

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXIV.—No. 40

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2, 1904

PRICE TWOPENCE

Attempts at a rapid realisation of the ideal not only do not contribute to its actual realisation, but more than anything impede it.—TOLSTOY.

The Rome Congress.

THE International Freethought Congress has been held at Rome. As a Congress, it was worthless. As a Demonstration, it was a magnificent success.

The foreman of the Tower of Babel was wanted as a general agent for the various nationalities speaking different languages. But they all understood their principal object. It was to show to the world that Freethought is as international as Christianity, that thousands of its representatives could be gathered from all parts of the world in one great assembly, and that each of them stood for thousands who could not be present, but looked on approvingly from small or vast distances with the "mind's eye."

From that point of view the Congress was successful beyond the most sanguine anticipations. More than three thousand delegates met at Rome. Upwards of a thousand came from France. Three hundred Spanish delegates arrived late from Barcelona. Nearly a hundred came from Belgium, Germany, Russia, Holland, Denmark, Bohemia, South America—almost every European country, or country of European origin, was represented. Some thirty Englishmen were there, including four delegates, and eleven honorary delegates, of the National Secular Society. America sent Dr. Moncure D. Conway from New York, Mr. Mangasarian from Chicago, and Dr. Wilson from Cincinnati. But the greatest figure of all, of course, was Professor Ernst Haeckel, the Darwin of Germany, whose Atheism is such an affliction to the apostles and parasites of Christianity; of whom I shall have more to say hereafter.

Numerically, therefore, the Congress was a tremendous affair; and, although nothing to boast of as a Congress, I repeat that it was an amazing success as a Demonstration. Freethinkers from all parts of Christendom assembled at the spiritual and historic centre of Christianity, to challenge it in the name of science, freedom, and humanity, to tell it that its sun is setting, and to salute, however long beforehand, the new Republic of Man which will certainly follow the Kingdom of God.

So great was the success of the Congress from this point of view that the Pope was angry and alarmed. He dared not try to shut St. Peter's Church—that vast, superb Pagan monument of Christian superstition; but he sulked in the Vatican and allowed no one to enter its holy precincts. When I went on the Wednesday morning, with some of my British comrades, to the Vatican, in order to see where the vicegerent of God, the deputy of Jesus Christ, and the successor of Saint Peter, represents the gospel of poverty and renunciation in this miserable vale of tears, I was not at all anxious to see the Pope himself. Signor Sarto (in vulgar English, Mr. Taylor) was nobody before he was made Pope, and is nobody now, except for the accident of his position. He might have bitten his thumb in any one of the countless rooms of his

palace. What we wanted to see was the Papal collection of objects of art; above all, the noble Pagan statuary which the Popes had stolen during many centuries. But we were not admitted. One of the Pope's soldiers—for the old Father of the Faithful still keeps some, and apes the military display of temporal sovereigns—advanced to us with a naked bayonet resting on his arm and barred our passage. He was a good-looking fellow, but his fantastic uniform was worthy of one of Gilbert and Sullivan's operas. He informed us that the Vatican was closed to the public. We asked him in French when it would be open. He replied in Italian, "After tomorrow." In other words, the day after the close of the Freethought Congress. Well, we went to the Vatican again on Friday morning, and found it still closed to the public, although "pilgrims" were admitted by showing their passes. And what was the reason? Simply this. The Freethought Congress was being continued, and the Pope continued to show his annoyance.

I see by Tuesday's English papers, the morning after my return to London, that Mr. Taylor, of the Vatican, Rome, Italy, is still in a pet. He has issued a letter of protest against the Freethought Congress, in the form of a letter to the Cardinal Vicar of Rome, and ordered expiatory functions to be held in all churches in Rome on September 29, which is the Feast of the Archangel Michael. The following extract from that document will show his Holiness's temper:—

"The intelligence which pretends to be independent of God is guilty of sacrilege towards Him. Although the powers of hell cannot prevail against the Church, nevertheless the meeting of these forces in an International Congress of Freethinkers has in it something of the nature of an outrage and a provocation towards Rome, the tranquil and venerated seat of Christ's Vicar. We consider that it is an offence against God and against us, and we feel deeply grieved."

Evidently the Pope has been badly hit in a very sensitive place. Otherwise he would take Hamlet's advice to Polonius, and play the fool nowhere but in his own house. He forgets that Rome does not belong to him now; except as London belongs to some lunatic in an asylum, who imagines himself the rightful king of Great Britain and Ireland. The Freethought Congress met at Rome with the knowledge of the Italian Government, which granted it the use of the Collegio Romano for its sittings. There was no thought of the Pope in the matter. The Congress was minding its own business, and the Pope should have sense enough to do the same. When he talks about "outrage" and "provocation" he is only making himself ridiculous. Let him recollect that to thunder without thunderbolts is to court derision.

II.

I have said that the Congress itself was a fiasco—as a Congress. Let me explain what I mean.

In the first place, the Congress had no proper Agenda printed in advance. Six *subjects* were down for discussion, but they were nearly as wide as the world. There should have been a series of *resolutions*, which could have been discussed, accepted, amended, or rejected in open Congress. Notices of these should have been sent in long beforehand, and printed and circulated at least a month prior to the Congress. All would then have known what they

had to discuss, and have had an opportunity of preparing what they wished to say. But the method followed was something very different. The Congress broke up into six sections. These all met simultaneously in different rooms, and prepared "Reports" for discussion at the general sittings. That is to say, they prepared the Agenda on the spot. Of course it was prepared hurriedly, and discussed still more hurriedly. And the result was mere confusion.

I walked into the room of the sixth section, which was considering the subject of "Propaganda." I saw many orators throwing about their arms, shrugging their shoulders, making faces, and talking in a very excited manner about what required the most sober reflection. It was taken for granted that several might speak at once. And under the head of "Propaganda" they brought in Socialism, Anarchism, and everything else that any Freethinker might be individually interested in. My readers will easily understand that I did not pay the sixth section a second visit.

In the second place, there was a general want of what the English call "business." There was plenty of good intention, but no practical method. M. Furnémont, the general secretary, is an excellent and admirable official, but he could not possibly do everything; and, as far as I could see, it was simply his presence that saved the Congress from falling into absolute and irretrievable chaos.

This want of "business" was universal. Had the Congress been held in London, the British Freethinkers would have seen to the foreign delegates in every possible way. But the Rome committee never so much as inquired about the British delegates. We went to the Congress an hour late on the first morning, because they had altered the time of meeting "all on their own" the previous evening. The Rome committee issued a manifesto, placarded the walls with it, calling upon the "Romani" to take notice of what was going on in their midst, and then folded their arms for evermore. Without being inhospitable, they showed no hospitality. Nor was this the mere personal complaint of the British delegates. The German delegates complained loudly of the same neglect.

Again and again the Congress visit to the Giordano Bruno monument was postponed. This, at least, should have been a definite fixture. But it had not taken place on Thursday evening, when the Congress should have closed. It was then fixed for Friday morning at ten. When that hour arrived the Congress was still talking. Pertinacious orators were listening to their own sweet voices, and others were waiting for the same luxury. The N. S. S. delegates, having no time to waste, begged to know whether "ten o'clock" meant any time during the day that the orators might choose to regard as that hour. I asked M. Furnémont myself. He was sick of the babble, and regretted that he could only say that he "hoped" the Bruno demonstration would take place after three o'clock. That was enough for the N. S. S. delegates. We went off and saluted Bruno's monument by ourselves. But more of this visit hereafter. It is not germane now—and it will keep.

In the third place, the French, being in the majority, captured the Congress—as they had often done before. When it comes to dividing the earth, John Bull is a consummate egotist; but when it comes to talking, the French take the cake, and the Italians make a good second. The French fall too readily into the delusion, or prejudice (call it what you will) that their country is *the* country, that their language is *the* language, and that their questions are *the* questions. They do not say this, but they assume it. They are apt to overlook the very existence of the British—except when it comes to paying the expenses. They treat the whole English-speaking world as almost a negligible quantity. I had an able pamphlet on "Church and State" put into my hands. It was written by a Frenchman. The second half of it was an Appendix, giving details of "Church and State"

in various lands. All the Latin peoples, even down to South America, had long notices. The United States had three lines. England, with the richest church in the world, had none at all. The clever Frenchman had clean forgotten it.

M. Charbonnel, the ex-priest, and editor of *La Raison*, is reported to be a great orator. I was anxious to hear him, but I had no opportunity. Mr. Roger told me that he had run against M. Charbonnel by accident and asked him why he did not speak, and that M. Charbonnel replied that his countrymen had occupied so much time that he had not the face to take any more. Which is greatly to his credit, while corroborating what I have said.

There is no need to be angry with our French comrades. They do not act in this fashion out of mere impoliteness. It is a way they have got into. And the sooner they get out of it the better. Individually they are charming. We only wish them to be so collectively.

In the fourth place, the Congress debates suffer from the aforesaid want of "business." It is no uncommon thing to see the chairman, the secretary, three or four persons on the platform, and a dozen persons in the body of the assembly, all on their legs together. This is cheerfully accepted as a very regular proceeding. There is also no proper way of arranging for a succession of speakers. Excited gentlemen jump up, or mount chairs, and shout "Je demande la parole." And too often the one who demands it the loudest and longest gets it.

In the fifth place, the Latin delegates (French, Italian, etc.) get excited over next to nothing. If you shake your fist in an Englishman's face he is apt to take you seriously. A Frenchman looks upon it as a harmless recreation. Imagine the scene, then, when the warmth of Freethought is intensified by the caloric of Socialism, Anarchism, and other political or social idealisms.

III.

The British delegates could not see their way to participate in the discussions of a Congress conducted on such lines. The American delegates followed suit. Dr. Conway spoke for a few minutes in English, but that was by pre-arrangement. For my own part, I should never think of delivering an English speech to an audience that could not understand me; and I should not try to speak in another language unless I was sure of respectful attention—for it is always an effort to express yourself in a language in which you are not accustomed to think. Conversational French, for instance, is one thing, and platform French is quite another.

Let it not be supposed, however, that the British and American delegates wasted their time—and the money of those they represented. That is a serious misconception. The British and American delegates were glad to be present. They swelled the gathering. They lent it their measure of representative value. They joined in the functions that were necessarily collective. They took part in a grand Freethought demonstration—vast in numbers, and pregnant in significance—which has shaken the heart of the very Pope in the Vatican, and attracted the attention of the whole civilised world. The conspiracy of silence against Freethought has been broken down by a powerful blow. The press has had to report in its own despatch.

IV.

My account of the Congress, and of my visit to Rome generally, will take up a good deal of space. I have much to say that I believe will interest my readers. I want to describe some of the things I saw, to relate some of the things I heard, to say something about distinguished and attractive personalities, to take my readers to Rome with me and bring them back—in imagination.

When our N. S. S. party entered the Congress at Rome on Tuesday morning, September 20, we found the *cortile* of the Collegio Romano crowded, the large hall not being big enough for the gathering. Freethinkers thronged the floors and galleries. Bright ladies' dresses lent a sprinkling of color. And over-

head was the lovely blue Italian sky. President Sergi was finishing his address. This was followed by a speech from Haeckel, of which more presently; and that by a message from M. Berthelot, the great French scientist, which was read very distinctly by M. Buisson. I translate M. Berthelot's letter for my readers:—

"I salute the Freethought Congress assembled at Rome, and I send my good wishes to its members, both for their labors and for themselves personally.

"The assembly of the Freethought Congress at Rome is a sign of the times; for Rome has been the centre of the oppression of science and thought during more than fifteen hundred years. It was truly the bottom of the abyss, announced by the Apocalypse, from which ascended the pestilent vapors of superstition, of fanaticism, and of the inquisition, raised by the theocracy. Depending upon its militia of monks and congregationists, it aimed at keeping men eternally under the domination of a sword at once spiritual and temporal. Even in our own day, we have heard a Dominican at Paris call again for the intervention of the secular arm, from the highest chair of our metropolis. Italy suffered the pretensions of the Church more, perhaps, than any other nation during the Middle Ages, and even more in modern times, when the free developments of thought and science, at the epoch of the Renaissance, were stifled in her midst by the Papacy. The pyre of Giordano Bruno smokes still; and the prosecution of Galileo should never be forgotten, for it was the solemn condemnation of Science herself in the name of dogma and the Holy Scripture.

"Even here, at Rome, clerical oppression never ceased to exert itself until the day when Italy took possession of her temporal capital.

"It is therefore an enterprise both just and worthy, and salutary to the human race, which brings us here together, to mark well the evolution of modern thought and the triumph of the new society, which derives its authority from the absolute independence of opinion and the irresistible demonstrations of science.

"Behold the flag which we raise in face of the Vatican, the seat of divine revelation and papal infallibility.

"Nevertheless, let us always preserve the genial serenity which becomes our sincere love of justice and truth. The voice of science is not the voice of men of violence, nor the voice of absolute doctrinaires. Whatever have been the crimes of the theocracy, we cannot but recognise the benefits that Christianity has spread abroad in the world. It has represented a phase of civilisation, a stage, now surpassed, in the course of the progressive elevation of humanity. It would be contrary to our principles to oppress in our turn our old oppressors, if they only rest faithful to their former opinions, without trying to impose them upon others. What we firmly intend, what we have the right and the duty to do, is to deprive the clerical and retrograde spirit of the official direction of States, and above all of the compulsory direction of consciences, that of popular education and the works of social solidarity.

"Certainly, we do not affect the pretensions of the prophet who descended from Sinai to exterminate his enemies and promulgate a new decalogue.

"The science that we proclaim springs from a new spirit of toleration, founded, I repeat, on liberty of thought and the exact knowledge of natural laws.

"Let us not confound this method with that of the false science of theology, which deduces its conclusions *à priori* from imaginary dogmas revealed by divine inspiration, pure scholasticism empty of all reality, and devoted perpetually to absurd affirmations and heresies.

"The science that we represent imposes its directions in all orders—industrial, political, military, educational, and above all moral, in relying exclusively on natural laws, demonstrated *à posteriori* by the observations and experiments of *savants* of all kinds; physicists and mechanicians, as well as historians and economists, chemists, doctors, and naturalists, as well as psychologists and sociologists.

"We shall establish thus in the world the reign of reason freed from ancient prejudices and dogmatic systems; that is to say, a superior ideal, a higher morality more secure than that of former times, because it is based upon a knowledge of human nature, and because it proclaims and demonstrates the intellectual and moral solidarity of the people of all nations."

I am sure my readers will be pleased to have in English this fine letter to the Rome Congress from one of the very foremost men in France.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

Haeckel's "Three Superstitions."

REGULAR readers of the *Freethinker* will perhaps recall a controversy the present writer had some considerable time ago with Dr. Keeling, of Sheffield. The subject was on the question of Theism; and although it left—as discussions are apt to leave—both disputants as they were, it was, I had reason to believe, interesting and instructive to a number of others. Since then Dr. Keeling has, despite the many calls of a very busy professional career, written more than once on the question of religion and science; and his views, however one may differ with them, have at least the merits of clearness and strength of conviction. And there is, in addition, the interest of noting what a medical man, and one who evidently keeps himself abreast of current science, has to say on religious topics.

Dr. Keeling's latest venture in this direction deals with Professor Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe* under the title of *The Three Superstitions of Professor Haeckel*—the three superstitions being the belief in a God, in immortality, and in free will. In each case Dr. Keeling prefaces his criticism with a very fair summary of Haeckel's position. And there appears to me to be a lurking suspicion in Dr. Keeling's mind that a plain statement of Haeckel's views is enough to secure their rejection. So far as the average individual is concerned, there may be some grounds for the suspicion. The race has been so steeped in anthropomorphism, and the average person is so much in the habit—resulting from custom and education—of invoking a "creative mind" for this, and a "ruling intelligence" for that, that a view of nature that eliminates both is bound to create more or less antagonism. In this direction the Theist has always an advantage over the Atheist. The former is appealing to beliefs already existent, to sentiments already active. The latter is seeking to develop new sentiments, to establish new beliefs; and, as this involves some mental rearrangement and trouble, the tendency is to reject the new and to fall back upon the old.

This, it seems to me, is all that is involved in Dr. Keeling's comment that "In view of the consummate order, the invariable law, the steady progress in definite direction, the wonderful adaptation of means, the amazing intricacy, yet harmony, of the results arrived at, one is tempted to believe that a ruling Mind has been all along at work." I know the writer too well to believe that this sentence is intended to appeal to the crude feelings of people, and yet it cannot fail to operate in this manner. For the whole sentence is built up of words that are better calculated to silence than convince; to oppress man with a sense of his own weakness when he compares his handiwork with the complexities and subtleties of nature's productions.

In the first place, it is to be noted that the leading phrases in the above sentence all express, more or less, the same idea. Careful examination will show that "order," "invariable law," "progress," "adaptation of means to ends," "harmony of results," all express fundamentally the same idea. Law is only a statement of the observed order; order is but a statement of the direction that force takes; adaptation of means to ends is scientifically only a statement of the relation of one aspect of natural force to other aspects; and harmony of results is only a statement to the effect that the interaction of natural forces produces a result necessitated by their nature. As so much of the case for Theism turns on a right understanding of these points, it may be well to amplify in the interests of clearness.

There is one thing that both Theist and Atheist have to take for granted in all their controversies; this is, existence. Whatever be its nature—whether we choose to call it force, matter, substance, spirit, or aught else—the existence of something is assumed by both, the discussion being as to its nature. But existence *per se* we do not—perhaps cannot—know.

All that we do know are the effects as seen in physical, chemical, biological, and other forces. And a general statement of these effects is what we mean, or ought to mean, when we speak of the order of nature. But once given existence, some "order" is inevitable. This "order" might conceivably have been different to what it is, so far as its form is concerned; but the *fact* of order would remain unaffected by any change of mode. But if something does exist—for the sake of clearness we will call it force—this is bound to manifest itself in some way; and its mode of manifestation, whatever it be, will constitute natural "order." And, further, to say that there is an adaptation of means to ends is really only to repeat the truism that things are what they are. In strict science there are really no differences in the degree of adaptations of means to ends. This only arises when we introduce an ideal end, and measure things in relation to that end. But the adaptation of means to ends, the "harmony of results," is as complete in the case of a decomposing organism as in the case of a living one. The forces operating on a given centre at a given moment produce this or that result, and could not produce any other without a change of conditions. It is true that we speak of organisms surviving because they are "better adapted" to a given environment; but in this case we assume a purpose in nature—viz., the maintenance of life, or the development of a more perfect type—and measure things by what is really an artificial standard. But, from the standpoint of strict science or pure logic, to say there is adaptation of means to ends, a harmony of results, or progress in definite direction, is only saying that force persists, and, in virtue of inherent qualities, produces results corresponding to those qualities.

Dr. Keeling says of Haeckel's statement—much older than Haeckel, by the way—that the first change in the process of universal evolution is the condensation of a homogeneous substance, that all subsequent evolution depended upon this, and "had there been a false step at first, all must have gone wrong. Yet we are told these early movements in 'substance' were strictly mechanical!" But how could there have been a "false step"? Or, rather, how could the step have been different to what it was? If we assume either that the same force under identical conditions may operate on two different occasions in different ways, or that there is an external and irresponsible force that *might* have caused things to operate in a different manner, then there is reason in the fear, and also in the wonder, that the result has been what it is—although had it been different there would still have been the same opportunity for surprise. But the first is scientifically inadmissible. Force being what it is, anything else than what actually occurred is simply impossible. Possibility is in this case a synonym for ignorance.

And the second possibility rests on the assumption that there does exist a "ruling mind" external to nature and likely to interfere with its operations. Given the belief in a "ruling mind," one can well understand the admiration of a believer marvelling that this "mind," with infinite possibilities of choice and direction, should have selected the "plan" exemplified in cosmic evolution. But on the materialistic hypothesis there is really no room for any such wonder. While we are ignorant, we are naturally surprised at certain results from certain conditions. But as our knowledge grows our surprise diminishes. We not only see that no other result than the one that actually occurs is possible, but that no other result is even conceivable. Dr. Keeling is really reading the theistic difficulty into the atheistic position.

This is also the case with the remark that Haeckel "arbitrarily endows it (substance) with whatever capacities and powers are needed to bring the universe into being." For the life of me I cannot see how or where Haeckel, or any other Atheist or Materialist, can be said to "arbitrarily" endow nature with the qualities it actually possesses. What

is done by Haeckel is exactly what was done by Lyell or by Darwin. Each assumed that certain forces now existing always existed, and that their existence was adequate to account for all the phenomena in their respective departments. And all that is done by Haeckel, or by Spencer—for it is not quite fair to others to continue writing as though this idea belonged to any one individual—is to take certain principles or forces, all of which are actually in operation, and to show that their operation through vast periods of time is adequate to account for the evolution of the universe, without evoking any extraneous power. It may be argued that these forces are *not* adequate, but it cannot fairly be said that anyone who believes they are adequate "arbitrarily" endows nature with them, and thus give the impression that they have no existence outside the writer's imagination. In sober truth it is the theist who goes in for arbitrarily creating forces on which to base his theory. He "arbitrarily" creates a "Divine Power," a "Creative Mind," and endows this with various qualities and capacities for the existence of which no one has ever produced a spark of unquestionable evidence.

Moreover, if there be a God, he clearly works *through* nature. If he acts at all, his actions are through natural forces; and whether evolution is due to cosmic forces that are independent of God, or only exist in the cosmos because of his power or will, cannot really affect the point at issue. This is that the forces of nature as now existing, if prolonged backward, are able to account for the phenomena of nature. Whether these forces owe their existence to a God or not is another question. But unless an explanation of the development of the universe, strictly in accordance with purely natural forces, is possible, none can be offered, and we are bound to give the whole problem up as insoluble. In brief, the difficulty of the Theist is this. Cosmic evolution must be in accordance with the laws of the cosmic mechanism, or the evolution is impossible. But if it is in accordance with the laws of the cosmic mechanism, then an explanation of that evolution must be in terms of the action and interaction of natural forces. It is all a problem of matter and energy. In this case, and in strict logic, there is no room for "God" at any part of the process. It is true that it is still open to the Theist to posit a deity as the originator of the cosmic process, but he cannot on that account challenge an explanation of natural phenomena that does not take into account deity. In this event his challenge would really amount to a denial of the existence of forces concerning which there can be no question.

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

Matter and Mind.—II.

MATTER is of two kinds, ponderable and imponderable, visible and invisible; but both kinds are equally material or physical. Matter is also potent, brimful of inexhaustible possibilities in various directions. Matter and Force are said to be two fundamental attributes or "inalienable manifestations of one single universal being—Substance." Force may be described as the spirit or soul that animates Matter and makes it ever active. Now, the claim of Monism, as expounded by Dr. Haeckel and other scientists, is that Substance, with Matter and Force as its two essential properties, is the sole reality in existence. What Substance is, no one knows; but it reveals itself as Matter and Force. When asked what Force is we can only answer that it is the potency of Matter in operation.

Theologians often admit that there is an element of truth in this conception of Nature, but resolutely contend that behind and above, as well as within, Nature there is an infinite, invisible, and immaterial Being, who is her author and the guide of all her

activities. Furthermore, they maintain that into Matter, in its most highly organised and complex forms, this Being has breathed an entity called soul, mind, or spirit, which partakes of his own immaterial essence. According to many, this immaterial entity resides in all the higher animals; but the more orthodox view is that it is man's peculiar property. The saying is that man *is* a soul and *has* a body. The soul dwells in the body, but is independent of it. The body dies, but the soul ascends to God, and lives a disembodied life. If a good soul, its home is in the blissful presence of God in heaven; but if a bad one, its doom is eternal banishment from God in the torments of hell. By-and-by the dead body shall revive again, and become once more its appropriate tabernacle.

That is admirable theology, duly drawn from the Bible; but is it true? What is there to show that, in addition to his purely animal life, man has an immaterial and immortal soul? For even the semblance of a proof we ask absolutely in vain. In response to our earnest appeal we are offered nothing but bald assertions. We do not affirm that there is no immaterial and immortal soul in man, but we do affirm most emphatically that, without the presentation of adequate and satisfactory proof or proofs, it is impossible for us to believe in its existence. Moreover, judging by all available facts, and giving due weight to all the indications at our disposal, we are rather confirmed in our unbelief.

Man's ordinary life-time may be divided into three great periods—namely, adolescence, maturity, and decay. Mr. Frank Ballard scores a grand victory over Mr. Blatchford by exclaiming, "Man is not born at all, nor can be"; as if a baby were not a man. But if a baby is not a man, what is it? Is it not man in the making? Mr. Ballard says that "at the moment of birth a babe is no more a man than on the day before birth." Again I ask, What is a babe at the moment of birth, and for weeks and months thereafter, if not man in the making? But a newborn babe has no consciousness—has it a soul? Is the soul born with it, or is it presented to it at a specific stage in its journey manward? When does it cease to be an "it" and become a "he"? Let us read this golden sentence by Mr. Ballard: "It—for no sensible person ever speaks of a babe as 'he' or 'she'—only becomes a man through what takes place between babyhood and adult life." But we want to know *what* takes place "between babyhood and adult life." Is it the advent of the soul? Where is the soul during the period of unconsciousness? Is *it* in a state of unconsciousness too? Or does God create a new soul for each individual, and bestow it upon "it" when "it" is in a fit condition to become a "he" or a "she"? Mr. Ballard gives his whole case away. Consciousness is a function of a centralised nervous system, and its development keeps pace with that of the system. It takes a human being twenty-five or thirty years to reach maturity. Childhood and youth and early manhood are a period of growth and development. During that time man is in the process of becoming. At thirty a man has reached his prime, and he generally remains in his prime until he is sixty-five or seventy. Then decay sets in, and may cover ten, twenty, or even thirty years. But the strange thing is that, apparently, the soul decays with the body. A man of seventy is said to be no longer in his prime, either bodily or mentally. As a manual laborer he is at a discount; and as a barrister or a clergyman he is equally out of favor. But what becomes of the soul, the mind, the spirit during this period of decay? Does it, too, decline with physical consciousness? Theology cannot tell us.

We frequently hear of people who are declared to be of a weak mind, or out of their mind. Now, of what use would the possession of a soul, distinct from the body, be to an insane person? His intelligence is no higher than that of a dog or a monkey—what proof is there that he still has a something that the dog or the monkey has not? Is not man's superiority to the lower animals due to the fact that

he has developed a more finely sensitive and complicated nervous system than they possess? His organism, being more perfect and efficient than theirs, his life is so likewise. Injure his organism, and you injure his life to the same extent. Break the harp, and there can be no more music. To damage the brain is to make thought impossible.

Bishop Butler, in his famous *Analogy*, devotes a whole chapter to the subject of Immortality. His proposition is that death does not of necessity destroy the living man. He never uses the word "soul"; but he is never tired of speaking of "living powers," "perceiving or percipient powers," "moving agents," "ourselves," terms which evidently signified to him exactly what "soul" does to present-day theologians. These "living powers," according to him, are independent of the body, and, consequently, may survive it. You may lose a leg or an arm, or an eye, but the mind is not thereby affected. You can think quite as clearly with one hand as with two. In sleep or a swoon the "living powers" are suspended, but not destroyed. In his opinion, our organs of sense are but instruments we employ, not vital parts of ourselves. We receive ideas through them, but once the ideas are ours we can reflect upon them without any assistance from the organs through which they were conveyed to us. Our eyes are no more part of our living selves than a pair of spectacles or a microscope. In fact, we may lose all our organs of sensation without our intellectual powers being in the least degree impaired; and it is a fair presumption that the dissolution of the whole of our bodies will not involve the destruction of our minds.

Such, in brief, is Butler's oft-quoted argument for immortality. It proceeds on the mere supposition that "our organised bodies are no more ourselves or part of ourselves than any other matter around us." "It is as easy to conceive," he says, "that we may exist out of bodies as in them; and that we might have animated bodies of any other organs and senses wholly different from these now given us; that we may hereafter animate these same or new bodies variously modified and organised; as to conceive how we can animate such bodies as our present. And lastly, the dissolution of all these several organised bodies, supposing ourselves to have successively animated them, would have no more conceivable tendency to destroy the living beings ourselves, or deprive us of living faculties, the faculties of perception and of action, than the dissolution of any foreign matter, which we are capable of receiving impressions from, and making use of for the common occasions of life." But, in reality, such an argument has no force whatever, because the assumption on which it rests is not logically permissible; nor did the great metaphysician follow his own argument to its only logical conclusion. It is seemingly most plausible to say that the loss of all our organs of sense would not involve the destruction of our self-consciousness; but we must not forget that the loss of any bodily organ is after all a real loss to ourselves. Remove the eyes, and there is no longer any vision. Cut off the tongue, and the sense of taste ceases. Butler says that if you lose a leg or a hand, you can use a wooden leg or an iron hand. Quite so; but if you lose your eyes or your tongue, will you ever be able to see through artificial eyes, or to experience the sense of taste by means of a silver tongue? The fact is that the loss of every bodily organ inevitably implies the loss of the corresponding sensation. Now, what sensation does the nervous system produce, or of what form of activity is it the organ? Bishop Butler, writing in the year 1736, entirely overlooked this question, the correct answer to which is a rock upon which his ingenious argument is completely wrecked. The nervous system is the organ of consciousness, the brain is the organ of thought or mind. It is in this region that man becomes a self-conscious being. Now, if the nervous system receives an injury; if a lesion attacks the brain, are not our "perceiving or percipient powers" correspondingly impaired? Can a man think coherently under brain-fever; and if not, what happens then to the thinking self to which all bodies

are foreign? If consciousness is "a single and indivisible power" resident within but independent of our bodies, what becomes of it when they are asleep, under chloroform, or utterly paralysed? If the soul is a single and indivisible entity, perfectly distinct from the body, though using it as an instrument, how is it that this single and indivisible soul shares the unconsciousness of the body? John Fiske maintains that the relation of conscious intelligence to the brain is like that of the harper to his harp; and yet we know that if the harp is destroyed the harper survives, and is *delightfully conscious of his survival*. Many doubtless remember how deftly and effectively Professor Tyndall elaborated this point in his *Belfast Address*. The illustration he gave was that of the telegraph-operator and his instruments; and this was the question in which was couched the application:—

"What is there, I would ask, in the human system that answers to this conscious survival of the operator when the battery of the brain is so disturbed as to produce insensibility, or when it is destroyed altogether?"

Of course, the connection between the brain and conscious thought is as yet utterly inexplicable. This is a problem which Science has hitherto completely failed to solve. We cannot explain consciousness, nor can we tell how thoughts and emotions arise within us. But we do know that when incapacity has overtaken the brain, thoughts, and emotions, and consciousness itself are conspicuous by their absence. We do know that nervous diseases often cause a radical change in a man's character. We do know that ten years ago our friend fell from his horse and hurt his head to such an extent that he has been a totally different man ever since. We do know that without a brain man on earth has never yet been able to think. But we have no knowledge of unembodied or disembodied spirits, or of supernatural beings. We have no knowledge of any being or thing unembraced by the term Nature. In a word, we have no knowledge of mind existing apart from or exercising itself independently of matter. Therefore the only conclusion to which we can come, under existing circumstances, is that thought, mind, soul, or spirit is *an expression or manifestation of Matter in the condition to which it has attained in the human brain*. Necessarily this conclusion has reference solely to the present state of existence because we have absolutely no knowledge of any other.

JOHN T. LLOYD.

Some Defenders of the Faith.—IV.

"BLATCHFORD ANSWERED."

MR. SPURR spreads his feathers, and lifts his crest, over a point that he thinks he scores against Mr. Blatchford in relation to King David. "Paul," according to Mr. Blatchford, "speaks of David as 'a man after God's own heart.'" Mr. Spurr replies:—

"Indeed! *Where* does he thus speak? You might oblige with chapter and verse."

Mr. Blatchford *might* have obliged with chapter and verse, but his little book is not loaded with references, and what call was there to be so precise in this particular instance? What on earth is Mr. Spurr driving at? Is he trying his hand at a *suggestio falsi*? Is he hinting what he dare not allege? Or is he relying upon an imperfect acquaintance with the Christian Scriptures? As a matter of fact, Paul *does* speak of David as a man after God's own heart. The expression occurs in his address to the synagogue at Antioch, and may be found in the twenty-second verse of the thirteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Paul does not use the exact words "a man after God's own heart," but he represents God as calling David "a man after mine own heart," and the difference is a mere point of pedantry.

We gave this reference quite accurately in the chapter on David in our *Bible Heroes*. Both in that work and in *Bible Romances* we have given a mul-

titude of exact references. Every important text and quotation can be verified by the reader himself, if he chooses to take the trouble. And this is one of the merits of those works. It involved great labor and care, but the result is worth all the trouble.

Here is another of Mr. Spurr's points. Mr. Blatchford said that, in his opinion, the Bible was not "a fit book to place in the hands of children." We have said this ourselves a thousand times. We have said it, not only theoretically, but practically. We have urged it as an objection (not the *only* one, of course) to the reading of the Bible in the nation's schools. And we submit that the objection needs answering. There are things in the Bible which are quite gratuitously disgusting. But when they are referred to Christian advocates pretend to be deaf. Mr. Spurr does not attempt to reply to Mr. Blatchford's criticism of the Bible as a reading book for children. All he says is this:—

"The Bible needs explaining to children by competent teachers. Some of the 'classics' which are put in the hands of boys are certainly unfit for any children to read. You might with profit extend your observations to books of that class."

But the "classics" are not under discussion. The book under discussion is the Bible. Nor are the "classics" used as the Bible is in the schools of Great Britain. No "inspiration" is claimed for them, and they are not used (objectionable parts and all) as text-books of morality.

Some of the Bible heroes are worthy of the Newgate Calendar. Mr. Blatchford calls them "unspeakable savages." "Well," replies their friend Mr. Spurr, "there is no accounting for taste." We agree with him. There *is* no accounting for taste. Especially for the taste of those who ask children to look upon a lot of liars, robbers, ravishers, and murderers as heroes beloved of God.

When Mr. Blatchford says that "these cruel and ignorant savages have been saddled upon the Christian religion as heroes and as models," Mr. Spurr replies "F-U-D-G-E." He evidently thinks this very witty. It would be more to the point if he read the eleventh chapter of Hebrews.

While dealing with the Bible it was natural that Mr. Spurr should notice Mr. Blatchford's reference to Josephus; and his reply may be taken as a fair test of his intelligence, scholarship, and manners. We reproduce the full Blatchford-Spurr text, in order to prevent cavil or misconception.

Blatchford: "Certain historic Christian evidence— as the famous interpolation in Josephus, for instance— has been branded as forgeries by eminent Christian scholars."

Spurr: "'Certain' and 'eminent' are too vague. You omit to refer to the evidence, and your 'eminent Christian scholars' are nameless. You must offer something more substantial than this before we can accept your word. You do give one case, however, and it is a very unfortunate one for you. 'The famous interpolation in Josephus' you call it. You refer, doubtless, to the passage in his 'Antiquities' Book Eighteen, in which he refers to Jesus. You and your 'eminent Christian scholars' will find it a little difficult to prove that this famous passage is a 'famous interpolation.' Naturally you do not like it, it hits your peculiar theory about Jesus too hard. Your cheap criticism notwithstanding, the passage in Josephus will stand."

Now we put it to Mr. Spurr that he is either aware or not aware of the identity of the "eminent Christian scholars" who have set down the famous "Christ" passage in Josephus as a forgery. If he *is* aware of their identity, what he says is highly disingenuous. If he is *not* aware of their identity, what he says is inexcusably ignorant. We say *inexcusably*, because a self-elected Defender of the Faith cannot legitimately plead ignorance as an excuse for elementary blunders.

Mr. Blatchford was under no necessity to name these Christian scholars. Their names are known to every competent critic. If they are not known to Mr. Spurr—and this is the only supposition consistent with his honor—it is high time that he learnt

the facts instead of figuring as a sciolist in a controversy with his betters.

But before we deal with the Josephus passage we will say a word about other forgeries. We devoted to this subject the whole of the fourth chapter in our *Crimes of Christianity*. We there showed what a number of "Christian Evidences" that were freely used a hundred and fifty years ago, and are still used by some apologists where they think it is safe to do so, have been abandoned by every orthodox scholar who addresses a well-informed, intelligent audience. We showed, by the testimony of Christian scholars of the highest standing, how the early Christian Church was gangrened with fraud. Every scholar knows that even the Apostles' Creed and the Athanasian Creed are rank forgeries. We will not give a list of such forgeries here. It is enough to refer Mr. Spurr, and any of our readers who may feel inquisitive, to the chapter in the work just mentioned.

With regard to the Josephus passage, we will oblige Mr. Spurr with the names of some of the "eminent Christian scholars" who treat it as a forgery. We will also ask him for the name of any "eminent Christian scholar" who defends the Josephus passage as it stands. One will do; at least, it will do for a beginning.

Bishop Warburton, author of the learned and once famous *Divine Legation of Moses*, called the Josephus passage "a rank forgery, and a very stupid one too." Dr. Lardner, after setting forth all the evidence and all the arguments, came to a similar conclusion. Tanaquil Faber maintained that Eusebius, who first mentioned the passage in the fourth century, forged it himself. Dr. Giles calls it "a forgery interpolated in the text during the third century by some pious Christian." De Quincey, in his essay on the Essenes, declared that "this passage has long been given up as a forgery by all men not lunatic."

These are some of the "Christian scholars." There are others, who plead for a most absurd compromise. Dean Milman, in editing Gibbon, who branded the Josephus passage as a forgery, could not defend the passage as it stands. He thought it was "not altogether a forgery, but interpolated with many additional clauses." This view was espoused by Dean Farrar. But we repeat that it is absurd. If Josephus wrote *something*, and what he wrote has been interpolated to an unknown extent, it is clear that we cannot tell what he *did* write. Besides, the external evidence is decisive. The Josephus passage was utterly unknown to all the Christian apologists of the second and third centuries. Can it be believed that they overlooked the one passage that would have been more valuable than all the other "testimonies to Christ" which they were able to present? The only rational conclusion is that they did not cite it because it did not exist.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

The God of the Bible.

(Concluded from p. 615.)

THERE is much about God in Job, the Psalms, and the Prophets. The portrayal of him in Job is rather kaleidoscopic. On the supposition that the Book of Job is an inspired history, it is difficult to understand the various characters given to God in it. But on the theory that the book is a fiction, which no doubt is true, the difficulty disappears.

In the first and second chapters God seems to be a great Personage who attends the religious festivals to receive the homage of all who came to present themselves before him. And the curious thing in the story is that Satan was in the habit of presenting himself to the Lord as well as men. "Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord"

(Job ii. 1). The Lord spoke to Satan quite familiarly and friendly. They had two long chats together about Job. In the first the Lord gives to Satan power over all Job had, and Job soon lost all he had. In the second chat the Lord gives Job himself, all but his life, in the hand of Satan, and he "Smote Job with sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown" (Job ii. 8). A God of this description does not afford a very high estimate of his Godhead. Further on in the book God is represented as speaking to Job from a whirlwind, and he spoke about himself in a grandiloquent way, as vain and pompous men are apt to do. This, again, does not give one a high idea of his personality.

The various characters, and even Job himself, give utterance to many refined thoughts about God, taken as poetical expressions about a hypothetical being. The same may be said of the Psalms and portions of the Prophets. Psalm xix. on the glory of God, and the 139th Psalm on the omnipresence of God, are fine as poetry. But there is nothing in any Biblical description of God that gives any satisfying evidence of his existence. All about God in the Bible is mere declamation, which the writers thought was the highest evidence. The scientific spirit was not born at that time. And many, if not most, apologists even now are as backward as they were. Another thing, many expressions in the Psalms, especially in praise and prayers, look very much as if they were borrowed from hymns used in the worship of the sun.

The word God does not occur quite so often in the New Testament as the Old, and there is nothing in it superior or more definite than the finer passages in the Old Testament.

In the New Testament God is mostly portrayed in words and phrases. For example, take the following: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John i. 1). If God inspired the wording of that verse, he cannot be complimented as a composer. In plain language the verse reads thus: "In the beginning was God, and God was with God, and God was God." If anybody can make any sense of it, they must have some faculty which I do not possess. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth" (John i. 14). Flesh is a material substance, and this verse, as well as others, makes God a material man, like any of us. The language here again is confusing and ambiguous, for God becomes flesh and also an only begotten Son of himself. Such language requires a magician to understand and explain. Another thing, if he had only one Son, who was himself made flesh, what becomes of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man so much talked about by Christians? Besides, the doctrine of the Logos, or Word, is evidently borrowed from the teaching of Plato and his disciples.

"God is a Spirit" (John iv. 24). What a Spirit is no one has yet been able to say. The nearest approach to a definition of Spirit, perhaps, is to say that Spirit is a negation of all there is—that is, nothing. All that can be said about a Spirit is contained in a saying of Jesus after his reputed resurrection: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bone, as ye see me have" (Luke xxiv. 39).

"God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews xii. 29). "For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God" (Deut. iv. 24). "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed" (Exodus iii. 2). The angel of the Lord was God himself, as the context shows. The idea of God being fire may be a very sublime conception, but it requires a great amount of faith to see how he can be a personal being. "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness" (1 John i. 5). "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love

dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John iv. 16). We know something of fire, light, love, and other things said to be God; but we cannot conceive any of them as personal beings. All the words can be changed without destroying the plain meaning. God is a consuming fire; consuming fire is God. God is light; light is God. God is love; love is God. If the first form is true, the second is true also; but both are true in an ideal sense only. Thus the Bible itself makes God a personified ideal, and not a personal being.

Perhaps the most remarkable passage in the New Testament about God is the declaration of Paul at Athens, on Mars Hill: "Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars Hill and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by and beheld your devotion, I found an altar with this inscription, *To the unknown God*. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.....For in him we live and move and have our being; as certain of your own poets have said, for we are also his offspring" (Acts xvii. 23-28). This teaching is pure Pantheism. If we live and move and have our being in God, we are parts of him. God is all, and all is God. If this is true there cannot be a personal God. It is impossible to conceive of the universe as a conscious personal being.

The God of the Bible is a very indefinite, and often a contradictory, conception. The idea, it seems to me, is nothing better than a superstition. The idea, it is true, has a great hold on the people; but so also has every other superstition. The words that Paul addressed to the Athenians could have been applied to himself, and to every people in the world: "I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious." Superstition, fostered and exploited by priestcraft, must be destroyed ere man can be manly and the earth a Paradise for all, as it easily might be.

R. J. DERFEL.

What is a Hero?

ANDREW CARNEGIE offers to devote five million dollars to the cultivation of heroism in the race. By the provisions attached to his gift it is plain that he has in mind physical bravery. Of course all heroism, even when of the body, is not without a touch of moral and mental grandeur. To jump into the whirling sea to save a life, or to dare the roaring flames to reach the cradle of a child, requires not only nerve, but also soul. We would be glad to have Mr. Carnegie's definition of a hero, but this is ours—The hero is he who *can*. There is a big difference between people who can and people who can't. It is not always easy to drop that little "t," but the hero can. Yet this alone would not make one a hero. There is not a man or a woman but who can do something; but more than that is required to be a hero. Shall we say: He who can do the *difficult* is the hero? It is easy to glide down the stream, but to sail against the current requires persistence, patience, and courage—in one word, effort. To attempt the difficult, then, is one of the necessary elements of heroism. But not even now have we the true definition of a hero. We have all known of men who have attempted the difficult without deserving to be called heroes. Neither the acrobat who balances himself on a tight rope, nor the athlete who performs wonderful feats, could be classified with the heroic men and women whose memory we love to keep green. Is then, the hero, the man who attempts the difficult at the *risk of his life*? Life is the greatest thing in the world. Life is the greatest word in human language; it is the greatest gift we can receive or give. If we lose our money, we may hope to make it up again; if we lose our reputation, our good name, which is more than gems or gold, even this we may live to recover; but if we give our life away, it is given for all time—it can never be recalled. They, then, who, in attempting the difficult, give their lives, give all, for no one can give more. Have we now the true hero defined? I do not think so. Many years ago Dr. Tanner, a New York physician, fasted for forty days. Here was a case of a man attempting the difficult at the risk of his life; was he, then, a hero? The shopkeeper, in running through the flames to save his valuables, attempts the difficult at personal peril, but is his act heroic? From time to time eccentric men have tried to swim across the Niagara River. One man, not long ago, got into a barrel and was hurled from the sharp

edge of the precipice into the seething depths below, losing his life in the attempt. He was certainly bold; but was he a *hero*? The hero, then, is the man who attempts the difficult at the sacrifice of his life for a *noble purpose*. The nobler or larger the purpose for which one risks one's life, the more heroic is the deed. What gives value to the deed is the purity of the motive and the loftiness of the aim. We look up to the author of such a deed because he is more than we are; because he did what we could not, because he *is* what we all wish to be. There has not been a country or an age which has not had its heroes. But it is not enough to have had heroes once. The old heroes cannot do our work for us. We need heroes to-day, men and women, who, for their country and for humanity, will speak only the truth, and do only the right, whatever the cost.—*Liberal Review* (Chicago).

Solomon's Flogging System.

MR. G. BERNARD SHAW, replying in the *Times* to a British admiral who defends flogging in the Navy—not for officers, of course, but for sailors—writes as follows about David and Solomon:—

"On the admiral's kind recommendation, I have gone carefully through the history of Solomon and his presumably well-birched son. I find that Solomon himself was the son of David, a successful warrior and ruler, who spoiled his children, as the case of Absalom shows. Solomon introduced the flogging system, which grew more severe in the family until scorpions were substituted for whips. And, as might have been expected, Solomon's children lost the kingdom his father had built up, and scattered the nation he had welded together. To this day the remnant of that nation, reverting to the sentimental practice of David, spoils its children, with the result that in dealing with them our grown-up public school boys are as clay in the hands of the potter. "As to Solomon himself, unrestrained authority, and the practice of flogging other people, had such an effect on him that, on reaching the age of an admiral, he turned to the worship of Ashtaroath, and never could be reclaimed. A more impressive warning against governing empires on Solomonic principles, and governing navies on the principles of Captain Kidd's boatswain, is not to be found in the Scriptures."

The Bishop and the Booze.

(Bishop Potter has dedicated the "Subway Tavern" for "moderate drinking" on the New York East Side.)

OLD Omar on a ten days' toot
Could seven and twenty sects refute;
But arguments he would not need
With one of Bishop Potter's creed.

According to the Bishop's views
The Devil shuns good, wholesome booze,
And e'en the Church may bless the house
Where Wine's fair Daughter goes to spouse.

"Go on," he says, "and open up
A tavern of the flowing cup,
And I will bless the magic bowl,
So he who drinks may save his soul."

And so the tavern doors wide flare
With an ecclesiastic air;
The barkeep, filled with pious cheer,
Blends silver fizz and measures beer.

And as the sweating devotee
Cries, "Scotch and seltzer—make three!"
He thinks of churchly matters more
Than he has ever thought before.

Till last, by Luna's guiding ray,
He takes his spirit-ual way
To bear the message to his wife,
"Hurralfher (hie) Bish'p—higher life!"

—Wallace Irwin.

"Also," continued the portly lady who was delivering a lecture on "The Duties of the Model Wife" before the women's club, "we should always greet our husbands with a kiss when they come home. Now, will one of my auditors tell the underlying principle of this?" A stern, cold woman arose in the rear of the audience. "It's the surest way to catch 'em if they've been drinking," she said, with a knowing nod.

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

Sunday, October 2, Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, London, W., at 7.30, "What Do We Know of God?"
 October 9, Queen's Hall; 16, Glasgow; 23, Leicester; 30, Birmingham.
 November 6, Coventry; 20, Manchester; 27, Liverpool.

To Correspondents.

- C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.—October 2, Manchester; 30, Queen's Hall; November 6, Glasgow; 20, Coventry.
- J. ARNOLD SHARPLEY.—Pleased to see your letter in the Liverpool *Daily Post*, which has been handed to us on our return from Rome. The omission of N. S. S. names in the English newspapers is not merely the result of prejudice. It is largely the result of direct misleading on the part of certain persons who are trying to assume an importance which they do not possess inside the Freethought party. We are glad to hear how much you appreciate the *Freethinker*.
- J. M. DAY.—We presume your subscription is for the Congress Fund. Part of your letter has been handed to Miss Vance. Mr. Foote's lecture on "Who and What was Jesus Christ?" at Queen's Hall will not be printed. He has in contemplation a treatise on that subject.
- F. J. VOISEY.—Thanks; next week.
- E. C. CORNETT.—We know nothing of Mr. George Wise's "challenge." We are not in the prize-fighting business, and are not in the habit of issuing "challenges"—or accepting them. The secretary of the Liverpool N. S. S. Branch has informed us that Mr. Wise is anxious to hold a debate, and we are answering Mr. Pearson's letter by post. For the rest, why trouble about Christian vauntings? A man five feet four does not really make himself six feet by strutting.
- W. P. PEARSON.—Mr. Foote has been waiting until the Rome Congress was over. He will write you now respecting the invitation to debate at Liverpool, etc. We are obliged to you for the extract from the letter of the Christian lady (we prefer not to be more precise) to whom you sent a copy of our *Bible Romances*. If it has made her laugh, because she is so quick to see the comic side of everything, it has done that amount of damage to her orthodoxy. Pray accept our thanks.
- W. S. PURCHON.—Forwarded.
- G. A. AIDRED.—We can scarcely do what you wish. Such an effort should be made (should it not?) through a regularly constituted society. We say this without prejudice to the propagandist work you have been doing.
- W. CAIN.—Not without merit, but you need more skill in versification, which may, of course, come with practice. It will certainly never come otherwise.
- W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.
- H. R. CLIFTON.—In our next.
- G. SCOTT.—Received with thanks.
- C. H. WOOD.—What you say is, on the whole, very just.
- D. S. CURRIE.—Your order is passed into the proper hands.
- H. JONES (Manchester).—You take no liberty; on the contrary, we are always pleased to hear from sterling Freethinkers. You have our sympathy in your bereavement.
- G. L. G. MACKINNON.—Thanks for the cutting, which may be useful in an early number.
- W. BILDON.—"Acid Drops" will be resumed in next week's *Freethinker*. Mr. Foote did not return in time to give this week's number the ordinary appearance. With regard to your question re our criticism of Mr. Spurr, we can only say that the co-existence of an omnipotent God and of any other being with free (spontaneous) will is to us simply unthinkable. Some people may be able to imagine (for instance) the meeting of an irresistible force and an immovable body. We cannot. That is all.
- ROME CONGRESS FUND.—H. J. Gabb £1, A. R. Brown 2s. 6d., W. Tipper 2s. 6d., A. Laggard 5s. 6d., J. M. Day 2s., D. S. Currie 2s. 6d.
- C. E. B.—We do not see how we can make use of your "confidential" letter. Our comments might lead to a denial of your statements, and you would then have to step out into the open. You could hardly expect the Salvationists to show much patience towards a Freethinker. In spite of their "kind" professions, we believe they would exterminate Freethinkers very cheerfully, if they only had a good chance.
- LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.
- FRIENDS who send us newspapers should enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.
- ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.
- PERSONS remitting for literature by stamps are specially requested to send *halfpenny stamps*.
- 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.
- 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 opens the new course of Freethought lectures at the Queen's Hall this evening (October 2). His subject will be "What Do We Know of God?" Prior to the lecture he will say something about his recent visit to Rome and the International Freethought Congress which has been held there. The admission to all seats at Queen's Hall is free, except for some reserved front seats which are priced at one shilling. Tickets for these seats can be obtained at the entrance office.

Mr. Cohen opens the new lecture season at the Manchester Secular Hall this evening (Oct. 2). He should have first-rate meetings. Mr. Cohen will probably say something about the Rome Congress before his evening lecture. He enjoyed himself very much during the whole trip, if we are any judge, and took an active interest in all that was happening. Perhaps he wanted (but then he is young yet) to put more hours in a day than it would hold, and was too often round the corner after a "bargain" (but that may be in his blood). But, joking apart, we like him all the better for what we saw of him during that "nine days' wonder." And what he may tell the Manchester "saints" will come from a fresh observer.

There are no "Acid Drops" again in this week's *Freethinker*, but there will be plenty of them, and good of the sort, we hope, next week. Mr. Foote did not return to London until Monday; Mr. Cohen and Mr. Lloyd returning with him, while the other members of the N. S. S. party to Rome staid behind for a few days longer in Italy or France. Four whole days out of nine had been spent in travelling, and four out of eight successive nights had been spent out of bed. Mr. Foote is not an easy sleeper, and had only one or two slight naps in the train (or boat) on Saturday and Sunday nights; so he had to have a good night's rest before he was fit for any mental work, and all his writing for this week's *Freethinker*, except the Spurr article, had to be done on Tuesday. Fortunately he slept like a log on Monday night—a thing he had not done for years.

The members of the N. S. S. party at Rome consisted of Messrs. Foote, Cohen, Lloyd, and Roger—the four special delegates, and the following honorary delegates:—Mr. A. Fincken (London), Mr. Guazzani (London), Mr. R. Johnson (Manchester), Mr. G. F. H. McCluskey (Plymouth), Mr. H. Parsons (Evesham), Mr. J. Clarke (Birmingham), Mr. W. H. Wood (London), Mrs. Fisher (Leeds), and Mrs. Forrer (Liverpool). Mr. J. W. Gott, an N. S. S. member, travelled with the party, but had a different delegation. Amongst the other British delegates at Rome, we noticed Mr. J. M. Robertson and Mr. Joseph McCabe, who represented "The English Committee," and Mr. W. Heaford, who acted as its secretary. We understand that Mr. Charles Watts represented the Ethicists. Dr. Stanton Coit was to have been there, and perhaps was, but we did not see him. Mr. Harry Snell, who was staying at Rome, attended the Congress, and foregathered a good deal with the N. S. S. party, who were very glad of his company, and thankful for his help in getting about the city.

Some of the N. S. S. party, including Mr. Roger, were going on to Naples. We see that Mount Vesuvius got up a splendid eruption in their honor. No doubt they appreciated it. But they probably groaned over the price of hotel accommodation.

Mr. Roger may tell us something about his Naples visit when he returns. In the meanwhile we may state that he was a tower of strength, as a travelling companion, to the N. S. S. party. The Mr. Roger of that trip was quite a revelation. He was really a consummate courier—if he will pardon the word. On board trains, at railway stations, in hotels, or elsewhere, he was ready for every emergency. He was even too many for the Italian predatory gentlemen who drive carriages, sell what you don't want, and cheat you in your change. And when he unbent, after his watchdog labors, over his cigar and modest glass of Frascati, or other Italian beverage, he was indeed a "Jolly Roger."

The West Ham Branch, much encouraged by the recent five meetings in the Stratford Town Hall, has engaged a hall for regular Sunday evening meetings. It is at the Liberal and Radical Rooms, in the Broadway, Forest Gate, and will hold nearly two hundred people. Local Freethinkers who wish to co-operate in this enterprise are invited to communicate with Mr. Henry Spence, 11 Reginald-road, Forest Gate, E. Mr. Spence has been appointed to help the Branch secretary in this matter. We hope the effort will be thoroughly successful.

Bible Ghosts.—II.

(From the New Edition of "Bible Romances" by G. W. Foote.)

JESUS CHRIST himself was considered a ghost by some of the early heretics. They could not conceive that Deity was born of woman, ate, drank, and slept, and suffered and ignominious death; so they held that the Messiah was not a being of flesh and blood, but a phantasm. There is something to be said for this opinion, for the same Jesus who was crucified and buried ascended into heaven; and does not St. Paul say that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God"? But on the other hand there are the very plain, unequivocal words which Luke puts into the mouth of Jesus on his appearance to the eleven, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." This seems decisive. Yet those fastidious heretics may be met half way, for if Jesus was not a ghost, he was at least the son of a ghost.

With the exception of those spirits Jesus was in the habit of casting out from people who never possessed them, a sprightly variety of which he sent into the Gadarean swine, the first authentic ghost he took in hand was that of Jairus's daughter. Some critics, among whom is Olshausen, throw doubt on this. When Jesus came to raise the girl from the dead, in other words to call her ghost back, he said, "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth." Those critics take the language literally, and assert that it was not a case of resurrection at all.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke narrate this story, but John does not. Mark and Luke both say that Jesus, after restoring the maid to her friends, charged them that they should tell no man, while Matthew says that "the fame thereof went abroad into all that land." This is a good illustration of Gospel Harmony. Yet it is fair to say that the different stories may be reconciled by supposing that Jesus asked them to keep the miracle a secret, in order to get it well published.

Jesus raised up more than one person from the dead, as indeed was to be expected, for Rabbi Acha in the Talmud only expressed the general belief when he said that "in the Messianic time God will wake the dead, as he did before by Elijah, Elisha, and Ezekiel." The second case was that of the widow's son at Nain. Jesus resuscitated him publicly before "much people" as he was being carried to the grave. Of course the young man, like the young maid, was never heard of again; and although the "rumor went forth through all Judæa," it never reached the ears of Matthew, Mark, and John. Josephus did not hear of it, nor even Paul, for he told Agrippa that Christ was the first that rose from the dead, and in Corinthians (xv. 20) he calls him "the first fruits of them that slept." For any useful result, or any conviction it produced, this miracle was like the barren figtree.

Philostratus relates a similar story of Apollonius of Tyana, who met one day in the streets of Rome a damsel carried out to burial, followed by her betrothed, and by a weeping company. He bade them set down the bier, saying he would stanch their tears; and having enquired her name, whispered something in her ear, and then, taking her by the hand, he lifted her up, and she began straightway to speak, and returned to her father's house. This story is quite as beautiful as Luke's, and probably quite as true.

A far more beautiful story is told of Buddha. Professor Rhys Davids and other Buddhist scholars narrate it with slight variations, but it is more finely rendered in Sir Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*. A young mother brings the Master her dying child, bitten by a poisonous snake, and implores his aid. Gazing at her with his gentle eyes, and laying on her his patient hand, he says that there is one thing which might heal her grief and the boy's wound, if

she could find it; a black mustard seed, taken from a house where no mother, father, child, or slave has died. But she seeks it in vain, for although those of whom she begs kindly offer her the seed, she cannot take it, because every house bears the taint of death; and she returns to the pitiful wise Master with the sad news.

"My sister! thou hast found," the Master said,
Searching for what none finds—that bitter balm
I had to give thee. He thou lovedst slept
Dead on thy bosom yesterday: to-day
Thou know'st the whole wide world weeps with thy woe:
The grief which all hearts share grows less for one.
Lo! I would pour my blood if I could stay
Thy tears and win the secret of that curse
Which makes sweet love our anguish, and which drives—
O'er flowers and pastures to the sacrifice—
As these dumb beasts are driven—men their lords.
I seek that secret: bury thou thy child."

How pathetic, yet how sane! How far above Luke's story of Christ, which teaches no lesson and touches no eternal problem!

Luke claims to have had "perfect understanding of all things from the very first," and he certainly beats the other evangelists in his account of the ruler's daughter. Yet he yields to John in the case of Lazarus. John, indeed, beats all three of his rivals hollow in this matter; for, while he hunts up all the details of the gentleman's resurrection, they never once get upon the scent.

Lazarus was loved by Jesus; he lived and died, rose from the tomb, and lived and died again, unless he is still roaming the earth; yet Matthew, Mark, and Luke never heard of him. What makes this ignorance still more striking is that John represents the raising of Lazarus as the fact which provoked the resentment of the chief priests and Pharisees, and led to the crucifixion of Christ.

Jesus knew that his friend Lazarus lay dying, but would not save his life, because he meant to work a bigger miracle. When he arrived at Bethany, Martha and Mary were surrounded with sympathetic friends, and weeping over their brother's grave. The scene was so affecting that "Jesus wept" too, although he knew, which they did not, that in less than a minute Lazarus would be restored to life. Jesus is called "the man of sorrows," and not without cause, for he seems to have been able to pipe his optics on the smallest provocation.

Lazarus had been dead four days, and his flesh was rather high. Martha said, "he stinketh"; and St. Ambrose wrote that the smell was like Egyptian darkness—so thick, that it could be felt. But Jesus, being the son of Jahveh, and used to the sickly odor of burnt offerings, was not deterred by such a trifle. Approaching the tomb, he first asked his celestial parent to back him up, and then shouted "Lazarus, come forth!" Whereupon the corpse started up all alive, but not kicking, for it was bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and must have looked remarkably like a bale of bacon. But of course he was soon unpacked and taken home.

Many people saw this miracle, yet it was not mentioned at the trial of Jesus before Pilate. What a strange omission! If Lazarus had been produced in court, with the witnesses of his resurrection, is it likely that Pilate would have sentenced Jesus to death? Or, if the chief priests and Pharisees believed in the miracle, would they have tried to kill one who had proved himself the master of Death?

Why did Jesus shout "Lazarus, come forth"? Would not a *whisper* have done as well? There is a theatrical air about the whole performance. Renan suggests that it was all a trick, got up between Lazarus and Jesus, when the latter's head was turned and his conscience perverted by the Messianic delusion. Dr. Davidson saves the credit of his Savior by impeaching John's accuracy, and charging him with "converting the Lazarus of the parable in Luke into a historical person." Keim also holds that "not a doubt can remain of the spuriousness of the whole story." A host of Biblical critics agree with this view, including Schenkel, Strauss, Baur, Weisse, and Hilgenfeld.

What became of Lazarus after his resurrection? Scripture is silent, but tradition says he became Bishop of Marseilles, which is doubtless as true as that he wrote the "Marseillaise." Epiphanius relates that he lived thirty years after his "second birth." What a pity he did not occupy some of the time by writing his autobiography! The history of the four days he spent God knows where would have been the best bit of literary property in the market.

There is a tradition that the first thing Lazarus asked on coming to, was whether he should die again; on being told "Yes," he never smiled more. Had he then, like Jesus a little later, spent those four days in hell? Or had he been to heaven, and finding it dismally monotonous, as Revelation depicts, was he terrified at the thought of returning, and dwelling for ever with what Heine called "all the menagerie of the Apocalypse"? Robert Browning has brought great learning and subtlety to bear on this subject, in his Epistle of Karshish the Arab Physician, but of course he is a poet and not a theologian.

Jesus Christ's ghost will be dealt with in another chapter. We conclude this one with a few words on the great ghost, the ghost of ghosts, the Holy Ghost. Let us, dear reader, approach this mystical spirit with fear and trembling; for blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is as in that will never be forgiven us in this world or in the next. It leads as surely to the pit as jumping from the gallery of a theatre; and is all the more to be dreaded because nobody knows what it is.

Men have speculated whether this being should be called he, she, or it. But the story of its "overshadowing" Mary seems decisive on that point. What shape the heavenly father of Jesus took when he visited Joseph's young woman is a moot point. Protestant writers shirk the subject, but Catholics go in for the dove or the pigeon. They ridicule the Pagan story of Jove's making love to Leda in the form of a swan, and becoming the father of Castor and Pollux. But what difference is there between these two myths except in the size of the bird? Yet to laugh at the one is legitimate fun, while to laugh at the other is unpardonable sin.

There is no doubt as to the Holy Ghost's form on his next appearance. When Jesus was baptised "he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him." This is Matthew's account. Luke goes farther. He writes as though all the bystanders witnessed the marvel as well as Jesus, "The heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove."

The last appearance of the Holy Ghost was on that famous day of Pentecost, when he came in the form of tongues of fire on the heads of the twelve apostles. The effect of this visitation was singular. They all began to jabber strange tongues. Some of the auditors thought they were filled with the spirit, and others said they were drunk. A similar diversity of opinion has obtained since. Many men have been "filled with the Holy Ghost," like those captains of the first Salvation Army, have talked with strange tongues, and seen visions and dreamed dreams; and while some people have thought them inspired, others have thought them delirious. This latter class have ever, as in the Acts, been stigmatised as "mockers," but their number is rapidly increasing in this age of science and common-sense. They have always had the laugh on their side, and now the world is coming over too. A mighty roar of laughter is shaking the realms of superstition, fluttering all the ghosts, warning them to melt into thin air, and "like the baseless fabric of a vision faded, leave not a wrack behind."

What object or significance could there be in this whole world, if it were under the arbitrary influence of a higher power which could at any moment suspend or break through its laws or institutions at its own pleasure.—BUCHNER.

The Conservatism of Woman.

(By M. M. MANGASARIAN, in the "Liberal Review," Chicago.)

"Free thought is not only a right, but a duty."—SIR LESLIE STEPHENS, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

THE sphere of woman is daily growing broader and nobler. As we remove from her mind the fetters which condemned her to a life of servitude and hindered the expansion of her nature, we discover in her a spontaneous development of capacity and even—genius. As she becomes freer she grows stronger. To-day her influence is felt everywhere. Even politics, the farthest removed from her sphere, is becoming permeated with her thought and interest. Perhaps, after all our vain efforts to purify politics, we shall be compelled to look to woman as the *dernier ressort* of reform in municipal and national life.

The advent of woman into the world's work has doubled the moral power of mankind. For long ages only one-half of the force at command was utilised; the other half was left unexplored, undeveloped. Now humanity is twice the power it was formerly, because all the departments and pursuits of life have received a fresh impulse and inspiration by the appearance of woman at the side of man.

But we must confine our remarks to the relation of woman to modern thought. By modern thought we mean original thought—the thought that is self-directed, and is the result of personal inquiry—the thought which is not borrowed, nor imitated, nor received blindly. Modern thought is free thought. Free thought may be narrower and poorer than the thought which comes packed and labelled in creeds; still, the one is honest thought, and the other is not. There are those who are afraid of even the phrase "free thought." They imagine it to be some dreadful thing. Free thought means personal thought. When, instead of asking the Pope, or the Bible, or the Church, to think for us, we do our own thinking, using freely and without fear the faculties of mind given to us, we are free thinkers. It does not mean that thought, to be free, should combat all other thought, or that it should always differ from the thought of others, but that it should be the unhindered product of the mind.

The great thinkers should help us; they must not overwhelm us. To Socrates, Jesus, Dante and Goethe, and to all the immortals of history, we say: "Dear teachers, help us; give us your hand, your light, but permit us to stand upon our own feet." Each one of us must count for a "self" in this great universe. The creed, the Bible, the church, the teacher, should be instruments, not to dominate the individual mind, but to encourage it to independence—to selfhood. "We cannot teach truth to another; we can only help him to find it," said Galileo.

Another characteristic of free thought is its courageousness. Cowardice is often the mainstay of the creeds. No force of character is needed to side with the majority, or to accept the established, popular thought. But when one discovers that the popular thought is neither strong nor sound, and undertakes to reform it, he shows initiative and courage. One candidate, when before the council, says: "I promise to adhere to the creëd, and to preach only the doctrines therein contained to the end of my life"; and they let him come in and preach. Another says: "I cannot promise any unchanging conformity; I shall preach to-day what I think to be the truth, though it should contradict every word that I said before." They do not want such a man; he is a free thinker; he has the courage to say he was wrong yesterday. Which of these would we have for a teacher?

We live in such an intellectual age that there are really very few who have not thoughts of their own. It was different in ancient times, when the people were illiterate and bigoted, and lacked the instruments and encouragements to thought. To-day he

must be poor indeed in mind and heart who has not his own ideas. But it is not enough for a man to do his own thinking; he must be faithful to his thought. He must have the courage to own his thought, and the sincerity to call it by its right name. There are people who twist and turn their thought until it is made to look like the thought that is popular, in order to escape the sacrifice involved in standing alone. "I cannot make the people accept my larger thought," says the timid thinker; "therefore I will let them think that I accept theirs. They will not subscribe to my truth; I will subscribe to their falsehood." The Rationalist says: "I am not going to compel anybody to surrender his prejudice to accept my thought, but it shall not be my fault if the new thought and the grander ideas are not proclaimed. There shall be one man at least who shall brush aside the cobwebs of interest, gain, comfort, reputation—the whole rack—and speak his free, honest, latest thought."*

Then there are those to whom this whole subject of religion is of so little importance that they do not see why they should be honest about it at all. The thing itself being a delusion, why should anyone make it a matter of conscience to be sincere about it? Why tell a woman who wants to believe as her ancestors have believed that there is a better and purer faith? If a woman thinks her jewellery is genuine, why tell her that she has been wearing imitation ornaments? In Burton's *Life of David Hume* there is a very significant passage: A young man, seeking promotion and income, writes a letter to the philosopher for advice. He tells him that he is reluctant to enter the Anglican ministry, although that is the most profitable within his reach, because of intellectual and moral scruples. He writes to Hume that he cannot stand up before the council of bishops and say that he is "moved by the Holy Spirit to take upon himself the sacred office," when his real object is material welfare. To all these delicate scruples Hume sends the following reply: "It is putting too great a respect on the vulgar and their superstitions to pique one's self on sincerity with regard to them. If the thing were worthy of being treated gravely, I should tell you that the Pythian oracle, with the approbation of Xenophon, advised everyone to worship the gods." This advice is climaxed with this personal reference: "I wish it were still in my power to be a hypocrite in this particular." John Morley, in commenting upon this passage, says that this view of Hume influences silently a much greater number of men than we are willing to admit. There are many "who would shrink from throwing their conduct into so gross a formula. They will lift up their hands at this quotation, so strangely blind are we to the hiding places of our own hearts, even when others flash upon them the terrible illumination that comes of calling conduct and motives by plain names." Where would humanity terminate if we should follow the advice of Hume? Our best thought tells us that there is no permanent power in a lie. If we should come to look upon ourselves as hypocrites, and act upon the idea that we can command the Truth instead of obeying her, how long before we would sink to the lowest depths? Hypocrisy is worse than ignorance; the one makes progress difficult, the other disgraces the progress already made. Honesty is the stuff great souls and great nations are made of. If honesty is a hollow word, then what is there serious in life? At what price would any of us be in the place of a man who professes to believe and to preach a faith which in his inmost thoughts he holds to be a mere tradition?

An English publication for June (*Reynolds' Newspaper*) entertains an article which describes the average English woman as a Tory, and that "the lower you go in the social scale the more conservative becomes the female." Is this pronounced conservatism of women an inherent characteristic of the feminine mind, or is it the result of education?

* John Morley.

We have heard it argued that men are more prepared and better qualified than women to divest their minds of the symbols of the old faith when these have ceased to command their respect. "Religion is preserved to the world by woman alone," said Renan. The general impression is that man is more friendly to vigorous thought than woman, and that for this reason religion appeals to woman and relies upon her sympathy and support more than upon that of man. The facts seem at first to warrant this opinion. There are more women in the Churches than men. The principal work of the Churches is done by women. These hear and believe when the men question and doubt. Among the old Greeks, who were an intellectual race, the women were more susceptible to religious excitement than the men. In Japan it is a very rare thing to see men in the temples; the Juggernaut is filled with women and children, and the few men visible in the congregation belong as a rule to the lower classes. It has also been ascertained that among certain tribes the women believe in more gods than the men. It is inferred from these facts that woman is the greatest obstacle to the progress of modern thought. Again, the desire on the part of men to spare the tender feelings of the mother or the wife frequently holds the larger thought in suppression. Tennyson advised the emancipated Rationalist to spare the feelings of his weaker sister. There is always some pain and anguish in the slowly but steadily growing doubt that what one has accepted as infallible in all these years is not infallible at all. Yet it is less difficult, less painful, it is claimed, for a man to wake up to this fact than for a woman. A change of thought or faith means more to a woman; it effects a greater revolution in her life. Again, it is stated that rational, vigorous thinking is not in the province of woman. Hence she regrets to see the old faith losing its hold upon the world, and throws her whole enthusiasm to prolong its kingdom. She is more conservative and less hospitable to critical and free thought, assert others. Let us examine these charges.

It is held that intellectually women are not as well equipped as men. Darwin thought that men were more inventive; that they pushed their investigations farther and deeper than women. The brain of women has remained stationary, while that of man has continued to develop. The brain of a Parisian woman, says Darwin, does not differ from that of a Chinese woman. But it is only recently that women are enjoying a few of the privileges that have been at the command of man from the beginning. For long centuries, and in all countries, woman has been refused the wider arena—the school, the college, the world—which have always been open to man. She has been confined to a subordinate position. She has been degraded by the laws and traditions into a mere "doll of fashion," a "spinning-top of whims," or a "tongue of gossip," or a "fool of flattery," or an "easy victim to adroit intrigues against her chastity," or a "household drudge." Is it any wonder that such treatment should tell upon her brain? May not a more rational treatment give to her intellectual faculties the largeness which, it is said, she now lacks? Already the mind of woman has more than begun to stir, and it does not take a very great seer to predict a larger and richer sphere for her in the near future. Yet, even granting that at present, and owing to conditions, women are not intellectually the peers of men, it does not follow in the least that for that reason they are incapable of modern thought, and that superstition is the proper thing for them. We are far from admitting that women cannot of their own effort broaden their horizon; we are only trying to show, that even if it were true, it does not follow that they cannot appreciate the more liberal, the more rational, thought. "Superstition," says Guyau, "is an affair of bringing up, not of nature. I have known many women whose minds were as pure of superstition as those of the great philosophers. Let a woman once seize the order of nature, open her eyes to the teachings

of science, and she will become as liberal minded as any man."*

Another obstacle to the progress of liberal thought among women is said to be their credulity. A woman will believe in a thing more readily and with less reserve than a man. It is observed that a wife will, with a few exceptions, believe as her husband does. If he changes his thought, the wife will frequently do the same. "I was a Catholic before I married my husband, who is a member of the 'Institute,'" said a distinguished woman; "now I believe as my husband does."† We knew an exceedingly well-cultivated young woman who was a Rationalist before she married a clergyman, and instead of the wife bringing the husband to her position, she went over to his. But it is also true that many husbands have followed the faith of their wives. It is not the credulity of woman that blocks the way of progress, but the indifference and the timidity of liberal men. Some husbands treat their wives in this respect as some fathers do their children. If a child wishes to go to the orthodox Sunday-school to learn the things that the father has ceased to believe, why, let it do so. So if the wife is anxious to have the husband go with her to her church, to please her, he consents. Instead of having the courage of his thought, he is willing to lay aside his honest convictions, and to act as if he still belonged to the old order. What is needed is a healthier and freer expression of conviction between husband and wife, and not a purely sentimental compromise or an attitude of indifference.

(To be continued.)

Free Thoughts.

ONE of the thrilling and soul-stirring sights in this sordid age is that of John D. Standard Oilyfellow following Jesus through the thorns and thickets of Wall-street. This aged, hairless, almost worn-out man follows his savior with all the ardor of youth.

The highest respect one can show all Sunday laws is to break them.

The first step towards knowledge is to get rid of superstition.

A great many bad people do not get drunk, and a great many good people do not get Jesus.

The poorer the dogs the fatter the fleas. The worshippers are the dogs, the priests are the fleas.

The Sunday paper has killed the Sunday sermon.

If God is as bad as he has painted himself in the book of Genesis he ought to commit suicide.

Love your friends and look out for your enemies.

Is it not strange that the Roman Catholic Church should have saved the "seamless coat" worn by Jesus, the bones of his grandmother, and other equally foolish relics, and should have lost all of the writings of the early Christians, which bear upon his life and career? Of the Christian Gospels and epistles there is not a manuscript that dates back of the fourth century, and probably not back to the fourteenth.

Is it not time for Roman priests to confess to somebody what they do? Why should not these men tell their sins to human ears as well as listen to the tale of sin from others? We opine that, should some of these priests open their lips in truthful confession, they would "a tale unfold" that would

Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their sphere,
Thy knotted and combined locks to part,
And each particular hair to stand on end
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine.

What is Roman Catholicism working for in this country? Is it to fill the air with a fairer flag

than the Stars and Stripes? Is it for a nobler and better freedom than is proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence? Is it to establish and foster grander institutions than those supported by our republican government? If so, show us these things; but, if not, then we say to Roman Catholicism, you are the foe of this country, and not its friend.

Because man came from the ape he need not be a monkey.

When a young lady has a dime novel in one hand and a dog in the other we wonder what can be in her head.

The Bible cannot answer satisfactorily a single doubt of man.

Civilisation is not wrong because it contradicts a text from the Bible; it is the other way.

An army on its feet can conquer an army on its knees.

A lie never commits suicide.

A lie has more lives than a cat, and is harder to kill than witch-grass. You cannot burn it, nor drown it, nor choke it. You may shoot it and it will smile; you may cut its throat and it will grin; you may give it poison and it will laugh. It will live longer than a typhoid germ and will kick after its legs have been cut off.

—New York Truthseeker.

L. K. WASHBURN.

WISDOM IN LIFE.

Metaphysics, and theology, including all speculations on the why and the wherefore, optimism, pessimism, freedom, necessity, causality, and so forth, are not only for the most part loss of time, but frequently ruinous. It is no answer to say that these things force themselves upon us, and that to every question we are bound to give an answer. It is true, although strange, that there are multitudes of burning questions which we must do our best to ignore, to forget their existence; and it is not more strange, after all, than many other facts in this wonderfully mysterious and defective existence of ours. One fourth of life is intelligible, the other three fourths is unintelligible darkness; and our earliest duty is to cultivate the habit of not looking round the corner.—*Mark Rutherford.*

REASON AND AUTHORITY.

The vulgar are in the right when they judge for themselves; they are wrong when they trust to their blind guides. The celebrated Nonconformist divine, Baxter, was almost stoned to death by the good women of Kidderminster, for asserting from the pulpit that "hell was paved with infants' skulls"; but, by the force of argument, and of learned quotations from the Fathers, the reverend preacher at length prevailed over the scruples of his congregation, and over reason and humanity.—*William Hazlitt.*

NO BEATING THE HOLY IMAGES AND THE TEAPOT.

They may lick us on the land,
They may lick us on the sea,
But we'll make our final stand
When they think we're up a tree;
For we'll mobilise our Ikons,
And they'll see where they will be.

You may think the Bear can't bite,
And we don't know how to scrap—
In our majesty and might
We will sponge 'em off the map,
When we mobilise our Ikons
And annihilate the Jap.

When to Tokio we get,
With our bureaucrats and czar,
We will make 'em skip; you bet
They will get a nasty jar
When we mobilise our Ikons
And our fizzling Samovar.

—Town Topics.

* *L'Irreligion de l'Avenir.*

† *Ibid.*

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent or postcard.

LONDON.

QUEEN'S (Minor) HALL (Langham-place, W.): G. W. Foote, "What do we know of God?" Doors open 7, Chair taken 7.30. Discussion invited. Admission free. Reserved front seat, 1s.

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bromley Public Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, F. J. Gould, "The Religion of Social Service."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 7, J. M. Robertson, "The Ethics of the Drink Trade."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Dr. Coit, "The Freethought Congress at Rome."

OUTDOOR.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Station-road): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey; Brockwell Park, 3.15, W. J. Ramsey; 7.30, Conversation, to be held in the North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road.

PECKHAM RYE: 3.15, T. J. Thurlow, "The First Great Convert to Christianity."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Hyde Park, near Marble Arch): 11.30, a Lecture; Hammersmith, 7.30, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms, Broad-street): 7, A. Barber, "Volney." Thursday, October 7, at 8, Coffee House, Bull Ring, S. A. Deakin, "Vision."

Huddersfield (Market Cross): Saturday, at 8, G. Whitehead and C. J. Atkinson.

DEWSBURY (Market Place): 7, C. J. Atkinson, G. Whitehead, and J. Barker.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): L. Small, B.Sc., 3, "The Philosophy of Science.—I." H. Percy Ward, 7, "The Gospel of Freethought." Monday, 8, J. Hammond, "The Earth and Its Neighbors." Lantern lecture.

LEEDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Armley Park): 11, W. Woolham, "Christianity and Commercialism." Crossflats Park, 3, Debate between H. C. Hepton and G. Weir. Subject, "Are Christ's Teachings Practical?"

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S.: C. Cohen, 3, "Some Old Problems with Modern Answers"; 6.30, "Atheism or Theism: the Final Issue." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, Market-place): 7.30, Important business.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Willie Dyson, 7, "Matter and Mind in the Light of Modern Science."

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,
**TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY and PRACTICE
OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.**

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered.
Price 1s., post free.

In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.

The *National Reformer* of September 4, 1892, says: "Mr. Holmes's pamphlet.....is an almost unexceptional statement of the Neo-Malthusianism theory and practice.....and throughout appeals to moral feeling.....The special value of Mr. Holmes's service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation, with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.
Orders should be sent to the author,

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

JUST PUBLISHED Paper covers, 1s., by post 1s. 2d.

**THE WORTHLESSNESS
OF CHRISTIANITY.**

By A JAPANESE.

With Portrait of the Author.

The views of a Japanese on our national religion are vividly expressed in this little volume. The criticism is good-natured, but often severe.

London: WATTS & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

READ THIS!

During the last twelve months I have visited nearly every important centre in England, showing samples of my goods and taking orders for Suits, Dress and Costume Materials, Boots and Heavy Drapery.

My tour has been one of a pleasing nature. All through I have been well received everywhere. Readers of this paper have all seemed greatly surprised at the high-class quality of my goods and the reasonableness of the prices. I have booked a large number of orders and received promises of orders in the future from nearly every person I have met. Most people have said, "I have often seen your advt. and been just on the point of sending for your goods, but I never felt sure whether it would be a 'take in' or not. But now that I have seen you personally and examined your samples, you can depend upon getting all my orders in future." It is not surprising that people have looked upon my advt. in that way. One hears almost daily of people being "had" by answering similar advts. I have advertised continuously in the Freethought Press during the last 10 years. I challenge anyone to prove that I have ever sold anything at any time that has not given satisfaction, where I have not been willing to refund either a part or whole of the money paid for such goods.

To sell goods at an exceptionally cheap rate, to give a guarantee both for the past and the future like the above, with the many opportunities the readers have of getting the opinion of those who have bought from me. All this to my mind ought to make every Secularist say, "Well, Gott sticks like glue to 'our paper'; he deals fairly and honestly, and is worthy of support. I will give him an order."

WHAT DO YOU SAY?**Overcoats**

(RAINPROOF)

MADE TO MEASURE.

25s.

30s.

35s.

EACH.

Wonderful Value!

Suits

THE FINEST IN THE WORLD

42s.

Patterns and Self-Measure Form post free.

LOOK!

The quantity of goods in this parcel staggers everybody.

LOT 11.

- 1 Pair Pure Wool Blankets
- 1 Pair Large Bed Sheets
- 1 Beautiful Quilt
- 1 Bed-Room Hearthrug
- 1 Pair Fine Lace Curtains
- 1 Pair Short Pillow Cases
- 1 Long Pillow Case
- 1 Pair Turkish Towels
- 1 Parcel of Advanced Literature

21s. Carriage Paid.

A DARING OFFER

I will send your money back in full and allow you to keep the goods if you are not more than ten times satisfied.

Work. For those with spare time sell my FREE CLOTHING TEA. It is the best value in the world at the price, 2s. 8d. per lb. SUITS to measure are given, free of all cost, for the Tea Coupons.

Secular Societies can have the Tea free of all cost for their Annual Tea Parties and Bazaars.

CLOTHING AGENTS WANTED.

Write for terms.

J. W. GOTT, 2 Union St., Bradford.

Branch Estab.: 20 Heavitree Rd., Plumstead, London, S.E

A Fresh Arrival from America. Not Otherwise Obtainable.

VOLTAIRE'S ROMANCES

"Voltaire was the greatest man of his country, and did more to free the human race than any other of the sons of men."

CHINESE CATECHISM. Dialogues between a disciple of Confucius and a Chinese Prince, before the Christian era. *Paper covers 1s., postage 2d.*

IGNORANT PHILOSOPHER, The. Containing portraits of René Descartes and Benedict Spinoza.—As entertaining as a French Comedy. *Paper covers 1s., postage, 2d.*

LETTERS ON THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION. With comments on the writings of the most eminent authors who have been accused of attacking Christianity. *Paper covers 1s., postage 2d.*

MAN OF FORTY CROWNS. Dialogues on National Poverty; Adventures with a Carmelite, etc. *Illustrated. Paper covers 1s., postage 2d.*

MICROMEAS. A Voyage to Planet Saturn. By a native of Sirius; and Twelve others. *Illustrated. Paper covers 1s., postage 2d.*

PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY. With portraits of The Empress Catherine and of Voltaire. *Paper covers 1s., postage 2d.*

POCKET THEOLOGY. Witty and Sarcastic Definitions of Theological Terms. *Paper covers 1s., postage 2d.*

THE SAGE AND THE ATHEIST. The Princess of Babylon. Adventures of a Young Englishman, etc. *Illustrated. Paper covers 1s., postage 2d.*

ZADIG: or, Fate. The White Bull; The Blind of One Eye, etc. *Illustrated. Paper covers 1s., postage 2d.*

When ordering, a second choice should be given, to prevent disappointment

THE SECULAR SOCIETY,

(LIMITED)

Company Limited by Guarantee.

Registered Office—2 NEWCASTLE STREET, LONDON, E.C.

Chairman of Board of Directors—MR. G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary—E. M. VANCE (Miss).

This Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

The liability of members is limited to £1. in case the Society should ever be wound up and the assets were insufficient to cover liabilities—a most unlikely contingency.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The Society has a considerable number of members, but a much larger number is desirable, and it is hoped that some will be gained amongst those who read this announcement. All who join it participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest, or in any way whatever.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, consisting of not less than five and not more than twelve members, one-third of whom retire (by ballot) each year,

but are capable of re-election. An Annual General Meeting of members must be held in London, to receive the Report, elect new Directors, and transact any other business that may arise.

Being a duly registered body, the Secular Society, Limited, can receive donations and bequests with absolute security. Those who are in a position to do so are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favor in their wills. On this point there need not be the slightest apprehension. It is quite impossible to set aside such bequests. The executors have no option but to pay them over in the ordinary course of administration. No objection of any kind has been raised in connection with any of the wills by which the Society has already been benefited.

The Society's solicitors are Messrs. Harper and Battcock, 23 Rood-lane, Fenchurch-street, London, E.C.

A Form of Bequest.—The following is a sufficient form of bequest for insertion in the wills of testators:—"I give and bequeath to the Secular Society, Limited, the sum of £— free from Legacy Duty, and I direct that a receipt signed by two members of the Board of the said Society and the Secretary thereof shall be a good discharge to my Executors for the said Legacy."

Friends of the Society who have remembered it in their wills, or who intend to do so, should formally notify the Secretary of the fact, or send a private intimation to the Chairman, who will (if desired) treat it as strictly confidential. This is not necessary, but it is advisable, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid, and their contents have to be established by competent testimony.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT

By G. W. FOOTE.

First Series, cloth 2s. 6d.
Second Series, cloth 2s. 6d.

Contains scores of entertaining and informing Essays and Articles on a great variety of Freethought topics.

The Freethought Publishing Co., Ltd. London.

FURTHER LIST OF SECOND-HAND BOOKS FOR SALE.

All in good condition and post free.

TROOPER PETER HALKET OF MASHONALAND.	Olive Schreiner	1	6
LIFE OF VOLTAIRE.	F. Espinasse	...	1 0
RELIGION AND CONSCIENCE IN ANCIENT EGYPT.	W. M. Flinders Petrie	...	1 6
ESSAYS TOWARDS A CRITICAL METHOD.	J. M. Robertson	...	2 0
VOLNEY'S RUINS OF EMPIRES	1 6

X., c/o Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street, E.C.

THE SAFEST AND MOST EFFECTUAL CURE FOR INFLAMMATION OF THE EYES.

Thwaites' Celandine Lotion.

Cures inflammation in a few hours. Neglected or badly doctored cases. 3 or 4 days is sufficient time to cure any case. For sore and inflamed Eyelids. Nothing to equal the Lotion for Dimness of Sight. Will remove Skin or Film that sometimes grows on the Eye. As the eye is one of the most sensitive organs of the body, it needs the most careful treatment.

Cullpeper says in his Herbal Book that if the virtues of Celandine were generally known it would spoil the spectacle-makers' trade. 1s. 1½d. per bottle, with directions; by post 14 stamps.

G. THWAITES,

HERBALIST. 2 CHURCH ROW, STOCKTON-ON-TEES.

Uncle Tom's Cabin Up to Date; or, Chinese Slavery in South Africa.

By E. B. ROSE.

One Penny. Post free, Three-halfpence.

THE FREETHOUGHT PUBLISHING COMPANY, LT
2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

SPECIAL FREETHOUGHT LECTURES

AT THE

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL

Langham Place, London, W.,

ON

SUNDAY EVENINGS

- OCTOBER 2—
MR. G. W. FOOTE, "What Do We Know of God?"
- OCTOBER 9—
MR. G. W. FOOTE, "Who and What was Jesus Christ?"
- OCTOBER 16—
MR. JOHN LLOYD, "The True Gospel."
- OCTOBER 23—
MR. C. COHEN, "Some Old Problems, with Modern Answers."
- OCTOBER 30—
MR. C. COHEN, "Atheism or Theism: The Final Issue."

Admission FREE. Reserved Front Seats, One Shilling

Doors open at 7. Chair taken at 7.30. Questions and Discussion Invited

NOW READY

THE POPULAR EDITION

(Revised and Enlarged)

OF

"BIBLE ROMANCES"

BY

G. W. FOOTE

With a Portrait of the Author

CONTENTS:—

THE CREATION STORY
EVE AND THE APPLE
CAIN AND ABEL
NOAH'S FLOOD
THE TOWER OF BABEL
LOT'S WIFE

THE TEN PLAGUES
THE WANDERING JEWS
A GOD IN A BOX
BALAAM'S ASS
JONAH AND THE WHALE
BIBLE ANIMALS

BIBLE GHOSTS
A VIRGIN MOTHER
THE CRUCIFIXION
THE RESURRECTION
THE DEVIL

Reynolds's Newspaper says:—"Mr. G. W. Foote, chairman of the Secular Society, is well known as a man of exceptional ability. His *Bible Romances* have had a large sale in the original edition. A popular, revised, and enlarged edition, at the price of 6d, has now been published by the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, for the Secular Society. Thus, within the reach of almost everyone, the ripest thought of the leaders of modern opinion are being placed from day to day."

144 Large Double-Column Pages, Good Print, Good Paper

SIXPENCE—NET

(Post Free, 8d)

ISSUED BY THE SECULAR SOCIETY (LIMITED)

Published by

THE PIONEER PRESS, 2 NEWCASTLE STREET, FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

A MIRACLE OF CHEAPNESS

"MISTAKES OF MOSES"

BY

COLONEL R. G. INGERSOLL

(THE LECTURE EDITION)

Thirty-two pages, good print, good paper

ONLY A PENNY

Twelve copies post free for tenpence for gratuitous distribution

THE PIONEER PRESS, 2 NEWCASTLE STREET, FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

Printed and Published by THE FREETHOUGHT PUBLISHING Co., Limited, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C.