand times that man had never been born. Upon this theory the Bible interrogatory of "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" acquires a terrible significance. Happily, however, such teaching is as false as it would be fiendish. We are not human shuttlecocks, to be bandied about between God and the Devil—now inclining towards heaven, now sent spinning and whirling away towards the gates of hell. No; science and reason have emancipated us from the rusty fetters and shackles of such theological figments. At last we have learned to recognise that we are men, independent of all supernatural powers, if such there be; and with this recognition there have also come to us clearer, better, nobler, worthier notions respecting human existence.

The present life affords ample scope for practical works of utility—a fact which concerns every Secularist whose aim it is to so act that the world shall be the better for the part he has played therein. On every side reforms are needed. Religion has to be divested of its priestly-invented creeds, its council-decreed dogmas, and its relentless teaching of future retribution. Church dignitaries have to be induced to use their ability and influence in instructing the people how properly to live, assuring them that such a course is the only safe preparation for a happy death. The schoolmaster must be impressed with the importance of aiding in the training of the rising generation so that they may be enabled to master the important duties of life, and thus prove a credit to themselves and useful to others. The moralist must be brought to acknowledge that ethical conduct consists in the performance of good actions apart from all theological considerations. The politician must be convinced that his business is to labor for the extension of the basis of national freedom, so that all qualified citizens shall share its advantages, regardless of class distinctions or religious restrictions. The social reformer must be reminded that the laboring classes have still unjust burdens imposed upon them; that the wrongs of woman have to be removed, and her proper position in society recognised and maintained; that the capitalist and laborer, having mutual responsibilities in the production

of wealth, should each have a fair share in the result of the alliance; and that the working classes must be encouraged to rely upon themselves, and to act justly towards all with whom they come in contact. Finally, it should be understood that true social elevation can be only effectually secured by sound education and harmonious co-operation.

It will thus be seen that, if we wish to avail ourselves of the fullest advantages of the present life, we should do our best to construct a new order of things, to strive to effect a wide, universal change in the thought and action of society. In breaking down the wall of prejudice and superstition, upon which all supernatural religion is founded, consists the destructive work of Secularism; while its constructive work simply means educating the people into accepting the great principle that all human improvement must be achieved by humanity alone, without reference to the aid of any external Being, if such there be.

CHARLES WATTS.

COLOSSAL IMPUDENCE.*

A SMALL band of irreconcilables professes to find *external* evidence from archæology to combat the conclusions of the Higher Criticism. The work before us is typical of its class. Dr. Hommel puts forward four main propositions:—

1. That the proper names contained in the Pentateuch agree in formation with proper names found upon Semitic monuments of an early date.

2. That the Minean and Sabcan inscriptions go back to a remote antiquity.

3. That the names of the eastern kings of Genesis xiv. have been discovered upon the monuments.

4. That the Jews before the time of David spoke Arabic, and were ignorant of Hebrew.

It must be evident to everyone that, even if these four propositions were *true*, they would not concern the conclusions of the Higher Criticism in the least degree; but the Doctor, in the usual style of his school, flouts them all as if they were demonstrated facts of the highest importance to criticism. The *truth* of his propositions, however, is but a secondary matter, as it always is to the orthodox apologist.

I.—Dr. Hommel's first assertion is not worth examination; for, of course, Semitic names must always be formed upon Semitic principles. Mr. G. B. Gray, in his *Studies in Hebrew Proper Names* (London; 1896), has anticipated Dr. Hommel's whole position, and he has articles in the *Expositor* and *Expository Times* which are well worth reading.

II.—The early date of the Minean and Sabeian inscriptions is a totally unproved hypothesis. When Glaser and Hommel have any trustworthy evidence in support of their theory we shall be glad to study it. These said inscriptions are in the Himyaritic character, which was used in Arabia before the time of Mohammed, and which was the original of the modern Abyssinian, or Ethiopic, script. The Himyaritic alphabet is well known to scholars, and specimens may be seen in the British Museum. Some of the Himyaritic inscriptions are dated according to the era of the Seleucids; and these dates only belong to the third and fourth centuries of the Christian era. Dr. Halevy, Dr. Mordtmann, and Dr. Müller, who are considered the highest authorities upon this subject, are totally opposed to Glaser's suggestions of early date; and it is nothing better than an imposition to throw Glaser and Hommel's theories at the heads of the British public, which knows nothing of the question. Many of Dr. Glaser's inscriptions are not even published, and Hommel himself says, on page 16 of the present work: "I earnestly hope that Edward Glaser will not oblige us to wait much longer before he consents to open his treasure chambers. . . . He is, however, very chary of his inscriptions, and only allows us to examine them piecemeal. . . . A great benefit would be conferred if these documents, which no one but a Glaser could have ferretted out and procured, were to be placed in some museum where they would be available for general use." (!) Dr. Glaser's views are set forth in a work of two

* *The Ancient Hebrew Tradition, as Illustrated by the Monuments. A Protest against the Modern School of Old Testament Criticism. By Dr. Fritz Hommel. (S. P. C. K.; 1897.)*

volumes, entitled *Skizze der Geschichte und Geographie Arabiens*. The first of these volumes is unobtainable. The second is a thick book of 575 pages, with neither table of contents nor index. The inquirer, therefore, finds great difficulties before him. Dr. Glaser's views on the antiquity of the Himyarite inscriptions are not new. They were anticipated in the *Geography of Arabia* of the notorious Rev. Charles Foster, upon grounds just as wild as his. But any crackbrained hypothesis is considered good enough for the purpose of combatting the Higher Critics.

III.—The pretence that the names of the kings in Genesis xiv. have been found upon the "cuneiform monuments can only be characterized as a gross fraud. But, even if they were, that would not prove Genesis xiv. to be historically true; nor would it affect the conclusions of Biblical critics. It is utterly untrue that the critics (as a whole) attack this chapter. On the contrary, many of them, from Ewald downwards, have treated this silly saga with the greatest respect, and have considered it as a piece of ancient history embedded among the Pentateuchal legends. In the *Guardian* of March 11, 1896, Canon Driver went into the whole question with his accustomed cautious deference to the views of his opponents; and, after pointing out that no critic had ever contended that the names in Genesis xiv. 1 were unhistorical, he went on to say, very truly, "That the historical character of a given person is in itself no guarantee of the credibility of a particular act"; and that the bearing of the alleged discoveries upon the credibility of the chapter was *nil*. But the whole of these identifications are of such a strained and over-drawn character that they would be laughed at if urged in support of anything but a religious theory. They have only to be stated in order to prove their absurdity. A town in Babylonia was called Larsam. This is asserted to be the Ellasar of Genesis. One of the kings of Larsam was named Kim-Agum, Kim-Sin, or Arad-Sin. These names are said to be the same as Arioch! Some years ago Dr. Hommel was quite certain that Amraphel was a Babylonian king named Sin-muballit; but in 1892 he announced that Amraphel was another individual named Khammurabi. So long as he can identify him with somebody, he is not particular who it is. As to Kedorlaomer, Mr. Pinches told the Victoria Institute in January, 1896, that he had discovered a Babylonian tablet, which is probably later in date than the Christian era; and upon this tablet was the name *Ku-ku-kubit*, which might possibly be an ideogram for Kedorlaomer! Of course it might as well be an ideogram for Dick Turpin. But the Dominican, Father Scheil, also discovered another tablet, upon which he read *Ku-tur-nu-ukh-ga-mar*, as our old friend K., who seems to be recognised in any combination of cuneiform characters. This latter discovery was put forward in an obscure Roman Catholic periodical—apparently without the cuneiform text; and it would appear from Dr. Hommel's translation that *Kuturnu*, etc., was a spirit or deity, if a name at all. As to Mr. Pinches's paper, read before the Victoria Institute, it has never been printed in the proceedings or anywhere else; and it is impossible to get any information about it. Some favored individuals have seen a proof, marked "Under Revision"; but ordinary persons have to be satisfied with mere hearsay. We are afraid that the adherents of the Higher Criticism will not be converted by means of wild assertions about alleged discoveries whose authors keep their evidence so modestly in the background.

IV.—Dr. Hommel's assertion, that the ancient Hebrews spoke Arabic, is the funniest proposition in the book. He does not condescend to inform us why Moses wrote his Laws in Hebrew, when the Jews did not understand that language until after the time of Joshua. It is also difficult to understand how this proposition is going to overthrow the critical position. The difficulties are increased by our being told that the patriarch Jacob was an Aramean.

Orthodoxy must indeed be in a bad case when it is considered necessary so to translate all this trash into English. The *Athenæum* says that it is translated badly, and complains of the "slovenly and untrustworthy character of the translation"; but any rendering would be good enough for such a work. Some of the misrenderings are, however, made with a purpose; others seem to show that the translator was not familiar with the subject of the book. In a pretentious work like this, in which so many novel readings and theories are put forward, the least the author and translator could do would have been to give the Arabic, Hebrew, and cuneiform words in their native dress.

Many of the assertions are unintelligible, with mere translations, except to a first-class oriental scholar (who would not take the trouble to read such rubbish); and they are evidently merely intended to throw dust into the eyes of the average reader by a display of much pretended learning. After wading through the work ourselves, however, we can only offer the average reader our deepest commiseration, should he attempt its perusal. Dr. Hommel's views will have to be put into a much more attractive shape before even the orthodox will tackle them.

CHILPERIC.

THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES.

VIII.—THE FORERUNNER OF CHRIST.

It has been shown, in the first of this series of papers, that the Gospel accounts of the imprisonment and death of John the Baptist are, from beginning to end, fabrications. The only matter having to do with that individual which appears to be historical is, that a baptizer of that name made his appearance in Palestine during the reign of Herod Antipas, and was put to death by that tetrarch. It is very improbable indeed that the Baptist ever saw Jesus, and still more improbable that he bore testimony to the divinity of that personage. If the writer of the primitive Gospel from which Matthew and Mark took their accounts thought it a meritorious act to fabricate the Gospel story of the death and imprisonment of this baptizer, he could have no scruples in concocting everything else now recorded of that individual in the Synoptics.

The Gospel used by the earliest Jewish Christians (*i.e.*, the Ebionites) contained the following choice paragraph:—

"And when the people were baptized Jesus also came, and was baptized by John. And when he came up from the water, the heavens were opened, and he saw the holy Spirit of God in the form of a dove, which came down and came upon him. And a voice came from heaven saying, 'Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.' And again, 'To-day have I begotten thee.' And immediately a great light shone round about the place; and John when he saw it saith to Jesus, 'Who art thou, Lord?' And again a voice came from heaven to him: 'This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.'"

If we compare this paragraph with the parallel passages in the three Synoptical Gospels (Matt. iii. 13-17; Mark i. 9-11; Luke iii. 21-22), we shall see how the original narrative has been altered and revised. The "great light" which, it is stated, "shone round about the place," and the words "To-day have I begotten thee," are omitted by all three. Also, Matthew records only the second announcement by the voice—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"; whereas Mark and Luke give only the first—"Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." Each evangelist had thus the authority of the same document for his version.

There cannot, also, be much doubt that the matters omitted by the Synoptists were in the earliest Gospel narratives, for Justin, who does not appear to have seen the canonical Gospels, says, when quoting from writings which he calls the "Memorabilia" of the apostles (Dial. 88):—

"And then, when Jesus had gone to the river Jordan, where John was baptizing, and when he had stepped into the water, a fire was kindled in the Jordan; and when he came up from the water.....the Holy Spirit alighted upon him in the shape of a dove.....and a voice came at the same time from heaven.....'Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee,' meaning that he was then born to men, when their knowledge of him first began."

Here, it will be seen, the "great light" which, in the primitive Gospel, shone upon the Jordan had become in Justin's day a "fire" burning in the Jordan.

The passage which suggested to the original Gospel writer the little fiction of the voice from heaven is found in the Second Psalm (verse 7), and reads:—

"The Lord said unto me, Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee."

Assuming David to have been the writer of this passage—as was believed by all the early Christians—he was the person whom "the Lord" called his son. Of this there cannot be the shadow of a doubt. The words were

certainly not addressed to one who was not born until ten centuries after the time of David—that is to say, Jesus; neither can they, with any regard to truth, be twisted into so doing. Yet so deeply rooted was the practice of perversion and misrepresentation among the early Christians that, as a matter of fact, we find it three times distinctly stated in the New Testament that the passage was written concerning Christ (Acts xiii. 33; Heb. i. 5; v. 5). Looking at all the circumstances, I have no hesitation in saying that, had the passage in the Old Testament never been written, we should never have had a story of a voice repeating it in the New.

In the account of the Baptist in the Fourth Gospel (i. 32-34) that individual is represented as saying of Jesus:—

"I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon him. And I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with water, he said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth with the Holy Spirit. And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

According to this statement, the Baptist did not know Jesus until after the alleged descent of the "Spirit" upon him; but, if we turn to Matthew's account, we find it plainly implied that he *did* know him:—

"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?"

This was before the descent of the "Spirit," and before the grand announcement by the voice. We have, then, in these conflicting statements a clear indication that the story of the baptism is a fabrication; and this view is confirmed by another incident related in two of the Gospels (Matt. xi. 2-3; Luke vii. 18-20). In the first of these passages we read:—

"Now, when John heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?"

Here it is evident that had John really beheld the "Spirit" descend upon Jesus, and had he heard a voice from heaven proclaiming Christ the beloved Son of God, he could not have had a doubt upon the subject, and would not have found it necessary to send and ask such a question. It may, of course, be said that one of the versions of the baptism story is true, and the latter incident fictitious. In that case we have but another illustration of the fact that we are dealing, not with history, but with a mass of Christian fabrications.

We come now to a matter which may assist us in deciding whether the other Gospel statements respecting the Baptist are fact or fiction. All four evangelists represent this baptizer as the forerunner of Christ, and they all state that his coming was foretold by Isaiah (Matt. iii. 1-3; Mark i. 3; Luke iii. 4; John i. 23). Taking the first of these accounts, the great perverter Matthew says:—

"In those days cometh John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by Isaiah the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ye ready the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."

The quotation is from Isaiah xl., a chapter written towards the close of the exile in Babylon—that is, about two hundred years after the time of the prophet Isaiah. The writer says (xl. 1-6):—

"Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortingly to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her time of service is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.....The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of the Lord, make level in the desert a highway for our God.....The voice of one saying, Cry. And I said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field," etc.

Here the writer, whom for convenience we will call Isaiah, speaks of himself as one "crying." The Lord (*i.e.*, the God Jehovah) is represented as telling his prophet to comfort the people, to proclaim, or cry out to them, comforting news, to declare to them that their service in Babylon was near its end, and their transgressions (for which the captivity was said to be a punishment) were forgiven. Two voices are mentioned—Jehovah's and Isaiah's—and they are a little mixed. First, the voice of "the

Lord" commands his servant to comfort the people; the prophet then speaks of himself as a voice crying—but *not* "in the wilderness," as stated in the Gospel quotations. Again the voice of "the Lord" commands the seer to cry, to which that individual responds by asking, "What shall I cry?" Then he commences his cry by proclaiming, "All flesh is grass," etc. The writer may have considered this language comforting; but, whether he did or not, he himself was the one crying, and that is the only point with which we have to do.

The reference is to the pioneer road-making which was often necessary before the march of an eastern army through a desert country. The "highway" which the prophet called upon the people to prepare was to facilitate the return of the Jews from exile, there being about five hundred miles of desert between Babylon and Judea. In accordance with this view we read in the same book:—

"And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall remain, from Assyria" (xi. 16). "For they shall see eye to eye when the Lord returneth to Zion.....For ye shall not go out in haste, neither shall ye go by flight: for the Lord will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rearward" (lii. 8, 12).

Jehovah returned to Zion when his people returned from captivity; he marched invisibly at their head, and guided and protected them. Isaiah's language seems to have been based upon the following passage:—

"Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: cast up a highway for him that rideth through the desert; his name is Jah; and exult ye before him.....he bringeth out the prisoners into prosperity; but the rebellious dwell in a parched land. O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness.....yon Sinai trembled at the presence of God, the God of Israel" (Psalm lxviii. 4-8).

The reference in the latter portion of this paragraph is to the Exodus from Egypt. In the passage quoted in the Gospels Isaiah has employed precisely the same language. There is no prediction of an individual who should prepare the way for a new teacher by preaching, baptizing, and directing attention to such a personage. The reference is simply to the making of a road through the desert as a passage for the God Jehovah and his people. The misrepresentation in this case turns upon the peg, "the Lord." The Gospel-writers, in common with many other early Christians, considered it legitimate to apply to Jesus anything they found stated in the Old Testament respecting the God Jehovah—both personages being called by them "the Lord." Hence, in the example under consideration, Isaiah is said to mean the Baptist, and Jehovah Christ—another clear case of deliberate misrepresentation.

Let us now, in order to get fresh light upon the subject, compare what Jesus says of himself with what the Baptist says of Jesus, as recorded in the Fourth Gospel:—

WORDS OF JESUS.

"Howbeit he that sent me is true; and the things which I heard from him, these speak I unto the world..... as the Father taught me, I speak these things" (viii. 26, 28).

"For the Father loveth the Son.....he hath given all judgment unto the Son.....He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life" (v. 20, 22, 24).

WORDS OF THE BAPTIST.

"What he hath seen and heard, of that he beareth witness.....that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God" (iii. 32, 34).

"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life" (iii. 35, 36).

Here, it will be observed, the Baptist uses precisely the same language as Jesus. He speaks of God as "the Father," and Jesus as "the Son." He knows that Jesus was sent by God; that "God is true"; that Jesus bore witness of what he had seen and heard in heaven, and therefore spoke "the words of God"; that "the Father" loved "the Son," and had "given all things into his hand"; and that whoever believed on Jesus would obtain "eternal life." He knows, in fact, as much as Jesus himself, and is evidently in the confidence of "the Father." No one in his senses could imagine one who had such a full knowledge of God's plans relative to "the Son" and to the redemption of mankind sending disciples to ask, "Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?"

But the words here ascribed to the Baptist must be set aside as a fabrication; for, it is scarcely necessary to say,

the statements put in the baptizer's mouth belong not to that alleged forerunner, but to the writer of the Gospel himself, who, it has already been shown, manufactured the sayings he has placed in the mouth of Jesus. In short, there cannot, I think, be any reasonable doubt that all the circumstances related of the Baptist in the Gospels are of the same questionable character—that is to say, matters obviously fabricated to show the superiority of Jesus.

ABRACADABRA.

DOUBLE-PROXY; OR, VICARIOUS BELIEF IN VICARIOUS ATONEMENT.

"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."—MESSRS. PAUL AND SILAS.

O PARENT! save your children
From the doom of Christian 'Doxy;
Remember that a household
Can be saved from Hell by proxy.
Believe in Joseph's step-son,
And you'll save your house—tho' vile as
The best of Bible worthies—
As declared by Paul and Silas.
You never need be fearful
Of your children being roasted;
Believe, yourself, and, Presto!
They are saved and Holy-ghosted!
Don't heed the counter statements
Of the Son of Joseph's *sly* lass,
Nor those of James and Peter;
But attend to Paul and Silas.
Have faith in Mary's eldest,
The Apostle told his keeper,
And you and yours are rescued
From the doup-less pit, or deeper.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

TRUTH THE TEST OF RIDICULE.

ON the Zangwillian principle of reversing trite, and oftentimes untruthful, aphorisms, one occasionally arrives at curiously apposite conclusions. Thus, ridicule may be discovered to be less frequently an effective test of truth than truth is an effective test of ridicule. But are we, therefore, to abandon ridicule as a salutary detergent—decry its powers in face of its results? God forbid! Is it thought that, because some people are dull and prosy and commonplace, innocent of smiles and unsusceptible to mirth, there shall be no more Rabelaisian fun made out of religious tomfoolery, no more wit or humor exercised in the scarifying of sanctimonious cant and shams? Are we ever to treat Superstition with ceremonious respect, bowing to the convicted culprit as he descends from the dock, and shedding crocodile tears because his villainy has been discovered and exposed?

Let us consider—to whom are we asked to speak with bated breath and whispering humbleness? Who are they, and how many of them? So few, indeed, as to be absolutely inconsiderable. The saintly seraph-creatures, who live in a transcendental atmosphere of ecstatic fervor quite beyond the range of rude and ugly facts, and who are to be approached in the upper storey only by Freethinking burglars with dark lanterns and rubber shoes—where are they? As a man of the world, living and moving in the world, I knock against but few of them, and they are such that one would, instinctively on contact, be glad to leave alone. I begin, indeed, to think that this crowd of super-sensitive souls, who are fashioned so slenderly, and who are to be handled with so much care, exist more in the imagination of Christian strategists than in real life.

In real life what do I find? A general indifference to the theological teachings—a dull and dead feeling which the clergy themselves deplore. To the bulk of work-a-day people, who give a nominal assent to the prevalent superstition, a Freethought discourse—modelled as the enemy would wish it—would be *caviare* as are the present pulpit pratings. One must be severe and satirical—if not sensational—to be understood. The great reformers of the

world were never mealy-mouthed—meanly apologetic to the abuses which they meant to sweep away. They painted with a big brush and in lurid colors, and their methods were justified by the success achieved.

If ridicule be one of the weapons employed, it is well to remember that, when used as a test of truth, it must itself be tested by truth and good taste, and that, as a discreet smile differs from a grin through a horse-collar, so an ineffective exercise of wit may, in Falstaffian phrase, be simply "the cause of wit in others." X.

JONAH AND THE WHALE.

Most modern Christians are rather shy of the story of Jonah being swallowed by a whale, and are inclined to think it is one of those divine revelations about which the less said the better. Dr. Lyman Abbott has been bold enough to say that it is without any historical foundation, although the story and the whale are certified to by our Blessed Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Indeed, Christ puts his own resurrection, after three days' burial, on a parallel with the three days' immurement of Jonah in the whale's belly, and the inference is that, if Jonah did not actually live in the whale and come safe to land, neither did Jesus resurrect. But Dr. Lyman Abbott finds a beautiful allegory in the legend of Jonah, and so may one find another allegory in the fable of the resurrection. The trouble is, that when you say a tale is an allegory, everyone may put on it his own interpretation. One person may say Jonah represents the sun swallowed up by the sea monster at night, and re-emerging at dawn. Another rationalizer will find he was a sailor, who spent three days and nights in a tavern with the sign of "The Whale."

According to the Rabbins, Jonah was the son of the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings xvii.), whom Elijah restored to life (the son, not the widow) by stretching himself upon him three times. This would date him about 900 B.C. Most critics incline to put him considerably later. The Rabbis, however, were knowing fellows, and probably had a meaning in thus identifying Jonah with the child who was miraculously restored from death by Elijah. Jesus Christ emphatically says that Jonah—not the whale—was a sign, and "as Jonah was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of Man be to this generation." What we have to do is to consider what these signs signified. For this purpose we may do well to go to Nineveh and though we cannot get there like Jonah, who must have gone all the way round Africa and up the Persian Gulf, we can easily get to the Assyrian galleries of the British Museum. Here we shall see the fish-god, and the priest within the fish. Or we may read the story in Berosus and Layard of the fish-god Oannes, whose body was that of a fish and his voice that of a man. During the day he taught the Chaldeans the arts and sciences, and at night returned to the sea. Certainly there were those in Babylonia who worshipped the fish, and who believed that wisdom came out of the waters. The priest in ritual placed himself within the skin of the fish, and there is strong reason to believe that this was a rite of initiation to assimilate oneself to the fish, as in a bear-dance one wore a bearskin, and the buffalo horns in the dance of the buffalo.

A Pagan parallel to the story of Jonah may, perhaps, be found in that told by Lycophron and Hellanicus concerning Hercules. Hesione, the beautiful daughter of King Laomedon, was given in sacrifice to a whale. When the monster approached her, Hercules leaped down his throat, and for three days and nights maintained a conflict, till at length the monster expired, and the hero emerged unharmed, save by the loss of his hair, which, by the heat of this animal, had been made to fall from his head, so that the place where the wool ought to grow appeared like the nut of a new-born child, or that of a tonsured monk. These similes are not chosen capriciously, for the monk's tonsure is a rite of initiation, symbolizing the new-born, imitating the appearance of the head of a new-born child. Hercules rescued Hesione, much as Perseus rescued Andromeda from the sea monster.

Colonel Claude R. Conder, in the *Quarterly Statement of the Palestine Exploration Fund* for July, 1881 (pp 214-218), describes a bronze tablet found in Syria, in which two of the figures, standing at the head and foot of a bier, "are robed in the peculiar fish-headed costume, with a scaly body and fish tail, which is supposed to be symbolical of the mythical Oannes, who, according to Berosus, issued from the Persian gulf and taught laws and arts to the early dwellers on the Euphrates." Probably what is depicted is a rite of initiation, the figure on the bier being the candidate, and the Oannes figure being the representative. Some have found a similarity between Oannes and Jonah, and conjecture that the tale of a whale may have been suggested by the initiation into the fish-priest order.

LUCIANUS.

ACID DROPS.

MR. TOM MANN took time by the forelock on Sunday, speaking twice in the Grand Theatre, Nottingham, before the opening of the Church Congress. Mr. Mann wanted to know what the Church was going to do for the people; in other words, whether it proposed to help the workers in their struggle against capital, especially the women workers. Of course he was only taking advantage of a golden opportunity to point his moral and adorn his tale. He could hardly have been serious in hoping that the Church would turn right round upon itself, and attempt what it was never designed for. The real, and indeed the only, business of the Church is to show the people the way to heaven; and if that business is played out, then the only thing to be done with the Church is to disestablish and disendow it.

Mr. Mann was more himself, and more felicitous, when he said that the Church Congress was meeting at Nottingham to "tell more fairy tales." He was also well inspired in telling his hearers "not to be led astray by clergymen, who would make them believe that there could be no heaven on earth, but while on earth they must do the preacher's bidding, and wait for joy in the heaven to come."

It appears to have been a "Labor Church" meeting that Mr. Mann was addressing. Another meeting of the same body was addressed by the "Dissenter Parson," the Rev. Mr. Collings. According to the *Daily News* reporter, the congregation was grave and attentive, but it did not consist of working men. "I should say," he observes, "that it was largely composed of middle-class people, who went to the theatre merely to learn for themselves what the Labor Church is."

Another Peculiar People case has occurred in Southwark. Coroner Langham held an inquest respecting the death of Walter Frederic Osborne, aged three years and five months. According to the medical evidence, deceased suffered from bronchial pneumonia and congestion of the brain. No doctor had been called in, but an elder had laid hands upon the boy and anointed him with oil. A special prayer meeting had also been held a few days before the child's death. As the doctor who made the post-mortem examination could not positively say that medical assistance would have saved the child's life, the coroner held that the father should have the benefit of the doubt and not be sent for trial; and the jury, acting on this direction, returned a verdict of natural death, adding that they "believed the child's life might have been saved but for the father's stupidity."

Stupidity! That's a good word. But it is applicable to others as well as the Peculiar People. Every Christian is stupid as far as he is a Christian. And if a man is stupid who follows the orders of James and Jesus Christ, what are we to think of those who gave the orders? The jury ought to tackle that question, especially if they profess and call themselves Christians. They should also consider whether it is wise or honest to take an oath on the very book which contains the "stupid" orders of James and Jesus Christ.

After the coroner had "censured" the father for being a *bona fide* Christian, the poor man himself had an innings, and this is what he said: "Before God saved my soul I used to have a doctor. But after he did that, it was such a mighty work that I believed he was well able to save and heal my body. I could not trust in God and man too, and God will not have half a heart. Since then he has been all-sufficient for me and my family, and he has healed them many times."

This is the language of sincerity, and if the Bible be true it is the language of common sense. The real question, therefore, is this: Is the Bible true? That is to say, is it the Word of God? If it is, that poor laborer, Arthur Osborne, is right, and the coroner and jury are wrong. And if the coroner and jury profess to believe that the Bible is true, that it is the Word of God, they are something more than wrong; they are thoroughly illogical, and their bullying of this poor, honest Christian is a piece of wretched hypocrisy.

Christians are always talking about Providence. They quote Hamlet's saying, "There is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow," which of course is a philosophical paraphrase of a well-known saying of Jesus Christ. Well, if there is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow—and we have the authority of the second person of the Trinity for the statement—is there not also a special providence in the death of a child? And if there is, physic is useless, and doctors are unnecessary; in fact, the science and art of medicine are a perfect farce.

Nottingham being a Dissenting city, the High Churchmen are keeping in the background at the parsons' palaver. The population of the lace city is 230,000. The Church communicants, as estimated by the clergy themselves, number but 9,500. The number of confirmations last year was given as 1,200, of whom only 431 were males.

Rev. J. Guinness Rogers takes Mr. Arthur Clayden to task, in the *Daily News*, for standing up for secular education. Mr. Rogers admits that this is what "we religious stalwarts" proposed in 1870, and it is still "logically right," but practically it is all wrong, as the Compromise works so well and so satisfactorily. What does this mean, after all? Simply this: Mr. Clayden stands up for a principle, and Mr. Rogers deserts it. The fact that he expects to gain something, as against the Church, does not add to the dignity of his position.

Athelstan Riley writes to the *Church Times* protesting against the policy of Mr. Diggle in shirking the religious question and appealing to Conservatives and ratepayers on the issue of economy, "that issue affording him the most certain chance of obtaining his majority and the chairmanship." This Mr. Riley protests against, and appeals to Churchmen to support only candidates approved by the Voluntary Schools Defence Union.

Dr. Rigg objects to the Apostles' Creed being taught in Board schools, though, he says, it is contained in the Wesleyan Conference Catechism. He is afraid lest it be explained in the interest of the Church. But does not that exactly apply to the Bible, to which we object?

The sudden deaths, almost simultaneously, of Gregory Yussef, the Melchite patriarch, residing at Damascus, and Cyril Behnam Benni, the Syrian patriarch, residing at Mardin, have given rise at the Vatican to suspicion of foul play. Religious enmity and opposition to the Pope's scheme for the re-union of the Oriental Churches are supposed to have been at the bottom of it.

The Rev. Mr. Miller, vicar of South Cave, applied to Lord Grimthorpe, Chancellor of the diocese of York, for a faculty to put up a reredos in his church. Lord Grimthorpe severely censured the vicar, and mulcted him in costs. In the Anglican Church that is allowed in London and Lincoln which is declared illegal in York. Such is ecclesiastical law.

In a certain Midland town the Wesleyans wanted to enlarge their chapel, and to do this it was necessary to erect a scaffold pole in the next-door garden, which belonged to a Baptist. This gentleman refused to oblige them. He would not have his ground soiled with the Wesleyan scaffold pole. In good, forcible, pious language, he said he "would not let them have a — inch." So they still love one another.

The old Pope is said to be preparing for his end. It has long been the talk of Rome that in the lifetime of Pio Nono an old prophet-priest, known as Padre Filippo, said: "Cardinal Pecci will be the next Pope, and he will reign for twenty years." Pecci was chosen chiefly because the other cardinals thought him weakly, so that another turn would soon come; but he soon showed renewed vitality, and has taken up every work with confidence in the old Padre's prediction that he had twenty years before him. Pius IX. departed on February 8, 1878, and now Leo XIII. thinks it time he put his private affairs in order.

Among the illiterate of the Pennsylvania Germans, says Dr. W. J. Hoffman, of Washington, D.C., diseases are sought to be cured by laying on of hands, breathing upon the affected part, charms, incantations, exorcisms, making passes with the hands, and crosses with the index finger, at the same time pronouncing the name of Jesus and coupling therewith some act in his life. The medicine-man there is still undifferentiated from the priest. Sneezing is always followed by the utterance of "helf Gott," or "Amen," an old and very extensive custom. They also divine with the rod, reciting the following words: "Thou Archangel Gabriel, I beseech thee through God, the Almighty, if there is water here, or not, to indicate it." It is supposed that the rod will tip towards the ground if water is beneath the surface.

The *Daily Chronicle* has received a "long and pathetic letter" from the Barcelona prisoners immured in the fortress of Montjuich. They have all been acquitted by the court which tried them, yet after fourteen months they are still kept in confinement, because they have not the means to pay for their passage to some other country. There are about a hundred and twenty of them, and their fate is a scandal to civilization as well as an infamy to Spain.

Spain has been ruined by the Catholic Church—that is, by Christianity. After the terrible story of the tortures inflicted on the Barcelona reformers, there comes a letter from the Philipino Islands, which shows that similar

atrocities are being perpetrated there. The writer speaks from personal knowledge; his letter is addressed to the Howard Association in London, and is published in the *Daily News*. We reproduce it for our own readers: "I have not been in Cuba; but the atrocities committed there, and denounced in the leading American papers, are only mild instances of the ferocious barbarity practised by the Spaniards in the Philippines. There, at the present day, one sees the omnipotent friars reigning in all their pristine glory, asserting their preponderance over the civil power, living in debauchery and concupiscence, setting even the Roman Church at defiance, by means of the enormous wealth accumulated at the expense of these patient islanders. It is a state of affairs incredible to those who have not lived in the islands. During the present rebellion they have been the instigators of the bloodshed and torture of their unfortunate political prisoners, on whose sufferings these worthy disciples of Torquemada have revelled with delight. I can confirm nearly all that has appeared in the Press on the torture. I know personally many of the victims, prominent and enlightened Philipines, who have been maimed for life, and others have succumbed; while many of the tortures applied are too disgusting for publication, such as—[here the writer describes certain horrible tortures which cannot be described in our columns]—the first of which I have myself seen practised."

A subscriber, who has lately visited Spain, writes: "Not long since a Spanish Liberal newspaper mentioned the fact that several noted Spanish professors and scholars had lately met in conference on the subject of education in Spain, and that the conference received no notice from the Spanish press. But, said the article, 'if it had been a conference of bull-fighters or priests, all the press of Spain would have given particulars of the meeting.'"

The agricultural districts of Spain, says our correspondent, are in a deplorable condition, the peasants working very long hours for a mere pittance. They live in dirty hovels, devoid of the decencies or necessities of life, and with no provision made for their education. Eighty-two per cent. of the population, according to the official statement, cannot read. This is holy Spain, where religion rules.

The *Christian Commonwealth* has an article on Hommel's new book, entitled "The Turn of the Tide." It glories in the thought that the days of the "Destructionists" are over. We commend the editor's attention to the article by "Chilperic" in our present number.

"Healer" Schlatter has left a book of revelation, in which he says "A New Dispensation is approaching." Here is an extract: "Father says that Robert G. Ingersoll is a man of great faith, only the professing Christians have given him too much material to use against religion by their hypocrisy and mouth worship. Had they lived the principles Jesus taught, Mr. Ingersoll would have found fewer facts, and less insincerity to hold up to scorn, and he would not have had the chance to say so much. Father says he has faith in the Unseen Forces, and is ready for the impending change."

The *New York Herald* is giving Mr. George Smith's Creation tablets from Assyria as if it was a new discovery, and speaks of "Professor Smith, the famous English Assyriologist," as if still living. Is Professor Baum responsible for this?

A petition was presented to the Sydney Presbytery from the Rev. J. Benvie, Presbyterian minister of West Maitland, directing attention to certain published statements of the Rev. L. M. Isitt, the temperance lecturer, which, it was contended, gravely reflected on a minister of the Presbyterian Church. What Mr. Isitt states is that a Presbyterian minister of Sydney was drunk on the street, and picked out of the gutter by the Rev. Routledge.

The *Sydney Bulletin* is a lively, but it is also a cautious, paper. A correspondent writes to know the *Bulletin's* views of Christianity. The answer is: "What do you mean by Christianity, and we will tell you what our views are upon it." A similar answer might serve for those who ask about God. Trot out your God before you ask our opinion of him.

The *Bulletin* got a good answer to another question it asked: "What do the early Christians in 'The Sign of the Cross' do for a living?" That's an easy one. Like the folk who took in each other's washing, they earn a humble but honest livelihood by preaching the Gospel to each other."

Bits of the old, old story, from the evidence in a Melbourne alleged criminal assault case:—The complainant was a prepossessing girl, aged fifteen years and eleven months.....Accused was a teacher in the Brighton Presbyterian Sunday-school. They first met there, as she was a scholar in his class.....They were improperly intimate in a paddock, and he then left her, saying he had a mission

service to attend at the church, and expected to see her there.....She admitted that a letter produced, in which a number of improper questions and answers appeared, was written by her to the accused. She got the questions from another girl at a Band of Hope meeting.—*Sydney Bulletin*.

Of what religion is a shark? Says Rev. W. G. Taylor in the *Primitive Methodist* of New South Wales: "A traveller had recently said that in Australia and America they had found the Methodists the pioneers of religion everywhere, and when he was going to Australia a shark was caught, and in it they found a ticket of Methodist membership."

Who says the lion will not lie down with the lamb—inside him? The Unitarians of Boston have met the Trinitarians in friendly conference at the Isle of Shoals, and indulged in much kindly talk about Christian re-union. Some think this indicates that people are ceasing to care a bawbee whether Jesus was God, man, or mixture.

An embarrassing scandal has arisen in a Lancashire town much frequented by holiday-makers. A lady who has for twenty years been an active member of a Nonconformist Church, and a Sunday-school teacher, turns out to be a person of the male persuasion. It appears that her (or rather his) sex was, for monetary reasons, concealed from birth. This person has shared the feminine confidences of many dear sisters in the Lord, and their distress of mind at the exposure may be easily imagined.

Peter Lombard tells in the *Church Times* of a man of God who was asked to take the duty for a clergyman just back from his honeymoon. On turning to the occasional prayers, he saw a notice: "The prayers of the Church are desired on behalf of Anna Smith." He read it out to the astonishment of the congregation, the incumbent, and the bride; Anna Smith being the incumbent's former wife, who had died some months previously.

An earthquake in Italy, a landslide in the Chilkat Pass, the plague in India, and bad harvests in Russia and Ireland, are among recent illustrations of merciful Providence.

Probably the orthodox will think they were "infidel" burglars who broke into the parish church of St. Mary, Long Crendon, Bucks, and not only stole what they could lay hands on, but actually tried to burn down the holy edifice. But men who would rob a church, when they could find much better swag at the parson's house, can hardly have brains enough to be "infidels." They must be Christians gone a bit wrong.

Mrs. Besant finds that Madame Blavatsky foretold the troubles through which the Theosophical Society is passing, but this unfavorable "cycle" is to end next year, certainly before the end of the century. "This society," Mrs. Besant says, "is the ark of spiritual truth," and those who do any sort of work for it are "the privileged of the earth." It reminds us of the glorious reign of the saints on earth, which was always going to begin, though somehow it never got a real start. "Ye are the salt of the earth," said Jesus. "We are the salt of the earth," says Mrs. Besant. The one is as accurate, and modest, as the other.

The vicar of the parish church of Folkestone is working the oracle with a lot of old bones, which are supposed to be relics of St. Fauswythe. They were exposed the other evening within the "altar" rails, surrounded by five lighted candles. A number of credulous fools passed by in single file, most of them bowing nearly to the ground before these "mortal remains," perhaps of a sheep or some other four-legged animal. Even supposing the relics to be human, it may be imagined what the old Reformers would think and say of this "worshipping of dead men's bones."

A characteristic comment was made by a Dublin gallery *habitué* on a curious dramatic hitch which occurred some years ago at the Queen's Theatre. A very portly Mephistopheles, in some *Faust* extravaganza, had to "go home." The dramatic Devil was, like Hamlet, "fat and scant of breath," and as he sank through a small circular trap—a sort of "converted vampire," to be technical—he stuck. The demons below tugged at his crimson legs in vain; the mortals above tried to stuff him down; everything was useless—and then, over the delighted Dublin din that rose from the whole house, came a still, small voice: "Well, boys, that's a comfort, anyway—hell's full!" The curtain came down with a run.

"How shall we check the Sunday bicycle?" demanded the president of the Christian Citizens' Reform League. "Same as trunks," courteously suggested the commercial tourist, who had wandered in merely because he saw a crowd.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 3, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London, W., at 7.30, "Man's Origin and Destiny."

October 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, Glasgow; 17 and 24, Athenæum Hall, London; 31, Camberwell.

November 28, Leicester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. C. WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—October 3, Sheffield; 5 and 6, debate at Birmingham; 10, Birmingham; 11, City-road School, Dudley road, Birmingham; 12, Nelson-street School, Birmingham; 13 and 14, debate at Bradford; 17, Huddersfield; 31, Stanley, Durham; October 30, November 1, 2, and 3, debate at Stanley; 7, Glasgow; 14, Edinburgh. 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.

R. H. F.—Books sent us for review are noticed, but we cannot insert gratuitous preliminary advertisements, especially of works dealing with subjects in which our readers are not particularly interested.

THE BROWNE FUND.—We have received: E. Jones, 2s.; Marie du Bois (per Miss Vance), 10s.; W. Button, 6d.

THE BROWNE FUND.—The case of Mr. Browne, who is still in Chelmsford Gaol, has taken a new and unexpected turn, which Mr. Forder will fully explain in our next issue. Meanwhile fresh subscriptions are not invited. Mr. Forder acknowledges the receipt of the following:—J. Gale, 2s. 6d.; W. Barker, 2s. 6d.; Manchester Man, 5s.; Mr. Leaf, 1s.; Mr. Bate, 6d.; A Friend, 6d.; J. Martin, 2s.; W. H. Putz, 6d.; J. Greevz Fisher, 5s.; Garibaldi, 1s.; J. G. Dobson, 1s.; J. Umpleby, 1s.; W. A. Jones, 6d.; A. Lewis, 2s.; J. Warner, 1s.

ERNEST PACK.—We cannot give space for the long extracts you send for insertion. There was no intention of doing you any injustice. The word "chased" seemed a fair summary of the newspaper report, which says that you "beat a retreat," and that the mob followed you, hooting, shouting, and yelling. It did not occur to us that you were responsible for the conduct of these bigots. Mr. Johnson's letter in the *Reporter* puts a somewhat different complexion on the matter. He says that the Secularists retired from the meadow in the usual way after the meeting was over, and that constable Perry did not actually protect you from violence, though he did disperse the mob that followed you. According to the report, you wore attired like a clergyman, and we expressed a hope that this was untrue. On this point you are silent.

DR. MORTIMER.—Thanks for the cuttings.

E. CHURCH.—You may read about Pappus and his story of the inspired books staying on the table, while the non-inspired ones fell off, in W. Mace's *Greek and English New Testament*, p. 874.

P. TODD.—Dr. Cumming prophesied the end of the world for 1866. He lived on till 1881, and it is said had a long leasehold property.

J. B.—Mr. Stead is no authority on that, nor perhaps on any other subject. If he likes to say that Büchner's *Force and Matter* is antiquated, well and good; he has a right to his opinion. Science is progressing day by day, but Büchner's arguments are based upon truths that do not change with time. His arguments may be fallacious, but they have not been refuted by subsequent discoveries.

A. F. WALTER.—It is too late now to think of a lecture on Peckham Rye. Mr. Foote has arranged to lecture in the Camberwell Secular Hall on the last Sunday in October. He would have given a date before, but the Branch, while wanting him to lecture, had overlooked the requisite invitation.

T. FENTON (Edinburgh).—Mr. Foote's debate at Glasgow with Mr. W. T. Lee takes place in the minor City Hall on the evenings of Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday (Oct. 12-15). The subjects are: "Is there a Future Life?" and "Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?"

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—W. Brownlee (Havelock, New Zealand), £5; Edward Self, 4s. Further subscriptions are not invited for this Fund, as the Lecture Scheme is dropped for the present in favor of the new Treasurer's Scheme. Mr. Foote puts up with the loss he has sustained since the Conference.

We have received the following fresh promises towards the N. S. S. Treasurer's Scheme, those marked (p) being paid:—E. Jacques, 5s.; T. Lewis, 5s.; Thos. Stephens, 10s. 6d. (p).

TREASURER'S SCHEME (N. S. S.).—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges the following:—A. W. Marks, £2 (p); Mrs. B. E. Marks, £2 (p); F. Roger, 10s. (p); E. H. Bass, 10s.; J. Umpleby, £1.

C. COHEN acknowledges the following fresh promises towards the N. S. S. Treasurer's Scheme:—Miss Garvon, 5s. (p); J. Walker, £1 (p); W. Thomson, 4s.; R. Skouce, 5s.; D. Watt, 10s.; W. Tait, 5s.; D. Fyfe, 5s. (p 2s. 6d.); J. McLolland, 10s.; J. Raven, 5s.

J. KEALT, 24 Albert-street, St. Paul's, Bristol, has taken the secretaryship of the N. S. S. Branch, in place of Mr. Treasurer, who has resigned through pressure of other business.

EDWARD SELF.—Thanks for your cordial and encouraging letter.

PRO PATRIA.—We deal with the subject again this week, and hope the new article will please you as much as the former one.

SPANISH EXILES FUND.—James Neate, 2s. 6d.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Bethnal Green Branch, 4s.

J. ROBERTS (Liverpool).—See paragraph. We regret to hear of the death of Mrs. Tanner so soon after that of her husband. It will be felt by the bereaved family.

C. W. HECKTHORN.—Thanks for your excellent letter, which would have been inserted, only the subject is dealt with in our leading article.

W. G. ROBERTSON.—Under consideration.

HUGH THOMPSON.—Your letter shall be kept, and the corrections made in the list. Thanks.

ALBERT.—Will appear next week.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Liberator—Sydney Bulletin—Two Worlds—New York Public Opinion—People's Newspaper—Herts Leader—Vectis—Secular Thought—Crescent—Islamic World—Isle of Man Times—Reynolds's Newspaper—Glasgow Herald—Star—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Essex Weekly Herald—Literary Guide—Stratford Herald.

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

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.

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

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

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

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 this evening (October 3) at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, taking for his subject "Man's Origin and Destiny." Freethinkers should endeavor to bring their orthodox friends to this lecture.

The Birmingham Branch is in a high state of delight over the extremely successful opening of its winter campaign last Sunday—the birthday of our late great leader, Charles Bradlaugh. Mr. Foote delivered three lectures in the large hall of the Bristol-street Board School, and the meetings exceeded the most sanguine anticipations. Even in the morning the hall was well filled, and in the evening it was crammed almost to suffocation, every inch of standing room being occupied. Happily the lecturer was in his very best form, and the audiences were remarkably enthusiastic. Over a hundred copies of the *Freethinker* were sold at the bookstall, and many more could have been disposed of if the supply had not been exhausted.

A capital program up to Christmas has been issued by the Birmingham Branch, and with a start like Sunday's there is every reason to expect a thoroughly successful session. Among the special lectures are those by Mr. Charles Watts and Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner.

Friends attended on Sunday from places as distant as Coventry and Burton. The friends from Wolverhampton, including the veteran Mr. Christopher, begged Mr. Foote to come over to them and wake up the "saints" with a view to reforming the Branch and resuming the propaganda.

The chair was taken in the evening at Birmingham by that gallant veteran, Mr. Ridgway, who was ill on the occasion of Mr. Foote's previous visit. It was pleasant to see him about and active once more. He is a fine type of the grand old army of Freethinkers who fought around Charles Bradlaugh. Mr. Taylor, the Branch president, was as active and genial as ever; the indefatigable Mr. Partridge slaved away quietly, but with great effect, at the bookstall; and all the committee seemed to be working together with absolute harmony. Such a Branch cannot help succeeding.

Last Sunday evening Mr. Charles Watts had a good audience at the Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road. His lecture upon "The Theory of the Resurrection" was followed with close attention and warmly applauded. Mr. Harry Brown made an excellent chairman. It was pleasing to see so many ladies present.

To-day, Sunday, October 3, Mr. Watts lectures three times in Science Hall, Rockingham-street, Sheffield. We hope the friends from the surrounding districts will rally in full force.

Mr. Watts has returned from his visit to Plymouth, where

he delivered Sunday lectures to good audiences, and held a public debate with Mr. W. T. Lee. This debate was to have lasted for four nights, but Mr. Lee seems to have lost his temper on the third night, and declined to appear on the fourth. Mr. Watts was present to fulfil his engagement with the public, and the audience, consisting of Christians as well as Secularists, unanimously passed a vote of confidence in him. We have received a long letter from Mr. Barter, representing the Secularists at Plymouth, but it arrived too late for insertion in this week's *Freethinker*. Besides, we should prefer to hold it over till next week, in order that Mr. Lee may have an opportunity of stating his own case without any sort of prejudice. He has always acted courteously in debating with Mr. Foote, and we should be very sorry to do him an injustice. He will see this paragraph and take his own course. In any case, we shall have to print Mr. Barter's letter, and whatever Mr. Watts may have to state himself, in our next issue.

Since the previous paragraph was written, we have received a letter from Mr. Lee, in which he refers to the "unpleasantness" at Plymouth. Of course the matter is graver than that. Mr. Lee hopes that we shall give him fair play, and in this he will not be disappointed. Both sides shall be heard. Mr. Lee will doubtless send us a statement for our next issue, and both he and Mr. Watts will be at liberty to correct each other, if necessary, in the following number.

An appreciative notice of Colonel Ingersoll's lecture on Shakespeare appeared in last week's *Stage*. We extract the following: "Colonel Ingersoll has certainly the gift of eloquence, and his description of Shakespeare as 'an intellectual ocean whose waves touched all the shores of thought' is by no means the only fine sentence in a powerful piece of literary and philosophical criticism. Ingersoll's glowing style, his forcible logic, and his acute discrimination make his panegyric of the Bard of Avon almost as interesting to read as, no doubt, his lecture was inspiring to hear. In these days of finicking special pleading it is pleasant to come upon such an example of bold, uncompromising argument on behalf of firm-seated opinions."

Mr. A. B. Moss had a fine audience last Sunday afternoon on Peckham Rye, and a good one in the evening at the Camberwell Secular Hall. Mr. Moss lectures at Camberwell again this evening (October 3), on "Is Religion Necessary or Useful?"

Mr. J. M. Robertson's lectures at Liverpool have (we are informed) been highly successful and much appreciated. He concludes the course to-day (October 3) with two lectures, at three and seven, on "Are the Clergy Honest?" and "Life and Morals without Religion."

Mr. H. Percy Ward is arranging a lecture tour in the North in the new year. On the way he would be pleased to arrange for Sunday or week-night lectures with any of the Midland Branches, if they will communicate with him as soon as possible at Leighton Hall, Kentish Town, London, N.W.

The President of the N. S. S. interviewed Mr. J. F. Green at the request of the Executive. This gentleman was going to contest Finsbury at the approaching School Board elections. He had been adopted as a candidate by a meeting of "advanced" representatives, including delegates from the Social Democratic Federation, and he was strong on the question of secular education. Mr. Green, however, has since been obliged to retire. The Social Democratic Federation now insists on the program including the universal free maintenance of school children. Mr. Green had accepted the free maintenance of "necessitous" children, which is a heavy burden enough to carry before the ratepayers. "I am sorry," he writes, "that this fiasco has happened, as I think I could have made a good fight on the program originally adopted, and I intended to make a special feature of my opposition to the compromise and to religious teaching in the schools."

The Failsforth Secular Sunday School, whose approaching bazaar is advertised in the *Freethinker*, is a most deserving organization, and we hope it will succeed in raising the requisite £500. The school is open every Sunday morning and afternoon, for the purpose of instructing the members' children. There are about 150 names on the books (scholars and teachers), and the average attendance is nearly eighty, the ages varying from four to twenty years. In the winter there are also Sunday evening lectures. The school was erected in 1880, and about £900 has been expended on the building. At present there is not a penny of debt. The alterations it is intended to make for increased accommodation are estimated by Mr. Larner Sugden to cost £500. The land is freehold, and the property is invested in trustees. If the alterations are completed at once, the premises will meet the requirements of the Education

Department, and a day and evening school will be opened. As all the members are working men, their enterprise is extremely creditable. They deserve all the support that can be given them. The bazaar will be held on October 30 and November 1.

A Cornish friend, who sympathizes with the Peculiar People who are being persecuted by their dishonest co-religionists, offers to contribute towards making good any pecuniary loss they may have suffered. He would forward £3 (say) if we could undertake to distribute it. Unfortunately, we are so extremely busy at present that we cannot very well undertake this duty, and perhaps it would in any case be better to wait until the case is tried before a jury in a superior court. This Cornish friend also offers to subscribe £1 towards reprinting our last week's article as a leaflet for general distribution. This might be done, with some alterations and additions, when the final trial attracts more public attention.

The Bradlaugh Club has been having an octave in connection with the birthday of Charles Bradlaugh, beginning last Sunday with a largely attended tea-meeting and followed by meetings and entertainments through the week.

The Wood Green Branch of the N. S. S. this Sunday open their new hall, Station-road, with a tea-meeting at five p.m., followed by a lecture from Mr. Forder. All friends in the district are invited.

Thomas Stephens, of Darlestone, is a member of the National Secular Society. He is an old working man, earning only twelve-and-sixpence a week. Last Sunday he travelled into Birmingham to hear Mr. Foote's lectures, and handed him half a guinea towards the new Treasurer's Scheme. Thomas Stephens did not want an advertisement, but we choose to give it as a stimulus to other members of the Secular party. If all subscribed in the same proportion as this poor workman, what a glorious future the N. S. S. would have, and what a magnificent propaganda it would carry on.

Obituary.

THE Manchester Branch has sustained a heavy loss by the death of Mr. Samuel King, at the age of forty-one. For the past nine years the deceased filled the important office of Treasurer, and, by his ability, straightforwardness, and sterling honesty, did much towards placing the Branch in a sound financial position. His work in this respect always received the warmest praise from the auditors and members for its accuracy and neatness. Mr. King had been in indifferent health for some years, but he bore up manfully, while suffering from a painful disease, which he well knew could have but one termination. The final attack came a few days ago, and on the 18th ult., in the presence of two of his many friends, he passed quietly and peacefully away. The deceased left instructions that his body should be cremated, and that he should have a Secular funeral. His wishes were carried out, a member of the Branch (Mr. Pegg) reading in an effective and impressive manner the Burial Service of Austin Holyoake, which was listened to with the greatest attention by a large gathering of relatives and friends. The service ended by the organ playing the "Dead March in Saul."—F. GOUGH.

It is with deep regret that I have to record the death of Ann Todd, wife of Edward Todd, of the Stanley Secular Society, at the age of seventy. For many months prior to her death she had been bedridden, but nothing pleased her more during her illness than to have a few of her Free-thought friends near. She would brighten up, and commence conversing with all the vivacity of youth. Her enthusiasm for the cause was unbounded; it was always her first inquiry, when you visited her, as to how the Free-thought world was going on. She was a well-known character to all our lecturers. Mr. Cohen, when he was here, visited her twice, and I remember he wrote in the *Freethinker* of the remarkable intelligence displayed by so feeble an old lady. It was her special request, right up to her death, to have a thorough Secular burial—no one but Secularists were to officiate. Mr. John White said a few appropriate words before leaving the house, and at the graveside he read the Burial Service of Mr. Austin Holyoake in an impressive manner. I beg to tender to her husband and children the heartfelt sympathies of the many friends and members of Stanley and district.—G. CRUDDAS.

There never will be a question in this world on which people will be unanimous, if only because an existing system, however bad, must always be advantageous to somebody.—J. P. Nisbet.

IF GOD EXISTED.

If there is a God, he should be good—all-good—towards all his creatures, as a recompense for having brought them into existence without their will and knowledge, and often contrary to both. He should be omnibenevolence itself, in order to command the respect and counter-love of his creatures. It is innate in man that he cannot love any one who is cruel to him; and unless He is kind to me and all my fellow-creatures I cannot reciprocate his affection, even if he love me, though I strive as hard as I may. He should also be omnipotent; for a god who can create this wonderful universe can do anything. But, on the contrary, we find by looking into the facts that he cannot, and does not, possess these two attributes at once. The facts of nature tell us that he must either be a malignant monster, who delights in torturing and maiming the poor unfortunate beings whom he, perhaps in momentary evil whims, has brought into existence; or else, though he means well with us, he is unable to remove the evils with which we are surrounded. But his only excuse is that he is not.

The greatest power in the world has always been, and still partly is, might, not right; the sword, not peace; blood, not brotherhood. Man has had to slowly raise himself up from a state of savagery to one of civilization. Through the terrible school of suffering, disappointment, and hardship, he has had to go in order to emancipate himself and make himself superior to the rest of creation. He was placed upon the earth in a state of nudity, and through the horrible and repeated exposure to wind and wave he was driven to learn how to cover his naked hide. He was put upon this globe without food, and the only teacher in the arts of obtaining it was the horrid pang of hunger. He was surrounded by conditions engendering disease; but he was given no remedies, and the sole teacher in the science of medicine was frightful suffering, pain, and death. He was brought here minus fire, and his only teacher in the art of kindling it was his ingenuity, experiment, and want. The gruesome process of evolution went on through the awful struggle for existence, the inevitable survival of the fittest, and natural selection, which brought about the merciless elimination of the unfit and the rejection of the unnatural. But the element fittest for survival was not always the best morally. The moral, the meek, inherited the earth, and the worms inherited them in turn; or perhaps they went to a better world, where they were more fitted to survive.

Race superseded race in the reckless struggle for ascendancy. One nation climbed to the top of the ladder of civilization, became indolent in its superfluity, and slowly sank to the bottom again; another race took its place, and soared above the rest, became corrupted, had its civilization crushed by an enemy, and had to begin its upward march anew, march on and on at random, without goal and without end, apparently without purpose, knowing that it will in its turn be superseded by still another, though the latter may never reach so high as the one it conquers. It is brute conquering man, savage beating the civilized, physical slaying moral force, evil destroying good, cunning superseding simplicity. One section of society has always warred against another. Jealous foolishness and avaricious greed have sought to eradicate unselfish wisdom and the honest love to human kind. The pioneers of every movement which was on the road to bring emancipation and happiness to poor, suffering, and struggling humanity were ruthlessly cast into dungeons, tortured and maimed in the most horrible ways that human subtlety of skill could devise, and put to death; and still man is winding his way forward on his thorny path.

Now, if God existed, what was he doing all these countless centuries, seeing the terrible struggles of man; seeing virtue being trampled under foot, and vice to reign supreme; seeing truth ignored and falsehood rear its head in unblushing effrontery, and not to assist in the promulgation of true principles? If God had existed, he would surely at least have now and then given the human race a push forward on its thorny way; he would have lent struggling humanity a hand; he would have given a sign whereby to travel—a revelation, definite, clear, consistent, and unmistakable, as a link between father and offspring. If God existed, he would never sit coolly by and allow a rascally priesthood, who profess to speak in his name, to utter the most unholy, the wickedest, and most monstrous blasphemies against his name, thereby deceiving men and causing them unutterable evils. If God had existed when it was written that he commanded Moses to go and slay the enemy and spare none—men, married women, and male children—but to save the young women for themselves, and to give a percentage of all the spoil to the priest as an offering to the Lord, including thirty-two virgins, and all the thousands of other obscene and brutal calumnies perpetrated upon him in the same "infallible" book, he would rather have paralyzed the writer's arm than permitted such writings to be spread broadcast over the world, inducing some men to act upon it, and others to turn their back upon him in disgust and deny him. If God had existed during

the Dark Ages, while the Inquisition raged through Europe, when innocent men were being subjected to unnamable and unendurable tortures—as rack, thumbscrew, and flames, and when women's breasts were torn open with iron instruments, he would have sent plagues and blindness upon the priestly monsters who were the authors of these crimes. If there had been a God when thousands of pure women and children were burnt alive for imaginary crimes, he would have struck dead the clerical brutes who perpetrated these abominable outrages. Yes, and if there were a God now he would rise in his wrath and paralyze the lying tongues of the damnable impostors who dare to stand before public nineteenth-century audiences and tell them that the "Old Book," which, as they very well know, sanctions and commands these brutalities to be committed, is the inspired word of the holy, living God. If God existed, he would bind the tongues of the infernal slanderers, who trade in the vilifications of the dead teachers of their race, whose shoe-strings they are not holy enough to touch. If God existed to-day, he would cast into the blackest depths of hell those vile scoundrels who live in grandeur and splendor at the expense of those who can less afford it, and try to keep the masses ignorant and slavish, while professing to be followers of the meek and lowly Nazarene.

But God's excuse is that he is not. A reverend Father-in-God, in replying to the Danish critic, Georg Brandes, asked the silly question, "If Jehovah does not exist, why try and kill him?" It is not the real Jehovah that needs killing, because we are satisfied that he never lived; but the imaginary Jehovah in silly folk's minds. People point to the order of things in the universe. That is only since the Evidencers have been in the field, and turned everything topsy-turvy. We used to be constantly referred to the disorder of things—i.e., miracles, as a proof of the existence of God. But as a result of modern criticism and reasoning, and because all the so-called miracles we know to have been shown by science to be parts of the natural phenomena of the law of causation, the theory of miracles has become untenable, and men have got ashamed thereof; and so, as a last refuge, they point to nature's regularity. But what about the irregularities and deviations of nature? What about the thousands of little—apparently purposeless—things and incidents occurring every day? How about the eyes that never see, the ears that never hear, the legs that never walk, the hands that never grasp, and the brains that never think? The child that is stillborn is as perfect in its organism as the one that lives. It has been conceived, nurtured, and born without any purpose, except to cause pain. It has been formed and shaped, and has all the organs that are necessary to be ready to enter upon life; but it is never to use them. How about the caterpillars, that spend a whole summer for the purpose of preparing their bodies for the winter trance in order to awake as butterflies or moths, which die during the long winter night, and never attain their aim? How about the storks that return to the mother country too early in spring, and perish? Or the flies and bees that drown? Or the birds' eggs that rot? What about the rain that falls at the wrong season, and does not fall at the right? And how about the human beings that are said to have been created for the sole purpose of being eternally roasted for the edification of God, the holy angels, and the Devil?

If there is a God, he must have a design for everything, as we cannot imagine a trivial, undesigning, blundering God. He could never have designed me to say that he is not—if God existed.

J. K. MAAGAARD.

The Bible Elohim.

The Elohim and all Alô-im, including Yahve, are spoken of as partial, hating, loving, and jealous; as the Creator he was pleased, and then displeased, with his work—the world and man (Genesis i. 31; vi. 6). All Elohim repent alike of their good and their evil intentions (1 Samuel ii. 30, 31; Jonah iii. 10); they associate with lying and deceitful spirits, and are often unjust, and visit the sins of parents upon innocent children—a cruelty Christianity has virtually accepted in her leading dogmas. The Elohim required bloody sacrifices, human and bestial, innocent and cherished victims, even the firstborn of man and beast. They gloried in "creating evil as well as good" (Isaiah xlv. 7; Amos iii. 6); and so loved savory food and the burning odors of the sacrifices that these were called "the food of the Elohim."—Major-General Forlong, "Short Studies," p. 346.

Suppose that all the money wasted in cathedrals in the Middle Ages had been used for the construction of school-houses, academies, and universities, how much better the world would have been! Suppose that, instead of supporting hundreds of thousands of idle priests, the money had been given to men of science for the purpose of finding out something of benefit to the human race here in this world.—Ingersoll.

BOOK CHAT.

THE Humanitarian League will shortly issue two new volumes through different publishers—viz., (1) *Human Science Lectures*, the series of addresses given last winter in London by Edward Carpenter, the Rev. Douglas Morrison, chaplain of Wandsworth Prison, Professor Thomson, of Edinburgh University, and Dr. Milne Bramwell (Bell & Sons); and (2) *Humanitarian Essays*, being volume iii. of *Cruelties of Civilization*, dealing with various subjects, contributed by Harry Roberts, Maurice Adams, Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner, Joseph Collinson, G. W. Foote, and H. S. Salt (William Reeves). The first part of this series dealt with certain social questions of immediate human interest; the second with those questions that more closely affect the welfare of animals. In the present volume both kinds are included, but in such proportion as to leave no ground for complaint so often brought against humanitarians—that, while pleading the cause of the lower animals, they forget that of their fellow-men. It has from the first been the Humanitarian League's purpose to show that the cause of humanity is everywhere one and the same, and that it is iniquitous to inflict unnecessary suffering on any sentient being.

Dr. G. Brinton, the author of *Myths of the New World*, has written a work on *The Religion of Primitive Peoples*. We dislike the word "primitive," but have no doubt Dr. Brinton's work will be far better worth reading than the pretentious study of Mr. F. B. Jevons, who philosophizes about the faith of savages from arm-chair researches.

In the fifty-first volume of the *Dictionary of National Biography* the greatest name of the entire roll appears—that of Shakespeare. It is, of course, written by the editor, Mr. Sidney Lee, and occupies nearly fifty pages, being divided into biography, portraits, and memorials, bibliography, and Shakespeare's reputation. Mr. Lee, who has gone most carefully over the ground, shows that materials for the great poet's life are fuller than usually thought. His conclusion, however, that from the time Shakespeare left Stratford (1585), "although he was never wholly estranged from his family, he saw little of his wife or children for eleven years"—when his son was buried there—is a surmise from want of evidence. We prefer to suppose that he had them with him in London as soon as ever he could afford to bring them. Mr. Lee appears to adopt Gerald Massey's view, that Lord Southampton was the patron of the sonnets. Much has recently been made of Shakespeare's father having been presented as a recusant for absenting himself from church. The commissioners reported that his absence was probably due to "fear of process for debt." Of the poet's will Mr. Lee says: "The religious exordium is in conventional phraseology, and gives no clue to Shakespeare's personal religious opinions." So far, so good; but Mr. Lee goes on to say: "What those opinions were we have neither the means nor the warrant for discussing." We think his works give both. No religious man would have written such plays, or indulged in the profanities which appear in them. When, moreover, we find the same sentiments on death placed in the mouth of his greatest characters in many different plays, we can hardly escape the thought that they reflect his own views.

Among the other contents of this volume are "Sir J. R. Seeley," the historian and author of *Ecce Homo*, by Professor Prothero; "Sir Walter Scott," by Leslie Stephen; "Michael Scot," the early scholar, by Sheriff Mackay; "Reginald Scot," the first English writer against the belief in witches, by S. Lee; and a too brief notice of Thomas Scott, the Freethinker, by J. M. Wheeler.

The University Magazine for October opens with "A Hundred Years of Malthusianism," the parson's work on Population being published in 1798. Nitti's criticism of Malthus is roughly handled. There is one little slip. Carlyle's work, from which, it is said, we must date the Neo-Malthusian movement, was entitled *Every Woman's Book* (1826). A. Ebbels reviews Professor Bruce's *Apologetics*, Mr. F. H. Perry Coste replies to W. S. Lilly on Evolutionary Ethics, and there is an acute criticism on the ever-interesting novelist, Charlotte Brönte.

We expect the article which will most attract our readers in the *University Magazine* is "My Family Folk-Lore," by J. M. Wheeler. Our sub-editor tells a lot of strange yarns about wheelers and wheels. His paper is of real human interest, besides containing much curious antiquarian matter, and a suggestion of the late survival of pagan cults in England. Those interested in Mr. Wheeler should certainly read this number.

You can always tell a sacred concert, because it is always given on Sunday.

CORRESPONDENCE.

ROMNEY'S PORTRAIT OF THOMAS PAINE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your paper of August 29 Mr. J. M. Wheeler decides very positively that the portrait left by me in the National Portrait Gallery as Romney's "Paine" is not by Romney. Anxious as I am to have the picture discussed, I read Mr. Wheeler's paragraph with regret, for it compels a rejoinder which, with all my kindly feelings towards a Freethinker of long service, cannot be made pleasant to him.

Mr. Wheeler mentions my article in the London *Athenæum*, but evidently has not read it. He seems to assume that I have occupied the valuable space of that journal—and that its editor permitted me to do so—with statements unworthy his consideration, and consequently occupies your space with forestalled objections. He says: "It is certainly not by George Romney. No critic who will compare it with Romney's masterly portrait of himself in the same Gallery, or with any of his portraits, can be in doubt upon the point." In the *Athenæum* I said: "I have not the slightest doubt, and this accords with the opinion of persons well acquainted with Romney's work who have already examined the portrait," etc. Mr. Wheeler's implicit charge of mendacity on my part would be inexcusable were it not plain that he had not read my assertion.

Mr. Wheeler says he "asked the opinion of the curators. The answer was decisive: 'The painting is not by Romney, and is a very bad replica.'" Turning to the Standard Dictionary, I find: "*Replica*.—A duplicate executed by the artist himself, and regarded, equally with the first, as an original." According to these curators, then, the portrait is by Romney, though he did not paint it! But perhaps they meant "copy." There are many liveried "curators" in galleries who do not know the difference between a copy and a replica; but Mr. Wheeler would have got a more important opinion if he had asked their superiors—Mr. Lionel Cust, for instance, director of the Gallery, who came to my house to see the portrait, and at once pronounced it a Romney.

Professor Colvin, keeper of prints in the British Museum, who also came to see the picture in my house, remarked a characteristic of Romney—the red in the inner corner of the eye; and Mr. Cust pointed out the same thing to me in Romney's portrait of himself—that very portrait of which Mr. Wheeler says "no critic," etc. (see above).

Professor Colvin thought that the background had been painted in by a later hand, and advised me to consult an expert cleaner as to whether it could be scraped off. For that purpose I called in Murchall, merely telling him it was an old picture, as I did not wish it talked of as a Romney or a Paine until I had written to the *Athenæum*. The portrait was shown to Murchall's expert in a room apart from other portraits of Paine. So soon as he saw it he said, "It's a Romney." "How do you know?" I asked. "We prepared many Romneys for the Romney family's sale, and I know them well." He had no knowledge of Paine, nor any notion who was the subject, but repeated, "It is a Romney." I then brought in Sharp's large engraving of Romney's Paine, and pointed out the differences in minor details between the engraving and the painting. These differences are in the lower part of the dress and in the papers on the table, which are roughly done in the painting, but finished off in Sharp's engraving. The expert said: "In painting portraits of men Romney did not care much after he had got the head, and often left the engraver to do his own finishing." He advised that the repainted background should not be tampered with, as the canvas was very old and might be injured. I may here add that all experts and critics who examined the picture, at my request, agreed that the canvas is as old as Romney's work (1792)—an important fact, for no American painter could then have painted Paine, who was in Europe 1787-1802.

"Moreover," continues Mr. Wheeler, "the artist has taken liberties of alteration from the engraving, or the picture, which William Sharp certainly would not have done." But this is what Sharp certainly did. Had Mr. Wheeler read my article, he would have known that Sharp made two engravings of the portrait—one in 1793, another in 1794, and that these two differ from each other; in one of them, therefore, he did alter Romney. I left both of the engravings in Mr. Cust's hands.

Mr. Wheeler writes of "alteration from the engraving, or the picture." He is entitled to speak of the engraving, but what does he know of the picture? Did he ever see it?

A critic so cocksure ought to know that the variations of a painting from an engraving made from it are often evidence of its originality and genuineness. When an artist regards a picture as important enough to copy, he does not omit or alter details, and so invite injurious comparisons; but engravers often make changes in minor details, as some things that are well enough in colors look slovenly in black and white. In my article I said (not without due consulta-

tion with men of more knowledge than myself): "While the resemblances between the painting and the engraving are such as could not possibly occur in pictures of independent origin, the few differences sufficiently prove that the painting could not have been made from the engraving."

Mr. Wheeler says: "The search for the Romney portrait should begin from Columbia" [South Carolina, where Dr. Cooper, its first owner, died, 1840], "and not from New York, whence the Jarvis portrait was produced." What Jarvis portrait? Save a little lithograph at Paine's death, there is but one Jarvis portrait—that painted by the younger Jarvis in 1857 from Sharp's engraving, which I lately presented to South Place Chapel. I proved in my article that this newly-discovered portrait could not be by Jarvis. Mr. Wheeler says that admirers of Paine are indebted to me; if so, I hope that no others among them will show it by such utter disregard as he displays of a statement in which I have summed up the investigations of years (as stated therein). Mr. Wheeler's instructions to myself and other Freethinkers search for the Romney portrait should begin from Columbia," however awe-inspiring, give us little credit for common sense. Two years ago I corresponded with the President of the University at Columbia, to which Cooper belonged, and all others likely to know anything about the matter. Dr. Cooper's surviving granddaughter and his descendants have been discovered in another region by the aid of my friend, James Elliott; but they know nothing whatever of the portrait, or what became of any of Dr. Cooper's effects. Mr. Wheeler's instruction about Columbia begins sublimely: "I do know"; but one thing he does not know—namely, that when Dr. Cooper died (1840) any portrait of "Tom Paine" publicly shown in any part of the South would have stood more chance of being burnt than of being sold; anybody wishing to realize on such an asset would have sent it to New York or Boston.

Mr. Wheeler closes his article with a request that American papers will copy it. I am sorry for this on his account, for it compels me to communicate his grievous blunders to the Freethinking editors in this country. I hope, however, that this may be the means of preventing his article or this letter from appearing in America.—Respectfully.

MONCURE D. CONWAY.

395 West Seventy-street, New York.

MR. WHEELER'S REPLY.

I BROUGHT no charge of mendacity against Mr. M. D. Conway. The question, Has he discovered Romney's portrait? is a matter of opinion. He is confident he has; I, in his polite expression, am "cocksure" he has not. I have no axes to grind; and if I have any personal interest, it is that of an admirer of Romney and of Paine, who would like to show my friends the portrait of a great Freethinker by a superb artist in our national collection. Doubting its authenticity, and being confirmed in this doubt by authority, I felt it right to say so emphatically, that others might not be debarred from the search. That was, and is, my chief concern.

It is one thing to say in a gentleman's own house that his picture is like Romney, another to recommend its purchase by the British nation as a Romney. If Mr. Cust, or Mr. Colvin, assumes that responsibility, I shall cease to be "cocksure," but not cease to wonder. I doubt if they will rely on "the red in the inner corner of the eye." (Possibly the shadow under the brow is meant.) This may be found in portraits by Gainsborough, Guy Head, Raeburn, and others. Perhaps some American friend will see if it is not also found in Jarvis. What I venture to think more decisive is the treatment of the hair. This is altogether different from Romney's manner, and different too from both engravings. The skin, also, is too smooth and enamel-like. The real work was painted in July, 1792. Romney was in the plenitude of his powers. His *Memoirs* call Paine's portrait "one of the finest heads ever produced by pencil, both for professional skill and physiological expression." What critic will say this of Mr. Conway's picture? Of course it has some Romney characteristics, being, as I think, painted from the engraving of Romney's picture by a capable artist, and restored in the belief that it is a Romney. I do not wish to disparage it. On the contrary, I urged on Mr. Milner, who is no "liveried" curator, but a responsible authority, that, even if not a Romney, it was still, in the absence of the original, a most desirable picture for the national collection.

It would be tedious to readers, who have not the picture and engravings before them, to go into the minutiae of detail which suggest that the picture is from the engraving, and not vice versa—the variations of light and shade, the form and number of buttonholes, etc. One point I may mention. The table in both engravings is square edged, and in the picture draped. This is just such an alteration as an artist would make on an engraving, but which a faithful engraver like Sharp would not venture with the picture before him. The issue is obscured by talking of the two engravings. The differences between that issued at a guinea

in July, 1793, and that issued at half-a-crown in February, 1794, are only those which any competent engraver would produce. The second, though much smaller, is artistically an improvement. But the standard is the large one catalogued by Horne. In both there are essential differences from the painting. Their meaning I leave to experts.

Mr. Conway speaks of the investigations of years. In October 11, 1890, he asked about Romney's Paine in *Notes and Queries*, and wrote: "There is some reason to believe that the portrait was painted for Thomas 'Clio' Rickman, Paine's friend and biographer." In 1892, the date of his *Life of Thomas Paine*, he knew nothing, or said nothing, of the portrait having been painted for Cooper, of Manchester, though he mentions a (possibly spurious) Romney claimant turning up at Birmingham. If I am wrong in introducing the name of Jarvis, it is Mr. Conway who himself misled me. He now says: "There is but one Jarvis portrait—that painted by the younger Jarvis in 1857 from Sharp's engraving." In the catalogue of the Paine Exhibition held in South Place Institute, December 2, 1895, I find under Mr. Conway's name "266.—Paine, Large Oil Portrait, copy by C. W. Jarvis of his father's (J. W. Jarvis) portrait of Paine, while residing in his house." Will Mr. Conway explain this? Can he tell us why the picture, now ascribed to Romney, was, as he mentions in the *Athenaeum* (June 26), "always ascribed to the 'elder Jarvis'—John Wesley Jarvis—an artist in whose house Paine resided for a time in 1806?" The work of Jarvis was well known in America, so was Sharp's engraving, of which there have been thousands of reproductions issued. Paine had many admirers in America who desired his portrait, and of course got supplied from this, the best available source. My own dead friend, Mrs. Ernestine L. Rose, over a generation ago had a portrait of Paine painted for her by Jarvis.

Mr. Conway now says: "I proved in my article that this newly-discovered portrait could not be by Jarvis." What was the proof? "Jarvis did not see Paine until he was many years older than this portrait." Only this and nothing more! So a painter could not copy a picture taken at an earlier date than that at which he himself knew the person painted! If this is Mr. Conway's notion of proof, I do not wonder at his sliding over the absence of evidence that the Romney ever went to America, though he tells us that Cooper's descendants "know nothing whatever of this portrait." The painting does depict Paine older than does the engraving. The hair is whiter, the cheeks more sunken. The frontispiece to Mr. Conway's *Life* is inscribed, "Thomas Paine. Aet 67. From a picture by Jarvis in possession of the author." It portrays Paine as a younger man than that shown in the Romney taken when Paine was 55! But Mr. Conway's boasted frontispiece is another faked-up modification of Sharp's engraving, and Mr. Conway's "grievous blunders" with regard to Paine's portraits have already been exposed in America by Mr. W. H. Burr, of Washington.

One thing can decide our controversy. The proof of the picture will be in the payment. If what I contend, it may be worth some fifty guineas in the absence of the original. If by George Romney, its value is over fifty times that sum and it would be dirt cheap at a thousand guineas. Who bids?
J. M. WHEELER.

ISAIAH VII. 14.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In reply to some remarks by Mr. Haining on the above passage, "Chilperic" writes: "Matthew i. 23 has nothing to do with the Hebrew text; it is the Septuagint that is quoted; and it is beside the mark to accuse the *Evangelist* of perverting the passage." That the above statements are correct goes, of course, without saying; but there is an imputation contained in the last sentence which I cannot allow to pass without notice. If I understand this sentence rightly, it implies that I was so illogical and unjust as to accuse Matthew of perverting the words he has quoted from Isaiah. It is scarcely necessary to say that I did nothing of the kind. I noticed in passing, it is true, the fact of a mistranslation of the passage in the English version; but I did not set this down to the account of the evangelist, nor did I make use of the mistranslated words at all. Here is my sole accusation against the Gospel writer in this matter:—"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 Abaz, he has unblushingly declared 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 greater fraud it is scarcely possible to imagine." Now, admitting that Matthew has quoted correctly, and that he found the word "virgin" (*parthenos*) in his copy, how can this fact affect the misrepresentation with which he is here charged, seeing that I do not refer to the mistranslation at all? It alters nothing, and that is the reason I did not waste time in noticing it.

ABRACADABRA.

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 ATHENEUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Man's Origin and Destiny."
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (56 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, Mrs. H. Bradlaugh-Bonner, "School-taught Morality." October 2, at 8.30, Concert.
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, A. B. Moss, "Is Religion Necessary or Useful to Mankind?"
KINGSLAND: 12, Meeting at the Bradlaugh Club—Report and balance-sheet.
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Class Distinctions in England—(1) The Aristocracy."
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Aristocracy."
WOOD GREEN (Station-road Hall): 5, Tea meeting; 7, R. Forder, "The Jesus of the Gospels."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, H. P. Ward.
CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye): 3.15, H. P. Ward.
EDMONTON (Angel road): 7, Debate between Messrs. Ramsey and Boyce, "Is there a Future Life?"
HAMMERSMITH (The Grove, near S.W.R. station): 7, Debate between Messrs. Halling and Edwards.
LIMEHOUSE (Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, E. Pack.
MILE END WASTE: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Exodus."
VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 8.15, A lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Bristol-street Board School): S. Armfield—11, "What do we Know of the Hereafter"; 7, "God and His Bible."
OBATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, E. Pack, "The Brain and the Soul."
GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Business meeting; 6.30, Social meeting.
IPSWICH (G.E.R., Commercial-road): 7, Members' meeting.
LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): J. M. Robertson—3, "Are the Clergy Honest?" 7, "Life and Morals without Religion."
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholmeroad, All Saints): Miss Voltairine De Cleyre—3, "Woman v. Orthodoxy"; 6.30, "The True Mental Attitude of the Freethinker."
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): C. Watts—11, "Drawbacks of Christianity"; 3, "The Cradle, the Altar, and the Tomb"; 7, "The Triumph of Reason." Tea at 5.
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting.

Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—October 10, Gateshead. 16, 17, and 18, Stanley. 24, Newcastle.

H. PEPCY WARD, Leighton Hall, N.W.—October 3, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 10, a., Victoria Park. 17, Manchester. 24, m., Westminster; a., Victoria Park. 31, Birmingham. November 7 to 14, Mission at Plymouth.

E. PACK, 90 Camden-street, N.W.—October 3, Chatham. 10, Bradlaugh Club; 17, m., Camberwell.

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