

The announcement that Professor Beesley and Mr. Frederic Harrison are coming out to the colonies on a lecturing tour has a twofold interest. They are both profound thinkers, and Mr. Harrison is one of the greatest living masters of 'English pure and undefiled.' The special interest to Freethinkers is that both are Positivists, who recognise in Science the 'promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.' As apostles of the School of Humanity, they will dwell on the conditions on which the salvation of the race depends. Positivism has put on one side the Supernatural, and is emphatically the religion of History and Science. The doctrine of the school has found reception in some of the greatest brains of the age. This admits of no doubt when we mention the names of Auguste Comte, Comte, the late G. H. Lewes, the late Harriet Martineau, Congreve, John Morley, Harrison, and Tyndal. But what interests us equally to know is the progress the *cultus* is making among the people. Comte held that all advance must come from above. His appeal was (necessarily as we think) to the people in the upper mansions, who indeed were the only class likely to comprehend the doctrine until it found interpreters. We have noticed that an effort is being made in England to popularise and extend the influence of the Society. Is this the object of the two apostles who are coming amongst us? Whatever their aims may be, we cannot doubt that they are far above mere money-getting. Freethinkers will therefore give them a hearty greeting.

THE CHRISTIAN FATHERS :

Their own testimony, showing their qualifications as men capable of weighing evidence.

CLEMENT (A.D., CIRCA. 79.)

Reason given for a future resurrection:—"Let us consider that wonderful sign that takes place in Eastern lands—that is, in Arabia and the countries round about. There is a certain bird which is called a Phoenix. This is the only one of its kind, and lives 500 years. And when the time of its dissolution draws near that it must die, it builds itself a nest of frankincense and myrrh, and other spices, into which, when the time is fulfilled, it enters and dies. But as the flesh decays a certain kind of worm is produced, which, being nourished by the juices of the dead bird, brings forth feathers. Then when it has acquired strength, it takes up that nest in which are the bones of its parent, and bearing these, it passes from the land of Arabia into Egypt, to the city called Heliopolis. And, in open day, flying in the sight of all men, it places them on the altar of the sun, and having done this, hastens back to its former abode. The priests then inspect the registers of the dates, and find that it has returned exactly as the 500th year was completed." (1st Epistle of Clement, chap. xxv).

[The same tale is mentioned by Tertullian (died A.D. 220) and Cyril of Jerusalem (died A.D. 380.)]

BARNABAS (COMPANION OF THE APOSTLES)

Deals with the directions of Moses as to clean and unclean animals. "'Thou shalt not eat the hyæna' . . . Wherefore? Because that animal annually changes its sex, and is at one time male and at another female. Moreover, he has rightly detested the weasel, . . . For this animal conceives by the mouth. Behold how well Moses has legislated." (Epistle of Barnabas, chap. x.).

"'And Abraham circumcised ten and eight and three hundred men of his household.' What then was the knowledge given to him in this? Learn the eighteen first, and then the three hundred. The ten and the eight are thus denoted—ten by I, and eight by H. You have Jesus. And because the Cross was to express the grace by the T, he says also Three Hundred. He signifies, therefore, Jesus by two letters, and the Cross by one. . . . No one has been admitted by me to a more excellent piece of knowledge than this, but I know ye are worthy. (Ibid, chap. ix).

IGNATIUS (DIED A.D. 107.)

The star of Bethlehem. "A star shone forth in Heaven above all other stars, and the light of which was inexpressible, while its novelty struck men with astonishment. And all the rest of the stars, with the sun and moon, formed a chorus to this star. (Epistle to the Ephesians, chap. xix.).

ORIGEN (DIED A.D. 254.)

"I have this further to say to the Greeks who will not believe that our Saviour was born of a virgin: that the Creator of the world, if he pleases, can make every animal bring forth its young in the same wonderful manner. As, for instance, *the vultures propagate their kind in this uncommon way*, as the best writers of natural history do acquaint us." (Chap. xxxiii, quoted in Diegesis, p. 319.)

IRENÆUS (DIED A.D. 202.)

"John related the words of the Lord concerning the times of the Kingdom of God: the days would come when vines would grow, each with 10,000 shoots, and to each shoot 10,000 branches, and to each branch 10,000 twigs, and to each twig 10,000 clusters, and to each cluster 10,000 grapes, and each grape which is crushed will yield twenty-five measures of wine. And when one of the saints will reach after these clusters another will cry: 'I am a better cluster than thou; take me and praise the Lord because of me.' Likewise a grain of wheat will produce 10,000 ears, each ear 10,000 grains, each grain 10lbs of white flour. Other fruits, and seeds, and herbs in proportion. The whole brute creation, feeding on such things as the earth brings forth, will become sociable and peaceable together, and subject to man with all humility." (Quoted in Keim's "Jesus of Nazara," p. 45.)

ST. AUGUSTINE (DIED A.D. 430.)

"He himself, being at that time Bishop of Hippo Regius, had preached the Gospel of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to a whole nation of men and women that had no heads, but had their eyes in their bosoms; and in countries still more southerly he preached to a nation among whom each individual had but one eye, and that situate in the middle of the forehead. ("Syntagma," p. 33; quoted in "Diegesis," p. 257.)

CLEAR THE WAY.

Men of thought! be up and stirring
Night and day:

Sow the seed, withdraw the curtain,
Clear the way!

Men of action, aid and cheer them
As ye may!

There's a fount about to stream,
There's a light about to beam,
There's a warmth about to glow,
There's a flower about to blow;
There's a midnight blackness changing
Into grey!

Men of thought and men of action,
Clear the way!

Once the welcome light has broken,
Who shall say

What the unimagined glories
Of the day?

What the evil that shall perish
In its ray?

Aid the dawning, tongue and pen;
Aid it, hopes of honest men;
Aid it, paper, aid it type,
Aid it, for the hour is ripe;
And our earnest must not slacken
Into play,

Men of thought and men of action,
Clear the way.

Lo! a cloud's about to vanish
From the day;

And a brazen wrong to crumble
Into clay.

Lo! the Right's about to conquer,
Clear the way!

With the Right shall many more
Enter smiling at the door;
With the giant Wrong shall fall
Many others great and small,
That for ages long have held us
For their prey.

Men of thought and men of action,
Clear the way!

Charles Mackay.