

106

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXVI.—No 41

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1906

PRICE TWOPENCE

All human creatures, in all ages and places of the world, who have had warm affections, common sense, and self-command, have been, and are, Naturally Moral. Human nature in its fulness is necessarily Moral,—without Love, it is inhuman,—without sense, inhuman,—without discipline, inhuman. In the exact proportion in which men are bred capable of these things, and are educated to love, to think, and to endure, they become noble,—live happily—die calmly.—JOHN RUSKIN.

Blessing the Nets.

YARMOUTH—we mean the one in Norfolk—has the biggest parish church in England, and it was recently filled by some of the biggest fools in England. There was a public performance before a crowded audience of the old religious farce of "blessing the nets." The walls and chancel rails were festooned with nets, and others were heaped at the foot of the altar. And a live Bishop was booked for the principal part in the extravaganza. His right reverend lordship of Ipswich preached the sermon and blessed the nets afterwards. "Come, comrades, hoist the sail," was sung, and prayers were offered up for the prosperity of the fishing and the safety of the men. No doubt there was the usual collection.

We can quite understand the clergy taking part in a show of this kind. It helps to keep their business going. At the worst it could do no harm, and at the best it might do a great deal of good. For, if there are fools enough about, some of them may be caught by it, and every little helps in the case of a declining industry. What surprises us is such a large attendance of worshipers not brought from lunatic asylums. At this time of day it ought to be impossible. One has great difficulty in conceiving how thousands of people, in a town where there are schools as well as churches and public-houses, could believe that any words proceeding from the mouth of the Bishop of Ipswich—or from the mouth of any other man, for that matter—could in the least degree affect the number of herrings that will be caught during the present season in the North Sea. Yet this is what the Bishop's prayers amount to, if they mean anything at all. Less herrings would have been caught if he had not opened his mouth, and more will be caught now it is closed again. Such is the assumption, and every man in his right senses knows it is the veriest absurdity.

With regard to the safety of the fishermen, we should like to know whether any man in the whole town of Yarmouth really believes that the number of accidents on board the fishing-boats is in any way dependent on any words said on their behalf in the parish church—or elsewhere. We say *really* believes. There may, of course, be any amount of pretended belief. But real belief is a very different thing. Real belief expresses itself in action. Those who thought that the fishing boats were even partially secured by the prayers of the faithful would certainly diminish their insurance policies. Nothing of the kind, however, is done or ever will be done. Thoroughgoing belief in prayer would put an end to insurance altogether. "Trust

me all in all, or not at all," says the wicked lady in Tennyson's poem; and the good God would be entitled to say the very same thing to his votaries. But the most pious owners of fishing boats never trust the Lord all in all. They trust him, indeed, as little as possible. Having consigned their vessels to his care, they proceed to do a bit of hedging through a friendly insurance company. Say a boat is honestly worth two thousand pounds; they insure her for (say) two thousand five hundred pounds, and leave the balance of risk in the hands of the Almighty.

Is there a fisherman's wife, daughter, or mother in all Yarmouth who actually believes that her husband, father, or son is in any less peril at sea because of the professional incantations of the Bishop of Ipswich in the parish church? We doubt if there is a single one. The whole thing is simply a piece of play-acting. There is no sincerity in it from beginning to end.

We cheerfully admit, though, that the clergy ought to know something about *nets*. We read in the first chapter of the second Gospel that Jesus walked by the sea of Galilee, and saw Simon, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishers; and that he told them to follow him, and he would make them fishers of men. They took him at his word, and their successors pursue the same business. The clergy are fishers of men—and women. Particularly women. They like to catch the women first; for they know that this is the easiest way of fishing in human waters. First, the female fish—then the male fish—and then the little fish—and then the fishing is over.

Nor is it only men and women that the clergy fish for. They cast wide nets and catch many good things—such as place, and power, and money. Yes, *money*; and as much of it as possible. The Archbishop of Canterbury's income is £15,000 a year. The Bishop of London receives £10,000 a year—and loses on his job! Some of the Nonconformist leaders get fine salaries, and ride about in motor-cars, although their Master could manage nothing better than a "moke." Dr. Clifford himself, who is just turned seventy, has had a good paying post for many years; but has apparently been unable to save anything, since his friends are raising £7,000 to buy him and his wife a life annuity of £500.

Amongst the recent wills in the newspapers we see that of the Rev. Frederick Thomas Salmon, of Ormonde House, Ryde, Isle of Wight, who left £89,248. That is what he had fished out of the troubled sea of life. He took no thought for the morrow; he labored not for the meat that perisheth; but he cast out his net, and nearly forty thousand gold fish floated into it—perhaps while he slept.

There was once a priest in Italy who lived in a modest way, and used to place a net near his plate on the dinner-table, as a sign of his holy calling as one of Christ's fishermen. Step by step he went upward in the Church, but the net was still displayed as before. At last he was elected Pope, and his friends noticed that the net no longer figured on the table as a witness of his humility. They questioned him about it, and he replied: "It is no longer necessary; the fish is caught."

G. W. FOOTE

A Plea for the Clergy.

IN my account of the report of the Royal Commission on the conditions and earnings of the clergy (*Freethinker*, August 5) there was one sentence deserving of more attention than I was then able to give it. This was to the effect that the clerical profession, in selecting a type of mind not obviously useful for, and probably injurious to, various branches of social and political life, did in this manner confer a service on the general community. The argument has an attractive look, and probably possesses a scientific value. It is at all events a strictly scientific statement to say that for an organism or an organ to survive it must play a useful part in the struggle for existence, or at least it must not obstruct the useful activities of other organs or organisms beyond a certain point. The survival of the clergy as an institution being a fact, the question that arises for discussion is, "What function or functions have the clergy performed in the course of social evolution that has ensured their continued existence from the remotest ages down to our own day?"

A general survey of the history of the clergy will show that the statement made by the Commission can only cover the activities of the clergy during the earlier and later stages of their history. There is an intermediate period during which it is impossible to see that they performed any useful social function whatsoever. What that intermediate period is we shall see presently. For the present, one may point out that at that early stage of culture when belief in the supernatural is inevitable, the primitive clergy may be credited with a certain measure of utility, inasmuch as they relieved the rest of the community from devoting itself to the task of determining what were the wishes of these supposed supernatural governors. So far, and in spite of certain considerations on the other side, their activity would leave the rest of the community free to spend its energies on more useful social work. The clergy would thus represent in primitive society an illustration of that principle of differentiation of function that obtains in both the biological and the social world.

If the course of evolution had followed an ideal direction, the clergy would have ceased to exist with the condition of society that gave them birth. But it is a scientific truth that organs do not disappear with their period of utility. They may, if they are very injurious, die out with comparative rapidity, or otherwise they may linger on for a considerable period at the expense of the general organism. The clergy offer an example of the latter description. For many centuries the Christian clergy succeeded in attaching to itself a large proportion of the best intellect of society, and thus stood in the same relation to the body politic as those rudimentary organs possessed by man, which having sole reference to a past condition of existence, absorb nutriment and give nothing in return. It is this that constitutes the intermediate period in the existence of the clergy, during which they might justly have been charged with being an obstructive and even dangerous body to the society in which they existed.

But the clergy have since then entered upon another period, and its nature is such that I am surprised that before now religious apologists have not seized upon it as a valuable defence of the clergy, both established and disestablished. To begin with, no one can any longer accuse the clergy of absorbing the best intellect of the nation. To that charge they have a simple and effective reply. They can point to the men eminent in the churches, and show how it has showered favors on those of only average mental endowments—men whom it would once upon a time have restricted to very subordinate positions. More, they may also show, that so far from being desirous of monopolising the highest intellect of the country, when within recent years men of more than average ability have arisen within the churches, everything has been done to discourage their activity and encourage them to withdraw. The churches to-day

cheerfully offer these to Art, Science, Literature, even to Politics, and are content with such as would scarcely shine in other directions.

The churches go even farther than this. Self-sacrifice is of the very essence of Christianity, and in no direction has it manifested this more than by the way in which it renounces the help of men who might, could they be secured, reflect credit upon it. In this it is in striking contrast to the vanity and egotism of other professions. In all other professions the tendency is ever to raise the standard and by making the conditions of attaining eminence harder, secure the strongest only, leaving out of sight and consideration the weaker and poorer endowed. Christianity acts upon a different principle. It is a gospel preached to the poor, the weak, the infirm. Even one of its bitterest enemies—Heine—was forced to pay it the tribute of admitting Christianity to be an admirable religion for cripples. Of these weaker brethren the sciences take little notice, except it be by casting them out as the result of the increasing ability required. But it is to these weaker ones that Christianity holds out the hand of loving fellowship. It says to them: "Come, when you are rejected of other professions, turn to us. We will not reject you, but will take you in. Nay, we will take you in the more gladly and the more completely because of the weakness for which you are rejected by these intellectual aristocracies. With us, your want of intellectual ability shall be no bar, but rather a recommendation. Long ago it was said that unless you become as little children you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven, and the nearer the approximation to that idyllic condition, the warmer shall be the welcome, the more certain the advancement."

Here is a distinct benefit conferred upon society by Christianity and the clergy. For these weaker ones are social products equally with the stronger. Some arrangement for their welfare ought to be, must be, made. And in an unconscious manner society has provided an outlet by its encouragement of the clerical profession. Their enrolment in a special class confers, therefore, both a positive and a negative benefit upon the community at large. Positively, employment is provided for a class that society is morally bound to care for. And this is done in a manner that—short of confining them in an institution—could not be otherwise equally well done. In no other way could the sense of importance possessed of this class be so well satisfied, nor would the community be content to tax itself to provide salaries of equal value. It is beside the point to say that we do not desire this class to exist, neither do we desire the existence of lunatics or criminals. The truth is they are all here, and being here, society is bound to provide for their maintenance in some way or other.

The negative benefits conferred upon society by the institution of the clergy are even more important. In commerce, a Merchandise Marks Act aims at securing that all goods sold shall be what it is claimed they are. It is difficult enough to enforce this Act as things are; but the irruption into commercial life of a large body of men who seem constitutionally unable to supply the public with a genuine article would increase the troubles of the legislature, and enormously enhance the cost to the community. As it is, the clerical profession, by supplying an opening for those people who will supply the public with Catholicism for Protestantism, Protestantism for Catholicism, Freethought for Christianity, and Christianity for Freethought, certainly eases the problem. Perhaps an intellectual Merchandise Marks Act might be framed, but it is doubtful whether the Bishops would allow this to pass the Upper House.

Again; let us suppose that the methods of the pulpit were carried into ordinary life, and note the result. In the general world we are accustomed to a certain give and take, and to recognise that honesty and morality may co-exist with widely differing views on any question that may arise. No one would suggest that an opinion on Home Rule has any necessary connection with one's treatment of one's

wife and family, nor would a conviction as to the necessity of State ownership of land be taken as synonymous with an advocacy of sexual licence. But with the clergy difference of opinion is often connected, in a more or less subtle manner, with moral differences. Thus we have it on the authority of the present Bishop of London that very often a man's disbelief in the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is due to his having spent his evenings in a vicious manner. And other clerics of equal eminence, while not putting the matter in quite so crude a manner, are in substantial agreement with the dictum that almost invariably unbelief has a past origin of an evil character. In social life, again, it is customary to pay some regard to facts when dealing with the character of one's neighbors or of one's opponents. In theological matters all the restraints imposed by courtesy and common sense are abandoned. Even in politics the man whose speech was characterised by wholesale condemnation of groups of people or by almost unbridled exaggeration would lose all influence, and would be either treated with universal contempt or find himself a defendant in a criminal court. With the clergy, however, such men rise to eminence, to honor, and are hailed as ornaments of their order.

Now no one can deny that, so long as types of mind of this class exist, the whole of the community benefit by their being confined, to some extent at least, to a single profession. And one's appreciation of the value of the clergy will be exactly proportionate to one's dislike of these qualities in social, commercial, and political life. Of course, it may be argued that if those people who are now trained as clergymen were otherwise brought up they would behave as do other people; but this is a mere opinion, and we are dealing with facts alone. And the facts are that (1) the tendency of the non-clerical professions being to select the stronger characters, and the weaker being thus left unprovided for, the institution of the clergy does open up an occupation for this class. And (2) this institution provides a field for the exercise of certain qualities or characteristics, which if prevented from any other outlet, and so forced to express themselves in the purely social field, could not but be productive of greater harm than is the case under present conditions. On both these grounds the clergy may fairly lay claim to consideration, and may justly hold that so far they are a benefit to the community. It is strange that this function of the clergy should have been overlooked by their opponents, and stranger still that they should have overlooked it themselves. Perhaps what has been said may suggest the proper and soundest line of defence for them to adopt, and also excite a greater toleration in the minds of their opponents. We may not desire the presence of the clergy as an institution in itself; but neither should we desire doctors or lunatic asylums but for the existence of diseases and disorders. And it is surely unreasonable, not to say unjust, to spend willingly the large sums that are spent on providing for the ailments of our fellow-creatures, and yet cavil at an institution that ministers to the well-being of the class described.

C. COHEN.

Blasphemy.

BLASPHEMY stands in direct antithesis to reverence. To blaspheme is to do the very opposite to revering. In the Bible, blasphemy "includes all modes of reviling or calumniating God or man," and is treated as a capital offence. Leviticus xiv. 11-23 is the passage that contains the Hebrew Blasphemy Act, and we know how rigidly the Act was enforced. He who expressed derogatory opinions regarding the Deity was cruelly stoned to death. Even to use the name of God lightly, whether to ask a blessing or to invoke a curse, was forbidden (Deuteronomy v. 11; Exodus xx. 7). At a later date it was not allowable to pronounce the real name of the Lord on any occasion, or for any purpose (Leviticus xxiv. 11).

Coming to the New Testament, we learn that it was for blasphemy that Jesus was "condemned to be worthy of death" (Mark xiv. 64; Matthew xxv. 65, 66), and that it was for blasphemy that Stephen was condemned to be stoned (Acts vi. 13). We also read of the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which is declared to be absolutely unforgivable (Mark iii. 29; Matthew xii. 32); but what was the nature of this blasphemy the theologians cannot tell us.

Now, the common law of England is founded upon the Bible. Any indignity offered to the Deity by words or writing, the denial of his existence or Providence, any contumelious reference to Jesus Christ, any profane speech concerning the Bible, or any exposing of it to ridicule, all these things are punishable by the temporal courts with fine, imprisonment, and also infamous corporal punishment. Of course, there are two views as to what constitutes blasphemy, and it depends upon individual lawyers which view is adopted. On this point, such distinguished scholars as Chief-Justice Coleridge and Mr. Justice Stephen were at variance. But the fact remains that blasphemy is, at this hour, an indictable offence in Great Britain.

The object of the present article, however, is to point out that the only people who can be guilty of blasphemy, as thus defined, are Christian believers. It stands to reason that I cannot revere, adore, or worship a being in whose existence I do not believe. Even the Bible itself tells us that "he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him" (Hebrews xi. 6), for clearly no one can come to a non-existent person. But if I cannot worship, neither can I blaspheme, a non-existent being. The one act is as impossible as the other. It is Christians who can cast contumelious reproaches at Jesus Christ. To Freethinkers, he is either a mere man or a myth; and, to them, blasphemy against him, as God-man, is not possible. They are as incapable of blaspheming as they are of worshiping him. It was Israel who blasphemed Jehovah by committing trespasses against him, and it is Christians who blaspheme Christ by trampling his commandments under their feet, by pretending to follow him when they do not. Freethinkers are equally incapable of speaking profanely of the Bible, because, for them, it does not exist as the Word of God. When they declare that it cannot be the Word of God, and proceed to establish the truth of their declaration by means of the Bible itself, they merely express their opinion as to the nature and character of the volume; and surely they have as good a right to their opinion as others have to theirs. When they denounce the Bible they denounce it, not as the Word of Man, which they believe it to be, but as the Word of God, which they are convinced it is not. Therefore they cannot be guilty of blasphemy in their treatment of it.

And yet we are face to face with the anomaly that, whenever the Blasphemy Laws are appealed to, it is in order to punish people who cannot disobey them. The Freethinkers are the only people in Great Britain who are incapable of incurring the guilt of blasphemy; and they are also the only people who have been fined and imprisoned for the same impossible offence. This is a concrete instance of the general tendency of human nature to penalise all expressions of opinion and conviction on the part of minorities. I once knew a community in which there lived one Atheist. He never attended church or chapel, and he avowed his disbelief in God, Christ, and the Bible, with the result that he was regarded and treated as an outcast, although, morally, his conduct was above reproach. The community penalised his whole life because he had the courage to be loyal to his intellect, because he refused to act the hypocrite. Nominally, Great Britain is a Christian country. Nominally, the British people are disciples of the Nazarene. Now, among these nominal Christians are to be found thousands who are an open disgrace to the name they bear. In a languid, half-hearted fashion they are genuine believers in God and Christ and the Holy Spirit; and yet they drag

these (to them) Holy Names through the mire of a selfish, cruel, vicious life. But are these real blasphemers ever haled before the courts to be fined and imprisoned? Are these ever made the victims of a wicked, persistent policy of persecution? No; it is the very people to whom blasphemy is impossible upon whom the Blasphemy Laws are compelled to empty the phials of their wrath. Such an iniquitous policy may be worthy of the Christian creed, but it is a flagrant violation of all justice and truth.

What is Atheism? An opinion, a belief, a conviction. In reality, the Atheist is as much of a believer as the Christian. The former says: "I believe there is no God, no Eternal Christ, no Holy Ghost, no Supernatural; I believe that the present life is the only life about which we should concern ourselves, and that our only mission in it is to do our utmost to promote the welfare of all." This is what may be called the Atheistic creed. Now, what is the difference between this and the Christian creed? The Atheistic creed differs from the Christian in that it is more reasonable. Underneath every creed lies total ignorance; and it is this total ignorance that makes any creed possible. The Christian is quite as ignorant as the Atheist, the only difference between them being that the former believes *in spite* of his ignorance, and the latter *because* of his ignorance. Neither of them believes because he *knows*. But the difference between them is much greater than it seems at first sight. In both cases, belief is based upon ignorance; but, in the Christian's case, the belief thus based invariably blossoms into *affirmation*. You have never met a religious person who did not emphatically *affirm* the existence of God and the unseen world. But a believer has no right to make affirmations; it is only the *knower* who is entitled to affirm. The Atheist does not affirm the non-existence of God, because he is not in possession of the justifying data. He is only a believer, not a knower, and therefore he refrains from indulging in baseless affirmations.

A man has a right to believe what he likes; but no man has a right to call his belief knowledge, and then to speak and act with self-assumed authority in terms of the latter. And yet this is what Christians always do. They say: "God *is*, the Christ *exists*, eternity is the only *reality*, and all who do not thus believe and affirm are accursed, damned, lost." This is a bold, presumptuous speech, and its only possible justification is—*total ignorance*. What we have here is one set of believers unlawfully penalising the beliefs of another set; and history tells us that the penalising, when resorted to, is always the act of the dominant party. When Christianity was weak, it was penalised by Paganism; but as soon as the former became powerful it began to penalise the latter; and, when Atheism's turn comes round, it will have to be specially on its guard, or it, too, will develop this penalising mania.

Sometimes Christian apologists justify the penalising of Freethought on the ground of its alleged coarseness, vulgarity, inelegance. In their estimation, the very act of attacking Christian beliefs is in itself vulgar. However pure-minded, large-brained, and refined a Freethinker may be, however beautifully and effectively he may write or speak on any purely literary subject, yet no sooner does he venture to denounce theological dogmas than he is characterised as nothing but a vulgar brawler. Not long ago a prominent Freethinker stood in a court of justice defending himself against the charge of blasphemy. The judge paid a high tribute to the intellectual splendor of his address to the jury, but expressed his horror at the prostitution of such magnificent gifts to the advocacy of so despicable a cause as Freethought. But why should Freethought be described as a low, contemptible cause? Simply because it is espoused, as yet, only by a minority, and because it is imagined that insolence and impertinence, and especially imprisonment, will eventually stamp it out. It is forgotten that Freethinkers are fully as entitled to hold and proclaim their beliefs as the Christians are. Secularism is a

system of thought and a philosophy of life, and, as such, has equal rights and privileges with any other system or philosophy. And that is all Freethinkers claim from their opponents.

Let it be borne in mind that Freethought and blasphemy are as far apart as the poles. The only time Freethinkers blaspheme is when they are disloyal to their principles, or when they betray the faith that is in them. Their deity is truth, and to sell the truth is to be guilty of the worst species of blasphemy. There is nothing blasphemous in assailing with argument, with satire, or even with ridicule, what one honestly believes to be false; neither is there any vulgarity in the work.

Freethought has its beliefs; but, being based on ignorance, they are all negative. Freethinkers believe that there is *no* God, *no* Eternal Christ, *no* Holy Spirit, *no* life of bliss or woe after death; but they never treat such a belief as if it were knowledge. Still, they act upon it by giving all diligence to search for truth in the realm of the knowable, and by summoning all the truth they win to the service of life. Thus their aim is to walk, not by *faith* in an unknowable supernatural, but by an ever-increasing *knowledge* of the natural.

J. T. LLOYD.

My Twenty Years' Fight in Australia.—IV.

(Continued from p. 635.)

I MUST now hark back a bit to relate an incident or two somewhat less tragic than a criminal trial, and a trifle comic, if the truth must be told. The Christians in their injustice, bitterness and cowardice furnished me, during my Melbourne life, with as much comedy as tragedy, and made me laugh ten times more than they vexed me. Not long after my advent in the city some of the clergy got up a "Lord's Day Observance Society"; and they held one annual meeting, as I can attest, for I attended it. It was announced in the papers and all were invited. The date was October 26th, 1884, and I and a good number of our people attended the gathering; indeed, we were by far the majority in the meeting. Mr. Ormond, a rich man, and noted as a philanthropist and an out-and-out pietist, was in the chair; and he was supported by an offensively pious member of Parliament and three or four clerics. Before going someone had furnished me with a ticket for the platform, and I might justly have taken my place amongst the big ones, but I declined.

The secretary read the report, in which it was stated that the membership was 1,900; that their main object was to close the Hall of Science, which, they were very sorry to admit, had not yet been effected. The ringing cheer with which our people received this confession astounded and somewhat paralysed the saints. Some people here began to call out, "Symes! Symes!" "Wait a bit," said I; "Let them go on with their program." I really had no wish to interrupt them, but I intended to act before the affair was over. We heard all their speeches, full of drivel and of insult to us as they were, and the parson-secretary was going to perform the benediction, when I rushed to the platform, waved down and frightened the secretary, and spoke to the chairman.

"I wish to speak," said I, "before you close the meeting."

"I cannot allow you to," said he.

"As this is a public meeting, I have a right to speak. We have listened to you and allowed you to execute your program; now it is our turn," said I.

"I cannot permit you to speak," repeated the saint.

"Then I shall speak in spite of you," said I, and stepped into the rostrum. The member of Parliament was pushing by me to say something to the audience, when I said,

"You go back, please! You have had your say and will not be allowed to speak again."

The chairman then left the chair and he and his party went into the anteroom behind the platform, and I called out, "O, the cowards are running away!" The chairman then returned, sat down in the chair, and at once rose and said, "I declare the meeting closed."

"All right," said I, "we'll have a chairman of our own"; and one of our members at once took the chair. Up came the caretaker and said he had called the police. "Very good," said I, "we shall be glad to see the police." Two appeared and found they had nothing whatever to do. The caretaker then said, "I'll turn off the gas!" Upon this I sent a young friend out to buy a pound of candles. The gas, however, was off before he could return; but a multitude of wax vestas at once glinted out and made darkness visible. When the candles came we had a meeting of our own, passed a resolution in formal style, and then quietly filed out, the two policemen evidently enjoying the fun.

Next morning the newspapers made quite a sensation of the incident, and the pious *Daily Telegraph* nearly choked itself with rage—and the grace of God. The "Lord's Day Observance Society" never attempted another annual meeting. I think it died suddenly.

After the two or three prosecutions I have related, things quieted down a little, the enormous excitement had evaporated; but for several years we found very little falling off in the attendance at the lectures; in fact, we were in a flourishing condition until just about the time Mr. Bradlaugh died. Before that date we had paid our way, borne all the law expenses; had built a large Hall that would seat about 1,200 on the ground floor; had sent above £100 to Mr. Bradlaugh, and £20 to the dockers then out on strike on the Thames. The Hall cost us about £3,000. I will relate its history in my next.

In 1886 a young doctor, of the name of Guinness, visited Australia to convert people by blowing a bugle and chattering wishy-washy. He went to Tasmania, where the Lord inspired him to marry—it was reported—£30,000 with a woman attached to it. He was as cowardly as the clergy, as he demonstrated in Melbourne in September, 1886. He announced a lecture in a church in Albert-street, East Melbourne, the subject being, "Pills For The Freethinkers."

Feeling that he might understand our disease—if we had one—and that he might, being a medico, prescribe something suitable, a number of us attended the church, which we found pretty full. Someone found me a seat close to the platform, and my presence attracted all eyes, the platform push eying me very suspiciously through the door before they ventured to mount the platform. When they came in there was a little tooting of the bugle, a little singing, and then Rev. Allan Webb, the pastor, performed a prayer. I looked about while the prayer was being run off, and observed that almost all were keenly watching me. Webb informed some nonentity he called "Lord" that there were Freethinkers present, and said, "We would do anything, Lord, for their conversion."

This, I thought, seemed like business; and when the praying was ended I rose and asked if discussion would be allowed at the close of the lecture. "Certainly not!" exclaimed Webb, Guinness cowardly acquiescing. "You said in your prayer," added I, "that you would do anything for our conversion. Will you allow discussion?" "Certainly NOT!" replied the saint who pretended to have omnipotence to back him. "Then I shall go," said I; "I won't stay to be insulted." Guinness resorted to his bugle, and I went out, and many followed my example. One of them came out with a Bible under his arm—evidently a Christian. Outside in the vestibule he took that divine and most wicked book and flung it violently on the pavement, exclaiming, "I'll never go into that church again, after the treatment Mr. Symes has received there to-night!"

I then announced for the next evening but one a reply lecture, the subject being "Fly-Blisters For

The Christians." It was well attended, but Guinness and Co. avoided it—they knew why, and so did we.

Six or seven weeks later a trifling incident at one of my lectures led some Christians to behave as they usually do—lyingly and most cowardly. At the close of my lecture I jocularly said, "Mr. Chairman, I don't think there will be any discussion to-night, for I must ask that no one shall speak unless he has really found Christ; and if anyone can show that he has found him, I am going to give him £5." Thereupon I sat down; and shortly after up rose a man in the audience and said, "Mr. Chairman, I once heard a young minister preach an earnest sermon. And he told the people that he had found Christ. That young minister was Mr. Joseph Symes himself. And I now claim the £5." Full of amusement, I rose and said, "Mr. Chairman, inasmuch as the gentleman says that it was myself who found Christ, I think I am entitled to keep the £5 in my own pocket." There was an outburst of laughter, and the man said no more. That was the end of the meeting.

About eighteen months or two years later this trifling incident was taken by some unknown person, expanded into a large leaflet or small tract, under the title, *How Mr. Symes Was Silenced*, and scattered, thousands upon thousands, by the rascally pious. No name was attached to the leaflet, nor could all my inquiries ever find out who the man was or where he had heard me preach. But the thing delighted the "babes in Christ," poor things, and it circulated like a bush-fire. How many "immortal souls" were saved by that lying fudge, I am unable to say. It must have "exalted" and "magnified" the Lord to a degree beyond conception. Whether the said elevation and expansion continued will never be known until the graves shall give up their dead; and as that will not happen till all Christians have been converted to truth and truthfulness, we may be sure that we shall never know.

To proceed with my narrative, I may say that the Hall I lectured in from February, 1884, till about June, 1888, was sold by the proprietor at about the latter date, we being paid £250 compensation for the short period our lease then had to run. And now our troubles began. So long as we were attacked by outsiders we had peace within. When we had beaten the outside foe then certain parties wrought mischief in our own camp.

The Secular Society in Melbourne was very heterogeneous. There were in it English, Irish, Scotch, Germans, French, Hungarians, Americans, Jews, etc. There were many Spiritualists, and at least two Jesuits, a male and a female, and probably more. I do not think any public body can be named, be it political, social or Freethought, that does not contain amongst its members or adherents one or more Jesuits of some grade, complexion or species. Then in our Society there were six or seven men quite incapable of leading and much too stupidly conceited to be content to follow. Two or three of them began to teach Anarchy, not the mild species of some harmless fanatics, but the fiery sort that would resort to dynamite, or even to earthquakes and volcanoes, if they could but wield them. All the worst movers in the matter are long since dead, and I need not go into details. Suffice it to say, that out of my work in Melbourne arose Australian Democracy, and even Socialism is an offshoot and development of our movement, however far it may have wandered from our track. Extreme Socialism is indistinguishable from Anarchy, and Anarchy is a mad perversion of Freethought and of Freedom.

Well, we had to fight Anarchy and expel its preachers; and many foolish people who never understood them showed them sympathy. Our trustees and one or two other prominent men went with the Anarchists. In all, about ten to twenty dismissed themselves, and we never should have felt the loss but for the fact that the trustees were with them. The record of their treachery and crime must be left for my next instalment.

JOS. SYMES.

(To be continued.)

Acid Drops.

The Wesleyans have just opened their "Great Assembly Hall" at West Ham in connection with the "Wesleyan Mission." The total cost of the building, including the site, is £26,000. Half that amount is still needed; in other words, the venture begins with a debt of £13,000. And the Bible, which the Wesleyans swear by, says: "Owe no man anything."

An organ is to be erected in this Great Assembly Hall at a cost of £600. Of this sum Mr. Andrew Carnegie will contribute £250. Will he wind up with building churches? And will they all be called "St. Andrew's"?

General J. W. Keogh, having to be sworn at the Bloomsbury County Court, failed to kiss the book. At least it appeared so to Judge Bacon, who asked him why he did not give the usual caress to the sacred volume. The General replied that he intended to kiss the book. Whereupon the Judge, who made him go through the performance again, remarked: "You would not be satisfied with that mode of osculation under other circumstances." Perhaps not. But is that to the General's discredit? Who wouldn't prefer a woman's lips to a dirty old Testament?

Judge Moss, of the Chester County Court, said some strong things at a conversazione in the Town Hall held by the Chester Evangelical Free Church Council. We quote the following report from the *Daily News*:—

"Judge Moss said that the Free Churches were lacking, not so much in preaching spirituality, as in trying to uplift the condition of their fellow-men. One of his strongest impressions as County Court Judge was the enormous lack of thrift and the enormous dishonesty in our community. Three hundred judgment summonses the other day at Wrexham, and between one and two hundred that day had alarmed him, and caused him to ask what was at the root of it. To some extent, no doubt, it was poverty; to a large extent it was lack of thrift. To some extent it was absolute dishonesty. He had had before him men whom he knew to be members of Churches, whose position was due not altogether to accident or lack of thrift, but in many cases to lack of practical Christianity, which they professed on Sundays, but failed to carry out on week-days. They wanted to instil on members of the Churches that it was not honorable or Christian to be dishonest."

Fancy a Christian having to stand up and say this in a Christian country after the best part of two thousand years of Christianity! Members of the very Churches have yet to learn that it is not honorable to be dishonest.

Mrs. Craigie ("John Oliver Hobbes") was a Roman Catholic. She left in her will that her body was to be cremated and buried according to the rites of the Roman Catholic faith. How curious that she did not know that this was impossible! The Catholic Church condemns cremation, nominally as an outrage, but really because it fears the result to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. Mrs. Craigie had the sense, in leaving the bulk of her property to her son, a youth of sixteen, to direct that he should be unfettered in the choice of a religion and a profession.

Rev. Dr. Horton, addressing the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland at Huddersfield, said that they all admired the tact and skill with which Mr. Birrell had piloted the Education Bill through the Commons, thus "adding fresh lustre to an honored Baptist name." We did not know that Mr. Birrell went to parliament as a Baptist.

At a recent picnic at Thornton Hough the Rev. J. A. Sheal "gave a clever variety entertainment, chiefly conjuring." Conjuring should come easy to a gentleman of his profession.

The Bishop of Carlisle told the Church Congress that he was growing old and that he sometimes saw visions. "Among my sweetest," he said, "is that of a truly Catholic and Apostolic Church. I seem to see all the Churches slowly marching into one flock." A vision indeed! The Church of England isn't united itself, to begin with. Kensitites at Barrow displayed bills calling the Bishops of London and Birmingham "the greatest traitors of them all." And constables were necessary to preserve the peace.

Probably the silliest paper in England, and written for the silliest readers, is the *Christian Herald*, which is both conducted and owned, we believe, by one of the worst charlatans in the world, old Prophet Baxter. We never see it except by accident, but whenever we do see it we find that it keeps

up its old character. We have been favored with a cutting from a recent number of Baxter's organ, in which we read of the imaginary exploits of "Mr. W. R. Lane, the well-known evangelist," who has terrorised all the atheist speakers in Hyde Park. This wonderful soldier of Christ appears to be his own biographer. His manners are worthy of his profession, and the same may be said of his veracity. He talks of leading "infidel" lecturers coming on the platform half drunk, and describes their supporters as "penniless loafers and criminals, or people of the lowest class, who meet for the purpose of listening to blasphemy, cheap jokes, and obscenity." Having sampled this evangelist's stock, our readers will doubtless excuse us from paying him any further attention.

We like to see business people, even lawyers, displaying a little imagination. Mr. Reader Harris, K.C., still goes about the country lecturing on "How I was Converted from Agnosticism to Christianity." His lecture on this subject is highly romantic. It has been suggested that he will become a professional fictionist in time. There are some things that pay even better than law.

Mr. George White is a member of parliament and a Baptist. We have also seen him credited with a sense of humor. Probably a specimen of this was exhibited in his appeal to the Baptists to insure their churches in the Baptist Fire Insurance Society. It is a pretty position. The churches are built to please God. Every care must then be taken to prevent the Lord knocking his own buildings about by lightning or other "acts of God." Finally, a church that believes in the overshadowing providence of God and the power of prayer to move mountains establish a fire insurance society, presumably in case the prayers won't work, or the providence that knows when a sparrow falls to the ground overlooks a "flare up" of one of its preaching establishments. Of course the Baptist preachers *ought* to understand the fire insurance business, since every one of them is in the profession—or at least they were until hell was put out. Now they seem to be qualifying for cold air stores.

At the Class Teachers' Conference, held the other day at Nottingham, Mr. Coad, of West Ham, moved a very sensible amendment in favor of "A national and Secular system of education." In the course of what appears to have been an able speech, Mr. Coad pointed out that so long as religious teaching was allowed in any school there was an excuse for the interference of religious sects, and neither the Non-conformist nor the Church were necessary to the educational welfare of the State. His seconder, Mr. G. O. Dell, London, also asserted that people were disgusted with the strife of the sects, and pertinently asked, Why should teachers have to pay for their bread and butter by covering themselves with the cloak of hypocrisy? Mr. C. P. Stanley, of Leyton, also added, and neatly demolished one pretence in so doing, that teachers had no parental demand for religion at all.

Our compliments are due to these gentlemen for their straightforward attitude. The amendment was lost, but the speakers on the other side made a very poor show both mentally and morally by comparison. Mr. A. E. Cook, of London, the principal opponent said it was not expedient for teachers to give a lead to Secular education. Well, but if it is not the place of teachers, who ought to understand educational requirements better than outsiders, to instruct public opinion, whose place is it? Mr. Cook probably felt that teachers who did so might be made to suffer, and therefore advised his fellows to take no notice of the justice of the question but to study their own interests—which is quite intelligible, if not quite honorable. But Mr. Cook might have reflected that there are some people who are not built so as to sacrifice principle to promotion, or a conviction to an increase in salary, and that the body of teachers by not expressing a decided opinion throw a heavier burden upon those of their number who are intelligent enough to grasp a principle, and honest enough to speak out. Mr. Cook added that if the Bible were excluded from the schools, thousands of children would never hear the word of God mentioned at all. But what are the clergy for? What are all the churches for? And if they would not hear it, does it look as though the parents were very anxious that they should get it? Really a state of mental confusion like this is worthy of Dr. Macnamara—although that gentleman's confusion never by any chance lands him with an inconvenient minority.

Bishop Gore, in his address to the Church Congress, advocated the separation of the Church from an identification with the wealthy classes on the one hand, and from the administration of charity on the other. We should like to see both reforms brought about, but are not very sanguine of their accomplishment. A church that did this would be a church that relied entirely on

its strength as a teacher, on the vitality of its teachings, and of the intellectual sincerity of its supporters. Such a church, while it would not receive the support of Free-thinkers, would at least command their respect. But there is little chance, as we have said, of this reform being secured. The Church—and in this we comprise all, established and dissenting—has been far too long the guardian of the interests of the wealthier classes for them to shake off that function, especially as it would be impossible for them to adequately compensate themselves by support from other quarters. Still less likely are they to give up the control or administration of charity. They know full well the attraction this is to the poorer classes, and the value of the advertisement in being able to point to their charitable works. Both as bribes and as advertisements these things are too valuable for any of the churches to give them up.

Bishop Gore also said that Christians should, "in penitence and prayer, give ourselves to teaching the faith and practice of Christendom as it is in the Bible." Well, the Peculiar People do this, and get sent to prison by other Christians for their trouble.

While the Established Church has been "Congressing" at Barrow-in-Furness, the Baptists have been foregathering at Huddersfield. Both of these bodies have professed a frantic desire for social reform, and a burning interest in the working man. Well, there are some twenty thousand preachers in the English Church, and a fair number—although, of course, not so many—among the Baptists. And one would just like to put the question, How long is it since such an interest in the welfare of the working classes has been expressed? They are all deeply interested in the housing question, but compare the active interest shown in getting new dwellings for the people with that shown in building new preaching-shops for the parsons. Dr. Hopo, Medical Officer of Health for Liverpool, said recently, that Liverpool had some of the worst slums in the country—probably in the world. Yet the clergy put up with these slums with wonderful equanimity, and devote the better part of their energies to getting a new cathedral erected in the city. It is very touching to see so much interest shown in social reform, and we will believe in its sincerity—when we see something like a fair share of the energy of the clergy devoted to its realisation. Until then, we shall continue to regard it as so much "soft sawdust" for the purpose of winning over the intelligent of the labor leaders, and retaining a hold on the less thoughtful among the working classes.

One of the speakers at the Baptist meetings wanted to know why the working men would not come into the churches instead of standing outside criticising? And this man was a member of parliament!

The Rev. J. G. Greenbough said the Baptist denomination was not a racehorse nor a motor, but was "like that careful slow stepping animal on which their master rode into Jerusalem." And so say all of us.

The Rev. J. Owen, of Swansen, thinks it a disgrace that a family should spend one hundred pounds on a holiday, and give only a "miserable ten shillings" to sending a missionary abroad. Well, after all, it is only a question of who gets the holiday—the congregation that gets rid of the preacher, the preacher who is sent away, or the family. And it is odds on the family.

During his present visit to London, the Rev. Dr. Broughton, of Atlanta, has done much to justify his description of himself as a man who "stands flat-footed on the Bible." He is a most extravagant believer. In this capacity he easily takes the cake. He has swallowed the whole Bible, though there are portions of it which even he cannot digest. The Samson story, however, seems to agree well with him. He assured his Westminster Chapel audience, the other Friday evening, that Samson was a man with whom Jehovah had clothed himself—just an ordinary man *plus* God. Jehovah hated the Philistines, because they were not his chosen people; and clothed with Samson he went up and down among them slaughtering them without mercy with the jawbone of an ass.

Of course, Dr. Broughton is perfectly consistent. To him, Judges xiii.-xvi. is literal history. Samson was a Nazarite—separated and consecrated unto God—of which his long hair was the outward sign. As long as he kept his vow he, an ordinary man, wielded the power of God. When Delilah cut his hair God withdrew from him, and he became as another man. Now, Dr. Broughton, spiritualising all this, declared that Christians, as long as they keep their vows, possess and practice supernatural power. "God clothes himself with

them," and mighty results follow. But the moment they break their vows, God flings them off like filthy garments, and they become as other people.

With all this the audience, consisting of some 2,000 people, was immensely delighted. One wonders how God felt under it all. The chief characteristic of Dr. Broughton's God is his amazing touchiness. The least thing sends him into the sulks; and when he is offended, he flatly refuses to work. Even when good-tempered he loves to be coaxed to do things. Once Dr. Broughton asked a theological student to preach for him. The young man was extremely nervous. When the Sunday morning came round, with fear and trembling he entered the vestry, and there flung himself at full length on the floor in order to struggle with the Spirit. By and bye Dr. Broughton arrived, and joined him on the floor. Then the two of them committed such a violent assault upon the Spirit that he yielded and said, "I will preach this morning." And so he did; and such a service had never been experienced in that church before. Some twenty-five immortal souls found the Savior.

Dr. Broughton is an emotional orator who can emotionally sway great crowds. Indeed, the service just described was an emotional orgy. Both speaker and hearers were drunk on fermented feeling. There was not a single appeal to the intellect; the reason was heroically ignored. The people's one duty was to believe what they were told by God's representative, unbelief being the sin of sins. "Infidels and Agnostics," they were told, "are the offspring of sin. It was sin that begat them, and it is sin that keeps them alive." It was all undiluted nonsense; the last-quoted statement was an obvious lie; but then drunkards, at any rate habitual drunkards, cannot discern the difference between sense and nonsense, between truth and falsehood!

Mr. T. Summerbell, Labor M.P. for Sunderland, entertained a public meeting at Ulverston Parish Church, in connection with the Church Congress at Barrow. The subject of his address was "Christianity and Socialism." He pointed out the need for social reforms in Christian England, and said it was because men were not working with men for a common good. But why is this, when Christianity has had everything its own way for so many hundreds of years? Is it a false religion? Or is it a failure? We believe it is both.

Some time ago we referred to the case of a young woman named Mary Gelder, who was quite respectable until she got converted or something by the Torrey-Alexander mission, and has never been respectable since. She went about with it from place to place and lived by fraud all the time. At last she was sentenced to two months imprisonment for stealing a purse from a lady who had befriended her. On her release she went to London, and spent her time in bilking cabmen and running up hotel bills. She has just been fined 20s. for defrauding the Great Eastern Railway Company. We don't suppose Torrey will boast of *this* convert, anyhow.

How difficult it is to live up to some teaching! Nearly a hundred years ago Robert Owen discovered Determinism, though he didn't call it so. Had he been better informed, he would have known that it was in the world from the beginning of recorded thought. But to him it was a novelty, and he went about preaching it with great ardor. His most popular phrase was that man is the creature of circumstances—which, while it contains a truth, is not the whole truth, for it overlooks the man; as you see clearly enough when a Shakespeare or a Napoleon arises. Owen used to deny the rationality and justice of praise or blame, which he was too apt to confuse with reward and punishment. Well, after the lapse of three generations, Mr. Robert Blatchford discovers Determinism again. He also preaches it with great ardor as a novelty. And he also declares that praise and blame are unjust and unreasonable; for, he says, every man is what he is because he is, and can't help it. Now we admit that Determinism is true. We argued for it many years before Mr. Blatchford appears to have heard of it. But we do not admit the irrationality and injustice of praise and blame. On the contrary, we say that it is only on the basis of Determinism that praise and blame can have any intellectual and moral justification. Mr. Blatchford follows, probably without knowing it, in Owen's footsteps; and Robert number two falls into precisely the same blunder as Robert number one. A blunder, by the way, which could hardly be possible to anyone who had read the literature of Determinism—or even, say, that part of it which extends from Priestley to Mill.

We shall go into this matter fully when we write our long-promised criticism of Mr. Blatchford's book. Meanwhile, we wish to point out the difficulty of acting on Mr. Blatchford's

principles. Praise and blame are unreasonable; what is more, they are unjust. That is Mr. Blatchford's philosophy. It is also the philosophy of his able colleague, Mr. A. M. Thomson. Well, let us see how he carries it out. In last week's *Clarion* he gave Mr. Richard Bell, M.P., a trouncing. It may have been deserved, or it may not have been deserved. That is not our point. Right or wrong, it was a trouncing; and these are Mr. Thomson's final words, in relation to Mr. Bell's charge against the *Clarion* of "lying and misleading":—

"We have the right to claim that if he cannot justify his charge he shall withdraw it. If he does neither, not even pity for his humiliation will save him from the contempt which all right-thinking men must feel for wilful and unscrupulous slanderers."

This is a journalistic way of saying "You're another." It is perfectly natural. Mr. Thomson acts on the instinct of self-defence, with which nature endows us all, in spite of our "philosophies." But he is not acting on Mr. Blatchford's principles. He consigns Mr. Bell to the contempt of honest men; and contempt is a very severe form of blame; so much so, indeed, that most men would sooner be hated than despised.

Mr. Blatchford cannot refrain from praise and blame any more than Mr. Thomson can. We could give a hundred instances. But there is no need to give one, for we are stating a truism. Now, if the opponents of praise and blame cannot help indulging in them; if their instincts are against their principles, they would do well—would they not?—to reconsider their position. It is no use preaching what cannot be practised.

The Rev. H. W. Clark, writing to the *Christian Commonwealth*, refers to "the banalities of the *Clarion* and the vulgarities of the *Freethinker*." Mr. Clark gives no examples of either commodity, but contents himself with "bespattering" these opposition organs "with mud." More than once articles from Mr. Clark's pen have been criticised in the *Freethinker*; but in each case the criticism has been intellectually fair and "without bitterness." Never was mud thrown either at him or his articles. What, then, does he mean by "vulgarities"? Will he specify one instance of mud-throwing in the *Freethinker*?

But let us see what kind of a critic the Rev. Mr. Clark is. The book reviewed is Mr. Philip Vivian's *The Churches and Modern Thought*. Mr. Vivian quotes from Mr. Fielding to the effect that "no man has ever sat down calmly unbiassed to reason out his religion and not ended by rejecting it." Mr. Clark says that when Mr. Fielding "wrote those words he was writing nonsense." Well, there are thousands of people who agree with Mr. Fielding—are they on that account all fools? Are all opinions that differ from Mr. Clark's to be written down nonsense? Is it not quite as fair to say that when Mr. Clark "wrote those words he was writing nonsense"?

Again. Of Mr. Vivian's book Mr. Clark says: "The superficiality of the whole thing is simply amazing." Then he charges the author with "the lack of elementary knowledge of facts," with making "crude statements without any consciousness of their absurdity," with mistaking "a point which a schoolboy could hardly have misunderstood," with writing, "once again, sheer nonsense," with showing "no acquaintance with facts which are the merest commonplaces of history," with manifesting "an astonishing ignorance of things which any beginner ought to know," with being "unfair," and "shallow and superficial." And this is the man who accuses the *Freethinker* of dealing in "vulgarities"! Is it not time that Mr. Clark "sat up and rubbed his eyes"?

Let us notice just one of Mr. Clark's points against Mr. Vivian. It seems that Dr. Horton prefers the term "mighty works" to "miracles," and Mr. Vivian very properly calls this "word-spinning." Now, Mr. Clark naturally supports Dr. Horton; and he does so by claiming that the term "mighty works" "suggests that the thing done is natural to the person who did it." But on what ground does he make such a claim? Does not the word "miracles" involve the same suggestion? Jesus is said to have raised the dead to life—what possible difference does it make whether you call this alleged act a "miracle" or a "mighty work"? It is quite immaterial what name you apply to the deed, the only important question being, Did it ever happen?

"Providence" is not very beneficent in India. The plague has carried off nearly a million persons there, including 396,357 in the Punjab and 223,957 in Bombay. "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

The Parks Committee of the Blackburn Town Council recommend that the tea house and lavatories in the Corporation Park be open on Sundays as well as weekdays. Such a shocking idea was bound to excite the indignation of the local puritans. The District Free Church Council (Dr. Clifford's friends, who are always talking about "freedom") convened a public meeting to protest against it. A report of the speeches at this noble gathering has not reached us. But we can imagine the diatribes of the holy servants of God when their business is threatened with a serious rivalry. We see that these gentlemen are also bitterly opposing the proposal to open the museum and reading-room on Sunday. Trade, gentlemen, trade! You are all Protectionists as far as your trade is concerned. You want one day a week all to yourselves. Nothing more—and nothing less.

In an alleged "obscene book" case at West Ham police-court the defendant's legal representative remarked to the Stipendiary Magistrate: "Nobody would invite you to say that the Bible is an obscene book." Mr. Gillespie replied: "No; but probably I should say that extracts from the Bible were very obscene." There, now! It would never do to call the Bible obscene, but it would never do either to say that the Bible does not contain obscenity. "Very obscene" passages, according to Stipendiary Gillespie, might be quoted from it. We agree with him.

Next to General Booth, the Rev. F. B. Meyer is the best advertised clergyman in Great Britain. Never does a week pass without attention being called to the movements and doings of this man of God. Humility is not one of his shining virtues; but self-advertisement certainly is. He has resigned his pastorate at Christ Church, to become a peripatetic evangelist of the Free Church Council; and already we know where he is to be and what doing for some years to come.

"Gipsy" Smith went out to South Africa and performed wonders there. But the newspapers don't report any marked improvement in the condition of the country. This revivalist is now in America, trapping the souls that Torrey and Alexander couldn't bag; unless he traps the same souls—which is not at all unlikely. After a month at New York he will proceed to save Boston, Chicago, and other places. But why Chicago? That is Torrey's own dunghill.

Archdeacon Colley, who tried to regale the Church Congress at Weymouth, with some astonishing stories of what he said he saw at a spiritualistic *séance* with Dr. Monck (a convicted impostor!) twenty-nine years ago, offered Mr. Maskelyne £1,000 if he would produce any one of those phenomena by trickery. Mr. Maskelyne accepted the challenge, and the result was seen on Monday evening at St. George's Hall. But will the Archdeacon pay up?

The Bishop of Carlisle disburdened his mind as follows in a recent sermon at Torpenhow:—

"I am dead against that sham religion of happiness in the after-world and not in this. If your religion does not make you happy before death it won't make you happy after. Why should it? Some of the greatest blessings of life are its disappointments."

Some people call Christianity the eternal religion. Yet this utterance of the Bishop of Carlisle's would have made his Puritan predecessors turn sick—and probably turn on him. All that will remain of Christianity by-and-by is the name. It recalls the old lady's pair of stockings that had been footed and legged ten times.

A Welshman (the *Pink Un* says) wanted his son to emigrate. "Not me," said the lad, "I'm afraid of the sea. On land I can look after myself; but God does what he likes on the water."

In the *Christian World* for September 27 is to be found the following beautiful example of the great prevalence of brotherly love between Congregational ministers of different degrees of heterodoxy:—

"A London Congregational minister who holds broad views and whom we may call 'A. B.' sits on the committee of a small mission society. Another minister whose views are distinctly not broad was lately invited to join the committee of the society. 'Oh,' he replied, 'but "A. B." is a member of it! I couldn't sit on a committee with "A. B." He isn't sound on the Deluge.'"

How lovely! Christ indeed *doth* reign!

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 14, Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints, Manchester: 3, "A Searchlight on the Bible"; 6.30, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"

October 28, Leicester.

November 4, Woolwich Town Hall; 18, Birmingham.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—October 14, a., Brockwell Park; e., Camberwell; 21, Tyneside Lecture Society, Newcastle; 22, Hetton-le-Hole. November 4, Birmingham. December 2, Forest Gate; 9, Glasgow; 16, Belfast.

J. LLOYD'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—October 21, Glasgow. December 2, Liverpool.

MR. SYMES'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—October 14, Glasgow; 21, Camberwell; 28, Manchester. November 4, Nelson; 11, Liverpool. December 2, Birmingham; 9, Leicester; 16, Newcastle.

W. K. FULLEYLOVE (Coventry).—Your letter convinces us that a debate between yourself and Mr. Symes would be of no interest to our readers. "God's dealings" with you are not what we mean to have discussed in our columns.

NORMAN MURRAY.—Sorry we cannot open our columns for a debate between Mr. Symes in London and yourself in Montreal. The geographical conditions render the idea impossible.

W. LYON.—Pleased to hear from a reader so far north as Inverness. See "Acid Drops."

J. CLAYTON.—Thanks for getting us another reader. Keep on doing it.

T. O'NEILL.—There are all sorts of Spiritualists. Some, like those you got amongst, are next door to Christians; while others are nearly Atheists. The Freethought lecturers, mentioned by Mr. Symes, as being also Spiritualists, were not of the breed that he belongs to; nor of the breed that we and our colleagues belong to either.

W. G. DUNCAN.—Darwin was a Theist when he wrote the *Origin of Species*. He became an Agnostic afterwards, and remained so until his death. Read our little book, *Darwin on God*, where you will find all the facts; which is evidently what you want, whether you know it or not. Discussion is no good on a basis of mere ignorance.

G. B. H. WARD.—Many thanks for all your trouble in the matter.

R. J. HENDERSON.—Glad you were delighted with our article on the Herbert Spencer memorial; and pleased to read your tribute (from personal knowledge) to the clever, polite, and humane Japanese, who have something to teach the Christian nations.

J. BROUGH.—Thanks for cuttings and good wishes.

A. W. G.—Pleased to read in your letter: "I cannot tell you how much I appreciate your paper."

W. P. BALL.—Your batches of cuttings are always very welcome. N. LEVY, 40 N. Richmond-street, Edinburgh, will be glad to hear from local Freethinkers who are ready to join in carrying on an active Branch of the N. S. S.

H. SNELL.—Sorry; must wait till next week.

WATCHFUL.—Thanks.

JAMES NEATE.—Pleased to hear that the open-air lecture-season in Victoria Park finished on Sunday with a good lecture by Mr. Marshall and a good collection for the N. S. S. Benevolent Fund; also that your whole season has been unprecedentedly successful.

J. GRANT.—There is not the slightest historical proof that Saint Peter was ever at Rome. See the chapter on Peter in our *Bible Heroes*.

NO CANT.—We hope to write a pamphlet on the subject you mention. God's not being able to make a round square is no argument against his omnipotence; for a round square is a meaningless form of words—a contradiction in terms—nonsense.

A. CLARKE.—We feel quite sure that if Mr. Cohen elaborated the passage on personal and social morality you would find yourself in agreement with him.

H. M. RIDGWAY writes: "I was at Ilfracombe a month ago, and tried to get the *Freethinker* at Smith & Son's, but they refused to order it for me." We are having this looked into.

H. SPENCE.—Certainly: see paragraph.

SOME ANSWERS to correspondence are unavoidably postponed till next week, in consequence of Mr. Foote's visit to Scotland.

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.

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.

Sugar Plums.

South Lancashire "saints" will have an opportunity of hearing Mr. Foote again to-day (Oct. 14) in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Manchester. The subjects are expected to attract crowded meetings. Freethinkers who want comfortable seats should be in good time.

Mr. Foote had fine audiences on Sunday at Glasgow. The evening lecture on Shelley and Robert Burns drew many strangers and many ladies to the crowded evening meeting. Mr. Turnbull took the chair in the morning, and Mr. Scott in the evening. Both are valuable workers in the Branch. Mr. Scott, who is as modest as he is able, is the writer of that name whose contributions to the *Freethinker* are so highly valued by many of its readers. We are glad to know that Mr. T. Robertson, the invaluable secretary of the Branch, is in better health than formerly.

Freethinkers came to Mr. Foote's lectures from various towns within a radius of fifty miles. Paisley, Dumbarton, Ayr, and even Edinburgh were represented.

Mr. Foote appealed to the Glasgow "saints" to make a big rally at Mr. Symes's lectures to-day (Oct. 14), and give him the heartiest of Scottish receptions. No doubt they will do it.

Mr. Cohen lectures in the Camberwell Secular Hall this evening (Oct. 14). This hall has for some time been disused for Freethought lectures. We hope the new effort will be attended with success.

People often fail to understand the difficulties that lie in the way of a journal like the *Freethinker*. We don't appeal to the mob; our audience has to be found amongst the thinking of all classes; and the difficulty of finding them is immensely increased by the open or surreptitious boycott to which this paper is subjected. Bradlaugh carried on the *National Reformer* for nearly thirty years, and those who saw behind the scenes knew what a herculean task it was. We have carried on the *Freethinker* for more than twenty-five years, and the task has been back-breaking and sometimes heart-breaking. Ever so many advanced papers have gone down in that quarter of a century, but our own is still alive, and we are as able and ready as ever to keep it going. But those who are not behind the scenes, or in the thick of the fight, must not run away with the idea that ours is a holiday job. On this point we shall have something more to say later on.

We want to call attention, at present, to the case of *L'Humanité*, the organ of M. Jaurès, who is one of the foremost men in France, and many people say its greatest orator. He also does not appeal to the mob in his paper; he appeals to the brains and hearts of his readers. And what is the result? After six and a half years of hard work, and the literary assistance of very able and honest men, he has to announce that his paper will have to be dropped if it does not receive financial assistance. He has been offered a lot of money to cease his exposure of Russian finance; but he is not the man to take bribes; he will stand or fall honorably. Of course we hope some honest friend of *L'Humanité* will come forward with the requisite funds in his hand. But, in any case, we may point to the journal of so eminent a man as M. Jaurès in illustration of what we wrote in the previous paragraph. Those who knock at people's heads have to wait a long time before they open; and before the waiting is over the knockers may die or fail. It was ever thus—and perhaps ever will be.

The Failsworth Secular Sunday School's Bazaar takes place on October 28. This is a very deserving effort, and we hope it is receiving some outside support. Donations, in cash or goods, for the bazaar fund should be forwarded to the secretary, Mr. James Pollitt, Robert-street, Failsworth, near Manchester.

Mr. F. J. Gould continues to torment the religious educationists in Leicester. All he uses is the goad of logic, and they win under it "dreadful bad." Some time ago he presented to a meeting of the Education Committee, of which he is a member, a list of theological doctrines (the existence of God; miracles; prayer; immortality, etc.), and asked the Chairman of the Elementary Schools Sub-Committee if these might be taught in the Council Schools under the present regulations as to Bible-teaching. This was a poser. It wouldn't have been a poser to honest and straightforward men, but it was so to men who wanted to keep up "unsectarian" religious instruction without defining it—which

would show it was *not* unsectarian. So they put their heads together, and gave the beautiful answer that the committee prescribed no doctrines to be taught. Mr. Gould has just followed up that question with another. He asked by what means the committee ascertained the competence of its teachers to give religious instruction. This was met by the beautiful answer that the committee had "no religious tests." The upshot is therefore obvious, and Mr. Gould puts it very clearly:—

"I hope the public will now see the position as regards religious instruction in the County Schools of Leicester. As a community we do not know what doctrines are or may be taught to the children; and we do not know whether, and to what extent, the teachers appointed are competent to impart the instruction in religion. It is difficult for one to see what is the value of the public control which we are supposed to possess in this department of education. We do not know what we are controlling, and the committee does not know."

We congratulate Mr. Gould on pricking the bubble of "unsectarian" religious teaching in Leicester. Those who are responsible for the religious teaching there are afraid to say what they do teach.

Time, as we hoped it would, is bringing counsel to the opponents of the Catholic Church in France. That opposition, as such, should never have been allowed to enter into practical politics. It has really nothing to do with the policy of Disestablishment—which is simply a policy of civil justice. According to the Paris correspondent of the *Daily News*, the rulers of France are resolved that the transference of duties under the Separation Law should be "effected in harmony with the 'general' spirit of the Church." This is appreciated, we are told, not only by the French public, but even "in the very quarter where hostility to Vaticanism, and sacerdotalism in every shape and form, is most ruthless." The Socialists themselves, it appears, are "honestly desirous that the transition from the old order to the new should be effected as considerably, as indulgently, as is possible within the limits of the law." M. Jaurès intends to propose that the Church, if she rejects the Separation Law, shall be left to take (or refuse, just as she pleases) advantage of the common law of 1900 on the general subject of associations, syndicates, and unions. Under this law people may associate for public worship, as ordinary citizens may do for any other purpose. M. Jaurès will insist, however, that if the Church does this the pensions and allowances granted by the Separation Law must be stopped; which appears to us to have an element of justice, but to be too drastic in application. With regard to the churches (the buildings), we are glad to see that M. Jaurès will recommend that they should be left, for a liberal term of years, to the free use of the clergy. This is certainly a step in the right direction. And we note that it will "receive the approval of the Extreme Left."

El Progreso, the Spanish daily, edited by Deputy Lerroux, Republican, of Barcelona, draws special attention to our recent article on the Ferrer case, and quotes with apparent gusto our statement that arguing with the clericals is as fruitless as preaching humanity to sharks or tigers. "We congratulate the editor of the *Freethinker*, and the British Secularists," our contemporary says, "on their noble attitude." Mr. Foote is flatteringly referred to as "the illustrious materialist philosopher." But he must really disclaim that honor. His only aim (in Heine's words) is to be a brave soldier in the war of human liberation.

Amongst our exchanges is the *Journal de Charleroi*, which often contains a reference to some article in our own columns. The last number to hand translates some paragraphs from our recent article dealing with the case of a clergyman who died worth nearly a quarter of a million.

The West Ham Branch is (very justly) supporting the candidature of Councillor E. Leggatt in the High-street Ward at the forthcoming municipal election, and is seeking subscriptions towards his expenses—which can be forwarded to Mr. Henry Spence, 12 Fairland-road, Stratford, E. Mr. Leggatt is an ardent and outspoken Freethinker. He fought hard for this journal's right to justice in the local Free Library, he has spoken and voted for Secular Education and has withdrawn all his children from Bible instruction, and he has materially assisted the Branch in obtaining the use of the Town Hall for Sunday evening lectures. These are first-rate claims to Secular support.

The new edition of Mr. F. Bonte's *From Fiction to Fact* is now nearly ready for issue. We hope to announce next week that it is on sale. Persons whose orders for copies are not yet executed will understand. We have made all the haste we could, but our printing establishment is not a large one, and the *Freethinker* must be brought out, anyhow.

Ascensions of Saviors.

AMONG the numerous copies, or rather continuations, of Paganism, of which Christianity is composed, the miracle of the Ascension is one, next to the incredible marvels of the Incarnation—*i.e.*, the Immaculate Conception and the Virgin Birth, and also the Resurrection—of the asserted monstrous breaches of natural law which can appeal only to the grossly ignorant or to the mentally incapable or deteriorated. An ordinary common-sense individual, in reading the contradictory statements in the Gospels and Acts, is staggered at the thought that it can be possible for any level-headed person to believe, for one instant, such Munchausen yarns. Christians sneer at their pagan and heathen predecessors, yet have not scrupled to borrow or adopt all their beliefs, doctrines, and ritual, and, among others, this fable of levitation. Modern spiritualists claim to be able to accomplish this miracle, but have never succeeded in proving their capacity so to do in the presence of scientific men; and, had such been present at the reputed ascension and resurrection, etc., instead of a few ignorant and illiterate disciples, these parts of so-called Holy Writ could never have obtained lasting credence.

Long prior to Christianity, ascensions were said to be common, though one need only mention a few, which may be read in the Bibles of the various corresponding religions. Many saviors were crucified, rose again after three or more days, appeared to their friends and disciples, and ascended to the house of many mansions. Chrishna, the Hindoo Savior (1250 B.C.), "ascended to Viocontha (heaven) to Brahma," the first person in the Hindoo Trinity (himself being the second); and, as he ascended, "all men saw him, and exclaimed, 'Lo, Chrishna's soul ascends its native skies,'" whence he had descended. Sakia Muni, the Buddha, the ninth incarnation of Vishnu, the second person of their Trinity, and corresponding to Jesus in the Christian Trinity, is said to have "ascended to the celestial regions"; and his pious disciples point to footprints on a mountainous rock, whence he took his last leave of earth and ascended. Even some of the Hindoo saints are said, in their "holy" books, to have been seen ascending to heaven. Æsculapius, the God of Medicine, ascended to heaven, and some Romans made an affidavit that they saw Augustus Cæsar ascend to realms above. The god Bacchus died, was buried, descended into, and slept three nights in, Tartarus (the only hell they had in those times), whence he brought his mother, with whom he ascended to heaven and made her a goddess. Plutarch, the Greek historian and biographer, and also a Roman historian, relate that Romulus (the founder of Rome) suddenly ascended in a solar-eclipse (713 B.C.); and Julius Proculus, a well-known Roman senator, under solemn oath, declared he saw and talked with him after his death. Appolonius of Tyana, who was born before, and lived long after, Christ, performed miracles equal to, and some even greater than, those attributed to Christ, was crucified, raised from the dead, and ascended to heaven; and several more such instances are easy to demonstrate, as follows.

Prometheus was crucified, died on the cross, "descended to hell," "rose again from the dead, and ascended into heaven"; and the Savior-God Xamalxis of Thrace died, descended beneath the earth, remained three years, appeared in the fourth year after his death, as he previously predicted, and ascended to heaven 600 B.C. The Egyptian Savior Alcides, "after having been seen a number of times, ascended to a higher life." Enoch and Elijah are familiar examples from the Old Testament, the latter ascending in "a chariot of fire." According to the Mexican Gospels, their great god Quexalcote, born 300 B.C., was crucified, buried, arose, and ascended; and these writings are more than 2,000 years old, therefore more ancient than the gospel account of Jesus. For proofs see Rev. Mr. Maurice's *Indian Antiquities*, Humboldt's *Researches in Mexico*, Niebuhr's *History of Rome*, and Lord Kingsborough's *Mexican*

Antiquities. Lao-tse, of China, when "he had completed his mission of benevolence, ascended bodily alive into the paradise above" (*Progress of Religious Ideas*, vol. i., p. 214); and Fo, of the same country, having completed his glorious mission on earth, "ascended back to paradise, where he had *previously existed from all eternity*." I have italicised the identical parallelism with Christ. The unprejudiced reader, if he or she be not already acquainted with these facts in the history of comparative religion, cannot but acknowledge that the alleged life of Christ, as related in the Gospels, has, even as this very brief statement shows, been anticipated in every important particular, and also that no such discrepant and contradictory records, as appear in what Christians call "Holy Writ," exist in these so-called heathen instances.

On the other hand, the accounts of Christ's ascension are full of dissonances; and, like the varying stories of the resurrection, deserve no credit. Here are a few of the glaring inconsistencies. As Christ was said to be God, existing from eternity, he ought to know, therefore we will take his statement first. On the day of the crucifixion, he said to the thief who was on his cross, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise"; consequently, he must have ascended, if at all, on that day; and Christians should, if consistent, brand any other statement or belief as the grossest blasphemy. But their Holy, inspired revelation, in that part called the Gospels, Epistles, and in the anonymous Acts, gives the lie direct to their Man-God, Divine Savior, Redeemer. Luke (xxiv. 47) says he ascended on the third day; but the writer of Acts, which theologians attribute to Luke, says he did not ascend till *forty days* after the resurrection, so that Luke glaringly contradicts himself; but this appears to be a matter of indifference to the Gospel writers and to Christians generally. Only faith is asked for, not reason nor common sense; for, if Christians will read their Bible intelligently, they will notice that Jesus contradicted himself in this important matter of his resurrection when he spoke of Jonah being three days and nights in the whale's belly, saying that, like him, he would be the same time in the heart of the earth. We know this prophecy was incorrect, for he was not three days buried, and some authorities only admit twenty-nine hours, supposing him to have died. Luke (xxiv. 1 and 21) shows clearly that Jesus ascended on the third, and not, as he predicted, on the day of crucifixion; and in verse 49 Luke makes him say: "Ye are witnesses of these things"—i.e., the "eleven" mentioned in verse 33 witnessed the death and resurrection, and yet none of these witnesses agree on these matters. The ascension, two mention cursorily, and they and Matthew differ *toto caelo* as to the place of this miraculous ascension. When asked for a sign, in the passages mentioned, Jesus gave the incorrect one as to time already stated, but used the occasion for a sublime piece of egoism in claiming to be greater than Solomon or poor Jonah. And still we are expected to believe that he was the Almighty God, or a third part of him. Instead of improving the opportunity and telling people something of the next world, from which he is said to have just come, so that there could be some information as to a future life and as to his divinity, he again indulges in egoism, for Luke, in the same chapter, verse 27, says: "He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." Mark and Luke were not present, were not disciples of Christ at the time, and certainly mention the ascension in a somewhat abrupt and vague way; while Matthew and John, who were disciples, and said to be present, take not the slightest notice of an occurrence so vital to Christianity. Surely this fact is enough to cast overwhelming doubt on a story which, in itself, is sufficiently incredible; for truthful, accurate, and, more especially, *inspired* biographers would not omit such a final and consummate act in the life-history of a supposed God. Obviously the last scene in this tragic drama, being so immensely important for the future of Christianity, would not

have been allowed to be omitted by Almighty God, the Holy Inspirer, from any of the biographies of Jesus, had it really occurred. Apologists, as usual, try to explain away these very awkward facts by saying there was no need to repeat what was already known; but such quibbling statements are disproved by the fact that this, and most of the other alleged miraculous events related in the Gospels, were denied by many of the earliest Christians, and probably Matthew and John knew this; and also by the circumstance that, should any biographers—say of the last hundred years—omit to mention some very remarkable occurrence in two out of four of their histories, these same theologians would conclude, either that their accounts were unreliable on this matter, or that the two omitting the account did not believe the story. Though Matthew, John, Peter, James, and Jude are said to have been eye-witnesses, being present as disciples (Jesus, as pointed out, says eleven), in their gospels and epistles no allusion is made to this most wonderful occurrence. Here are five New Testament writers ignoring this miraculous levitation, which no one appears to have seen but the disciples, the immense importance of which they must have realised, and yet failed to record; though, as any proof of Christ's divinity, their testimony would be valueless unless we are prepared to consent to the divinity of Enoch and Elijah, and other alleged levitators. Other enormous discrepancies are that Mark says Jesus ascended at Jerusalem, and Mark was not present. Luke also was not present, and says the ascension was at Bethany, which is two miles distant from Jerusalem. Matthew, who was present, and ought to know, says Jesus, at that time, was on a mountain in Galilee, which is *seventy-five miles* away from Bethany, the place given by Luke. What reasonable explanation have Christian evidencers and apologists for these glaring geographical contradictions?

Here I may mention that which, in conversation and various reading, I have never known alluded to—i.e., the discrepant accounts as to the post-mortem manifestations of Jesus, and some other matters. John (xxi. 14) says that this—at the sea of Tiberias—was the third time Jesus had manifested himself to the disciples; whereas, in the previous chapter, he mentions three, which are, to Mary, near the tomb, on the first day of the week; to the disciples, on the evening of the same day (v. 19); and, again, after eight days (v. 26) to the disciples, making four in all; and thus he contradicts himself. At (v. 17) he forbids Mary to touch him, for "I am not yet ascended unto the Father"; but at the interview with Thomas *after eight days, and yet not having ascended*, he asks him: "Reach hither thy finger and see my hand (instead of inserting it into the wound); and reach hither thy hand and put it into my side"; and yet he had not ascended—another contradiction. I think a small committee of experienced surgeons would say that after eight days, even with suppuration, granulations would largely have filled the wounds, and that the thrusting of a big, dirty hand of a peasant or fisherman into the chest would have been extremely painful, and probably impossible, without great force and intense pain, in which a delicate and wounded man must almost surely have fainted; and, had he continued on earth, would extremely probably have had blood poisoning. John says nothing about the ascension beyond quoting Christ's reputed words, and, so far as he and Matthew are concerned, Jesus may have lived on earth for many years, as the early Christian father, Irenæus, stated he did. (See Rev. Dr. Grabes's *Irenæus*.) John gives the sea of Tiberias, *over seventy miles* from Jerusalem, as the last place where Christ was; so that, if he ascended thence, he levitated from four different places, considerable distances apart! Then as to the number by whom Jesus was seen after he rose. Must we believe Paul, who says he was seen by above five hundred brethren (1 Cor. xv. 6), or Luke, the reputed writer of Acts (i. 15), who says there were but one hundred and twenty brethren in all!

It is now well known that these stories were written long after the supposed events, therefore the reasonable explanation seems to be that they grew out of the teachings of the Essenes and Therapeutæ, as acknowledged by some of the Christian fathers, whose monks had come in contact long previously with Buddhist missionaries, from whom they heard the esoteric teaching, and also of the almost exactly similar miraculous life and doings of Buddha; and in Alexandria, where all nations mingled, they must have heard of similar stories of the heathen gods, as given in the early part of this paper. In ultimate analysis it is highly probable that the bulk of the Old and New Testaments is allegorical, and that Christianity is symbolic; and this was the view of the great Christian father, Origen, and some other early Christian writers of authority. Astronomically, a planet was "buried" when it sank below the horizon; when it returned to light, and was clearly apparent in the heavens, it was said "to rise again, ascend into heaven," etc.; and much that is very obscure and absurd, when considered literally, is made plain and much more admirable on the reasonable hypothesis that all Holy Scriptures, ante and post-Christian, are compounded of astro-allegories and nature-myths. The interested reader will find valuable information on such matters in the writings of Volney, Godfrey Higgins, Rev. R. Taylor, Logan Mitchell, Goldziher, Gerald Massey, Fraser's *Golden Bough*, Forlong's *Rivers of Life*, and other able and instructive works.

For the sake of completeness it should be mentioned that the account by Luke in Acts (i. 1) differs from his version in the last chapter of his gospel. In this latter Jesus led his disciples to Bethany, where he ascended; in Acts he appears to have ascended from Mount Olivet, after having spoken unto the apostles, and a cloud received him, and while they were gazing into heaven two men in white apparel appeared and spoke to them. Here is a second account by the same writer differing from another of his, and as he must have written some fifty years after the alleged event, which occurred, if at all, when he was a boy, one need not waste further thought anent a contra-natural miracle which is totally unsupported by the names of his informants—not that this would add to its credibility—by the apostles and disciples, who are supposed to have seen it, or by any contemporaneous writer.

NEMO.

All theology is anthropomorphism—the making of gods in man's image. What is the God of our own theology, as Matthew Arnold puts it, but a magnified man? We cannot transcend our own natures, even in imagination; we can only interpret the universe in terms of our own consciousness nor can we endow our gods with any other attributes than we possess ourselves. When we seek to penetrate the "mystery of the infinite," we see nothing but our own shadow and hear nothing but the echo of our own voice.

As we are so are our gods, and what man worships is what he himself would be. The placid Egyptian nature smiles on the face of the sphinx. The gods of India reflect the terror of its heat and its beasts and serpents, the fertility of its soil, and the exuberance of its people's imagination. The glorious Pantheon of Greece—

"Praxitelean shapes, whose marble smiles
Fill the hushed air with everlasting love—"

embodies the wise and graceful fancies of the noblest race that ever adorned the earth, compared with whose mythology the Christian system is a hideous nightmare. The Roman gods wear a sterner look, befitting their practical and imperial worshippers, and Jove himself is the ideal genius of the eternal city. The deities of the old Scandinavians, whose blood tinges our English veins, were fierce and warlike as themselves, with strong hands, supple wrists, mighty throws, lofty stature, grey-blue eyes and tawny hair. Thus has it ever been. So Man created god in his own image, in the image of Man created he him; male and female created he them.—G. W. Foote, "*Flowers of Irethought*."

The doubts which beset men upon many of the greatest matters, are the direct result of the lies and falsifications of our predecessors.—*Helps*.

An Open Letter to Jehovah.

JEHOVAH, maker of the world
If ancient lies be true—
You may be holy, wise and great,
But yet, whate'er I do,
More shocked at me you cannot be
Than I am shocked at you.

The useful many toil and weep
Whilst laugh the useless few;
And weary, tortured horses fall
Before your heartless view—
More shocked at me you cannot be
Than I am shocked at you.

If you exist, well, so do I,
And here we are, *we two*;
If you must think, well, so must I,
And this I think is true:
More shocked at me you cannot be
Than I am shocked at you.

You made me, yet, at me you're shocked
For being shocked at you;
But I am shocked that you are shocked
And feel that this is true:
More shocked at me you cannot be
Than I am shocked at you.

A life am I; you can't be more;
You never can be two;
And so, your *right* o'er me can ne'er
Be more than mine o'er you—
More shocked at me you cannot be
Than I am shocked at you.

To me, my mind is judge supreme
Of what is false or true;
And so, of what is right or wrong,
The judge am I, not you—
More shocked at me you cannot be
Than I am shocked at you.

If you exist, and if I must
Have thoughts of life and you,
My mind, if fit to *judge* and *praise*,
Is fit to *blame* you too—
More shocked at me you cannot be
Than I am shocked at you.

To say that you I ne'er should judge
Is foolish and untrue,
Because *too late*; my mind *exists*,
And mental work must do—
More shocked at me you cannot be
Than I am shocked at you.

Resistless judgments, praise and blame,
Arise with thoughts of you,
And if 'tis wrong to hate your deeds,
'Tis wrong to love them too—
More shocked at me you cannot be
Than I am shocked at you.

The hand, the tooth, the fang, the claw
Your bloody bidding do.
To whiten human souls, you make
Their bodies black and blue—
More shocked at me you cannot be
Than I am shocked at you.

As brutal butchers cudgelled pigs—
Before they "stuck" them through—
To make them "tender," carnal man
Is sanctified by you—
More shocked at me you cannot be
Than I am shocked at you.

What right have you to "educate"
The many or the few
Through *pain*—their own, or other folk's?
Who "educated" you?
More shocked at me you cannot be
Than I am shocked at you.

Have you been tried and trained by pain,
And did you struggle through
The chastening stress of blood and tears
Before in grace you grew?
More shocked at me you cannot be
Than I am shocked at you.

In "Holy Writ," your hated foes
Were simple men and true,
But all your loved and saintly friends
Were rascals through and through—
More shocked at me you cannot be
Than I am shocked at you.

A pious child lives long, you say—
A statement quite untrue;
You say you made us all, yet dare
To judge the things we do—
More shocked at me you cannot be
Than I am shocked at you.

You sent your Son to die for sin—
A selfish thing to do;
Of course, the victim should have been
Not Christ your Son, but *you*—
More shocked at me you cannot be
Than I am shocked at you.

To die for other people's sins—
As God, or Christ, or Jew—
Is childish, useless, and absurd,
And most immoral too—
More shocked at me you cannot be
Than I am shocked at you.

A self-respecting man must blame
Your Son who once did brew
Supplies of alcoholic drink
For folk already "fu."—
More shocked at me you cannot be
Than I am shocked at you.

You may have pow'r to do me harm;
You may, but if you do,
Your spite, though strong, is weak compared
With my contempt for you—
More shocked at me you cannot be
Than I am shocked at you.

If you exist, I wish, of course,
To be unharmed by you;
But, harmed or not, I think my thoughts,
And this, I think, is true:
More shocked at me you cannot be
Than I am shocked at you.

A God so wicked and absurd
For lunatics may do,
Or prowling priests of prey who preach
A lie as if 'twere true—
More shocked at me you cannot be
Than I am shocked at you.

Compel your blood-purveying priests,
Your "fortune-telling" crew,
To leave post-mortem frauds and seek
Some honest work to do—
More shocked at me you cannot be
Than I am shocked at you.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

DIPLOMACY.

The children of Israel were sighing for the fleshpots of Egypt.
"Wouldn't a little jackpot do instead?" Moses diplomatically suggested.
Herewith they joyfully proceeded to sweeten the kitty.

SERMONS IN SERMONS.

"Dear," said the prominent preacher, "I want you to notify all the papers to send reporters to the church next Sunday. I will preach a very strong sermon."
"Yes," replied his wife, "what will your theme be?"
"I shall strongly urge the abolition of all Sunday work."

We find the following touching tale in the newspapers. It belongs to that class of tales concerning which the mildest doubt is hateful blasphemy.
"A little girl in Ithica, just before she died, exclaimed: 'Papa, take hold of my hand and help me across.' Her father had died two months before. Did she see him?"
There is not a doubt of it; but interested relatives have somewhat misstated the little girl's exclamation, which was this:—
"Papa, take hold of my hand, and I will help you out of that."—*Dod Griles.*

Correspondence.

THE FERRER CASE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Senor Francisco Guardia, writing from prison, requests that all English press references to his case be sent to the three magistrates whose names and addresses I give below:—Sr. D. José Garcia, Romero de Tejada, Postigo de San Martín 3 y 5 Madrid; Sr. D. Tomás Albadalejo, Augusto Figueroa, 5 Madrid; Sr. D. José Ortega Morejon, Valverde, 36* Madrid. Will you kindly favor me by sending one copy of your issue of September 16—with paragraph marked—to each of the above named?

Espana Nueva, a prominent Madrid daily, publishes (September 18, 20, 21, and 24) four powerful articles from the pen of a lawyer, proclaiming Ferrer's innocence. I will send them for your perusal if desired.

Permission to re-open the "Modern School" at Barcelona has been granted; but the embargo upon Ferrer's fortune still operates, and, though arrested on June 4, it is highly improbable that the trial will take place before January next.

The re-opening of the Modern School is probably the outcome of a desire to stifle agitation abroad. A Barcelona lawyer, recently in England, believes that the embargo upon Ferrer's fortune—the endowment of these schools—may be taken away for a time, but that the trial will result in a verdict of penal servitude for a term of years, and will contain a clause for an indemnity for the families of the victims of Morral's dastardly act, thus effectually disposing of the endowments. This, he says, will be followed by a free pardon in a few months' time; *but the money will be gone.*

I have followed the case from day to day; and the more I read, the more certain I feel of the man's innocence, and of the vile methods adopted—not only with Ferrer—by the clerical Spanish reactionaries.

Some day the light of truth and liberty will shine upon Spain and its rulers. I thank you heartily for your assistance. Let us still hope *and work!*

G. H. B. WARD, *Secretary Ferrer Committee.*

SPIRITUALISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—You must now place your hand upon your mouth, cry "Undone!" and retire in abject silence.

Have you seen the book, just published, entitled *Talks with the Dead*, by John Lobb, "for thirty years Managing Editor of the *Christian Age*"?

Well, yesterday I purchased a copy, read it through, and said, "Mr. Footc must see this." Accordingly I bought a second copy, which I herewith present to you, in the hope that you will read, criticise, and deal with it in the *Freethinker*.

In the words of *John Bull*, Mr. Lobb "takes the biscuit"; and my simple comment for the moment shall be that Mr. Lobb's testimony is the unvarnished truth, or Mr. Lobb must be the most unmitigated liar on earth.

You will be interested to read in the book that not only Shaftesbury, Gladstone, Moody, Price Hughes, and Mrs. Booth are among the "ransomed," but that Shelley, Voltaire, the Czar, and Dan Leno share the bliss, and that Spurgeon now admits he made an awful hash of his business by preaching at the Metropolitan Tabernacle and elsewhere his terrors of brimstone and treacle—or, rather, I should say, the fire and brimstone of hell, which were only the projections of his distorted brain.

I think that this subject of "Spiritualism," especially on the basis of this publication, ought to be taken seriously in hand, and, by a series of well-thought-out and virulent articles, such as the *Freethinker* can usually boast, be given the most uncompromising and complete exposure—a veritable *coup de grâce*.

Mr. Lobb doubtless enjoys a good reputation, and it does stagger one to read such contributions as this if the whole bag of tricks is a delusion, or, worse still, a pack of lies.

Permit me to add that only quite recently I learnt that my brother claims to be a "medium" who has *seen* the spirit form of our dad, deceased three years ago. Unfortunately, as yet, my brother has made no demonstration to me by way of proof. All he insists upon is that, "brought up" in the Church of England, he later became atheistic; and as for "spiritualism," he was as sceptical as one could be until his own dead mother appeared to him; and now nothing could rob him of the conviction that we all survive death, and that the "future life" is a reality.

P. W. MADDEN.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

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

LONDON.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N.S.S. (North Camberwell Hall, New Church-road): 7.30, C. Cohen, "The Salvation Army and the Public: A Study in Religious Credulity and Social Imposture."

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Liberal Hall, Broadway, Forest Gate): 7.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Crucifixion and Resurrection."

OUTDOOR.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N.S.S.: Brockwell Park, 3.15, C. Cohen.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park, Marble Arch): 11.30, H. B. Samuels, "Secular Education."

COUNTRY.

FALLSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY SCHOOL (Pole-lane): 6.30, Mrs. B. Hodgson Bayfield, "The Bible and the Ten Commandments."

FALKIRK: Monday, Oct. 15, at 8, Joseph Symes, "Of What Use is the Bible to Man?"

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): Joseph Symes, 12 noon, "Jesus not a Historical, but a Dramatic Character"; 6.30, "Interesting Incidents in my Australian Life, 1884-1906."

GLASGOW RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (319 Sauchiehall-street): Wednesday, Oct. 17, at 8, Wm. Fay McMaster, "Religion and Socialism."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Milton Hall, Daulby-street): 7, H. A. Caddick, "Freethought in Economics."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): G. W. Foote, 3, "A Searchlight on the Bible"; 6.30, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?" Tea at 5.

PAISLEY: Tuesday, Oct. 16, at 8, Joseph Symes, "Of What Use is the Bible to Man?"

PORTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Secular Room, Town Hall): 6.30, "Christianity at the Bar."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, Business Meeting.

TRUE MORALITY:

Or The Theory and Practice of Neo-Malthusianism,

AS, I BELIEVE,

THE BEST BOOK

ON THIS SUBJECT.

Superfine Large-paper Edition, 176 pages, with Portrait and Autograph, bound in cloth, gilt-lettered, post free 1s. a copy.

In order that it may have a large circulation, and to bring it within the reach of the poor, I have issued

A POPULAR EDITION IN PAPER COVERS.

A copy of this edition post free for 2d. A dozen copies, for distribution, post free for one shilling.

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, EAST HANNEY, WANTAGE.

Thwaites' Liver Pills.

The Best Family Medicine in the World.

Will cure Liver, Kidney, and all Stomach Diseases effectually.

Good for Heart Troubles and Cardiac Complaints, Female Ailments, Anæmia.

1s. 1½d. and 2s. 9d. per Box.

Post free 14 or 33 stamps. Directions with each box.

G. THWAITES, Herbalist,

2, Church Row, Stockton-on-Tees, and

24, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough.

THWAITES' LIVER PILLS are not Sugar-coated or got up to deceive, nor factory made, but are made from Herbs by a Herbalist of nearly 40 years' experience in curing disease with Herbs and preparations from them.

Take a Road of Your Own

Or, Individuality and Mental Freedom

By COLONEL R. G. INGERSOLL

PRICE ONE PENNY

THE BOOK OF GOD

IN THE LIGHT OF THE HIGHER CRITICISM.

By G. W. FOOTE.

"I have read with great pleasure your Book of God. You have shown with perfect clearness the absurdity of Dean Farrar's position. I congratulate you on your book. It will do great good, because it is filled with the best of sense expressed with force and beauty."—COLONEL INGERSOLL.

"A volume we strongly recommend.....Ought to be in the hands of every earnest and sincere inquirer."—Reynolds's Newspaper.

Bound in Stout Paper Covers - - - - 1/-

Bound in Good Cloth - - - - - 2/-

BIBLE HEROES.

By G. W. FOOTE.

Adam—Noah—Abraham—Jacob—Joseph—Joseph's Brethren—Moses—Aaron—Joshua—Jephthah—Samson—Samuel—Saul—David—Solomon—Job—Elijah—Elisha—Jehu—Daniel—The Prophets—Peter—Paul.

200 pages, Cloth, 2s. 6d.

INTERNATIONAL FREETHOUGHT CONGRESS.

A Photograph of the National Secular Society's Delegates taken beneath the Voltaire Statue in Paris, September, 1905.

Well Mounted for Framing, 15 by 20 ins.

ONLY A LIMITED NUMBER OF COPIES.

Price HALF-A-CROWN.

(Securely Packed and Post Free)

From—

THE SECRETARY, N.S.S., 2 NEWCASTLE-ST., E.C.

A NEW EDITION. NOW READY.

Colonel Ingersoll's Last Lecture.

WHAT IS RELIGION?

An Address delivered before the American Free Religious Association at Boston, June 2, 1899.

Price Twopence.

IS THE BIBLE INSPIRED?

This Useful Pamphlet by

Mr. G. W. FOOTE.

Will be forwarded, post free, for

THREE HALFPENCE.

THE PICKER PRESS, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

Secular Schools, Fallsworth.

THE Members of the above School are promoting a BAZAAR, to be held on October 27, 29, and 30. The object is to clear off the debt, which stands at £400. We earnestly appeal to all Freethought friends to help us. Donations will be thankfully received and acknowledged by Mr. JAMES POLLITT, Robert-street, Fallsworth.

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 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.

THE BIBLE HANDBOOK

FOR
FREETHINKERS AND INQUIRING CHRISTIANS

EDITED BY

G. W. FOOTE AND W. P. BALL

A New Edition, Revised, and Handsomely Printed

CONTENTS:

Part I.—Bible Contradictions. Part II.—Bible Absurdities. Part III.—Bible Atrocities.

Part IV.—Bible Immoralities, Indecencies, Obscenities, Broken Promises, and Unfulfilled Prophecies.

The above four useful parts, convenient for the pocket, may be had separately, FOURPENCE EACH, or the whole, bound in one volume, 1s. 6d.; Best Edition, bound in cloth, 2s. 6d. (Postage 3d.)

"This is a volume which we strongly commend to all interested in the study of the Judaic-Christian Scriptures. It is edited by G. W. Foote and W. P. Ball, and Published by the Freethought Publishing Company, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C., price 1s. 6d. Indeed, we cannot conceive any Christian as having a faith worth regarding unless he has studied this remarkable volume. Teachers in Sunday and elementary schools will find it of special value as an aid to the exposition of the Christian religion from a thoughtful and critical standpoint. It is a perfect army of facts and comparisons. Since 1888 it has been the standard volume of the subject with which it deals, and its popularity is emphasised by the fact that the public have demanded a new edition."—*Reynolds's Newspaper.*

Under the Ban of the London County Council.

THE POPULAR EDITION

(Revised and Enlarged)

OF

"BIBLE ROMANCES"

BY

G. W. FOOTE

With a Portrait of the Author

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)

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

NEW EDITION NEARLY READY.

FROM FICTION TO FACT.

By FRED. BONTE.

(LATE A PRISON MINISTER.)

BEING THE HISTORY OF A CONVERSION FROM CATHOLICISM TO ATHEISM.

Reprinted from the *FREETHINKER*, with complete revision, and extensive additions.

Sixty-Four Pages. Price ONE PENNY.

ORDER OF YOUR NEWSAGENT AT ONCE.

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

WORKS BY G. W. FOOTE.

- ATHEISM AND MORALITY 2d., post ½d.
- BIBLE AND BEER. Showing the absurdity of basing Teetotalism on the Christian Scriptures. Careful, thorough, and accurate. Freethinkers should keep this pamphlet by them. 4d., post ½d.
- BIBLE HANDBOOK FOR FREETHINKERS AND INQUIRING CHRISTIANS. A new edition, revised and handsomely printed. Cheap edition, paper cover, 1s. 6d.; cloth 2s. 6d., post 2½d.
- BIBLE HEROES. New edition. Each part, paper 1s., post 1d. Superior edition (200 pages), complete, cloth, 2s. 6d., post 2½d.
- BIBLE ROMANCES. Popular edition, with Portrait, paper 6d., post 2½d. Superior edition (160 pages), cloth 2s., post 2½d.
- CHRISTIANITY AND PROGRESS. Second and cheaper edition. Recommended by Mr. Robert Blatchford in *God and My Neighbor*. 1d., post ½d.
- CHRISTIANITY AND SECULARISM. Four Nights' Public Debate with the Rev. Dr. James McCann. Paper, 1s.; cloth 1s. 6d., post 2d.
- CRIMES OF CHRISTIANITY. Hundreds of references are given to standard authorities. No pains have been spared to make the work a complete, trustworthy, final, unanswerable indictment of Christianity. The Tree is judged by its Fruit. Cloth (244 pp.), 2s. 6d., post 3d.
- COMIC SERMONS AND OTHER FANTASIAS. 8d., post 1d.
- DARWIN ON GOD. Containing all the passages in the works of Darwin bearing on the subject of religion. 6d., post 1d.
- DEFENCE OF FREE SPEECH. Three hours' Address to the Jury before Lord Coleridge. With Special Preface and many Footnotes. 4d., post 1d.
- DROPPING THE DEVIL: and Other Free Church Performances. 2d., post ½d.
- FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT. First Series, cloth, 2s. 6d., post 3d. Second Series, cloth 2s. 6d., post 3d.
- GOD AT CHICAGO. A useful Tract. Per 100, 6d., post 4d.
- GOD SAVE THE KING. An English Republican's Coronation Notes. 2d., post ½d.
- HALL OF SCIENCE LIBEL CASE, with Full and True Account of the "Leeds Orgies." 3d., post 1d.
- INFIDEL DEATH-BEDS. Second edition, much enlarged. 8d., post 1d. Superfine paper in cloth, 1s. 3d., post 1½d.
- INTERVIEW WITH THE DEVIL. 2d., post ½d.
- IS SOCIALISM SOUND? Four Nights' Public Debate with Annie Besant. 1s., post 1½d.; cloth, 2s., post 2½d.
- IS THE BIBLE INSPIRED? A Criticism of *Lux Mundi*. 1d., post ½d.
- INGERSOLL DEFENDED AGAINST ARCHDEACON FARRAR. 2d., post ½d.
- JOHN MORLEY AS A FREETHINKER. 2d., post ½d.
- LETTERS TO THE CLERGY. (128 pp.). 1s., post 2d.
- LETTERS TO JESUS CHRIST. 4d., post ½d.
- LIE IN FIVE CHAPTERS; or, Hugh Price Hughes' Converted Atheist. 1d., post ½d.
- MRS. BESANT'S THEOSOPHY. A Candid Criticism. 2d., post ½d.
- MY RESURRECTION. A Missing Chapter from the Gospel of Matthew. 2d., post ½d.
- PECULIAR PEOPLE. An Open Letter to Mr. Justice Wills. 1d., post ½d.
- PHILOSOPHY OF SECULARISM. 3d., post ½d.
- REMINISCENCES OF CHARLES BRADLAUGH. 6d., post 1d.
- ROME OR ATHEISM? The Great Alternative. 3d., post 1d.
- ROYAL PAUPERS. Showing what Royalty does for the People and what the People do for Royalty. 2d., post ½d.
- SALVATION SYRUP; or, Light on Darkest England. A Reply to General Booth. 2d., post ½d.
- SECULARISM AND THEOSOPHY. A Rejoinder to Mrs. Besant. 2d., post ½d.
- THE BOOK OF GOD, in the Light of the Higher Criticism, With Special Reference to Dean Farrar's Apology. Paper. 1s.; cloth, 2s., post 2d.
- THE GRAND OLD BOOK. A Reply to the Grand Old Man. An Exhaustive Answer to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone's *Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*. 1s.; bound in cloth, 1s. 6d., post 1½d.
- THE BIBLE GOD. 2d., post ½d.
- THE ATHEIST SHOEMAKER and the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. 1d., post ½d.
- THE IMPOSSIBLE CREED. An Open Letter to Bishop Magee on the Sermon on the Mount. 2d., post ½d.
- THE SIGN OF THE CROSS. A Candid Criticism of Mr. Wilson Barret's Play. 6d., post 1½d.
- THE DYING ATHEIST. A Story. 1d., post ½d.
- THEISM OR ATHEISM? Public Debate between G. W. Foote and the Rev. W. T. Lee. Verbatim Report, revised by both Disputants. Well printed and neatly bound. 1s., post 1½d.
- THE NEW CAGLIOSTRO. An Open Letter to Madame Blavatsky. 2d., post ½d.
- THE JEWISH LIFE OF CHRIST. Being the *Sepher Toldoth Jesu*, or Book of the Generation of Jesus. Edited, with an Historical Preface and Voluminous Notes, by G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler. 6d., post 1d.
- THE PASSING OF JESUS. The Last Adventures of the First Messiah. 2d., post ½d.
- WAS JESUS INSANE? A Searching Inquiry into the Mental Condition of the Prophet of Nazareth. 1d., post ½d.
- WHAT IS AGNOSTICISM? With Observations on Huxley, Bradlaugh, and Ingersoll, and a Reply to George Jacob Holyoake; also a Defence of Atheism. 8d., post ½d.
- WHO WAS THE FATHER OF JESUS? 2d., post ½d.
- WILL CHRIST SAVE US? 6d., post 1d.

THE PIONEER PRESS 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C.