

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXX.—NO. 15

SUNDAY, APRIL 10, 1910

PRICE TWOPENCE

What great result has he to show, who has so long practised philosophy and yet has HURT nobody?

EMERSON.

"Found Drowned."

ENGLAND is a Christian country. We mean by this that Christianity is in the ascendant. It rules the roost. It dips its hand to the extent of anything between ten and twenty millions a year into the public purse. You have to profess it, or at least to flatter it, if you want to get on in the political or social world. One need not be surprised, therefore, at the farce which has just been performed at Brighton. A minister of religion being found dead in the sea a mile from the shore, a coroner's jury had to sit upon the corpse (as they say) and decide how and why it parted company with its old friend the "soul." All the circumstances in this case pointed in one direction, but the jury looked steadily in another. It was as clear as daylight that the man of God was ripe for suicide; it was proved that he had been escorted off the pier after what could only be construed as an attempt to make a hole in the water; the police had sent him back to London, but he had returned by the very next express; and he was finally found a mere floating dead body by two boatmen a mile from the eastern pier. There was no suggestion that he had fallen into the sea, or that anybody had pushed him in; the explanation was perfectly obvious; yet the jury would not return a verdict of "Suicide" even "during temporary insanity" against a Christian minister, so they returned a verdict which, if not true in spirit, was true in the letter, of "Found Drowned."

This unhappy minister of religion was the Rev. Thomas Law, secretary of the National Free Church Council. It appears that his health had suffered for some time, and he had been plagued with insomnia, which had plunged him into a state of depression, and that is too often the highroad to suicide. We know enough of insomnia from experience to sympathise with the reverend gentleman. We are not going to denounce him, or say a harsh word about him. He simply had not the strength to stand up any longer against one of man's worst enemies. He must have gone through a period of great misery before succumbing. He is therefore to be pitied, and we do pity him, as we condole with his bereaved family. We mean no offence whatever in pointing out some of the lessons of his case.

Let us first note the impartiality or indifference of God. Providence made no exception in favor of a Christian minister. The Lord kept up his character as no respecter of persons. He never lifted a finger to help the Rev. Thomas Law, never gave him an extra hour's sleep, never moved to save his brain and nerves from being ravaged to the point of destruction. The Deity would have done just as much for a profligate or a drunkard.

God paid no heed to the poor sufferer's prayers. It is to be presumed that in the long and weary night watches, when the tired eyelids would not fall peace-

fully upon the tired eyes, and the sad hours crawled along their slow and venomous length, he passionately appealed to God for merciful assistance. But none came. The Deity was like a stony Sphinx, without a gleam of interest or a sign of perception—with only that careless and perhaps cynical smile which sits eternally on the colossal Egyptian image looking forthright over the eternal desert sands. Hundreds of Bible texts were thus falsified. The words of the Psalmist, the words of Jesus himself, were shown to be as idle as the breath which loses itself in a frosty air.

This afflicted minister of religion was as helpless under the power of natural laws and forces as the most "hopeless" materialist. His physical strength was overtaxed, his brain was overwrought, his nerves were unstrung. Prayers were of no avail, religion was useless, and nothing but scientific remedies would have done any good. Mr. Law had been under treatment at Margate; he returned home "cured" in January; but the "cure" in such cases is never quite to be trusted. He broke down again, and his friends should have taken him in hand. They let him disappear, and when they heard of him again he was dead. He went to Brighton, and took to drinking, which was the very thing he should have most avoided. His friends say that they never saw him using intoxicants, but he may have done so without their knowledge. It is certain that he took drugs, and the two weaknesses are very closely related. The whole case is one of the commonest character.

Self-control, like other human faculties, can be developed by wise training and regular exercise. We are not talking at random, but speaking from experience. After our own breakdown early in 1902, during which we never slept at all for nine days and nights, we had to brace up our mental energies for a big struggle. Stimulants were prescribed by the doctor, and eventually a drug, of which we took but one dose. We felt that the way of relief lay elsewhere. We gave up smoking once for all, we put the alcohol away, we resolutely turned from drugs, and slowly we floated back to a more tolerable condition. Such self-control is now habitual to us. We grin and bear it, as the saying is. We put up with the insomnia, and go on as if nothing had happened. As a matter of fact, we have not had a single good night's sleep for years; but we live temperately, and take physical exercise, and spend what time we can in the open air, and often work even against inclination by an effort of will, and thus we still can say with the poet,—

"I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul."

We do not mention these things boastfully. We simply desire to be of service to others who may be tried in the same way. We also desire to show that Freethought does not lead to suicide as Christians frequently assert. Religion often does lead to suicide; it is seldom a restraint. And there is another thing to be said. Christianity does not teach men common fairness any more than it teaches them common sense. A soft verdict of "found drowned" is returned in Mr. Law's case, but it would have been a very different verdict if the dead man had been a well-known Freethinker.

G. W. FOOTE.

Replying to Sceptics.

WHAT shall we do with our boys? is a question that is constantly turning up in the columns of papers, and which quite legitimately exercises the minds of parents. The query has its religious counterpart in "What shall we do with our sceptics?" and this, too, is a question well in evidence both in sermons and religious papers. And it is a subject, one can easily believe, that the clergy discuss with genuine concern. For the sceptic is not merely a problem to be solved, he is also a difficulty that must be removed. His existence is always a silent, and sometimes an eloquent, protest against Christian claims. In his aggressive aspect he exposes the hollowness of Christian pretensions; and even when he remains silent his mere existence challenges the truth of Christian theory and forces the more reflective among believers to reconsider their articles of faith. The existence of sceptics is, at least, a proof that Christianity cannot appeal with convincing force to all. That they should actually be increasing in number, while including men and women whose characters are beyond reproach and whose intellectual strength admits of no question, are facts that confront the Christian world with the threat of ultimate extinction.

The historic Christian method of dealing with the sceptic was simple, and so far as it was applicable, efficacious. Good King Louis's dictum that the only way to argue with an unbeliever was to plunge a sword into his stomach, long received practical Christian support, and in justice it may be added, that it was the only argument of Christian invention that the sceptics found difficult of digestion. A method that received an equal amount of Christian homage was that of lying about the unbeliever. Brutality in behavior was justified by untruthfulness in speech. The sceptic was so degraded in character that the suspension of considerations of justice and humanity in relation to him was justifiable. But this was a method that, clearly, could only be of use while the sceptic was a sociological rarity. When he became common, his peculiar mental make-up ceased to excite curiosity, and attention was directed to the many features he possessed in common with the best of his more credulous fellow citizens. And then the Churches were compelled to recognise him, not as a person to be forcibly suppressed, but as one who had to be met, and if vanquished, must be defeated, in sober and serious argument.

But while the necessity of meeting the sceptic with serious argument is often enough admitted, in practice it is not so often forthcoming. Frequently those who attack scepticism engage themselves in demolishing men of straw, or in advancing arguments that are almost too flimsy for recognition. For instance, a *Christian World* writer asks, "How has it happened, by what prodigious blunder has it come about, that the eager, intelligent, and growing cultured masses of the Western world have slipped away from our organised Christianity"—which is a rather ingenuous manner of hiding an unwelcome fact. The eager, intelligent, and cultured masses of the Western world have not merely slipped away from organised Christianity—that is, the Churches—they have, and are, slipping away from religion itself. Large numbers of the best brains in Europe have definitely given up all trust in fundamental religious beliefs, while a much larger number only retain them by modifications and reservations that rob them of all mental value.

Mr. J. E. Rattenbury, dealing with this topic in a recent issue of the *Methodist Times*, quotes "one of the greatest spiritual leaders of our age," who says, "Hardly a week passes over but someone tells me he is compelled to reject Christianity altogether,"—a statement that many other "spiritual leaders" could make with truth were they equally candid. Mr. Rattenbury's quotation is *à propos* of a letter he received from a young man telling him that the writer could no longer accept the Christian faith.

Mr. Rattenbury calls it "a sad letter," but one may assume that the recipient was much sadder than the sender. It is true, he says, the letter disclosed "a wistful longing for Christ," but preachers get in the habit of using such phrases without meaning anything in particular by them. But Mr. Rattenbury sits down and answers this letter, in the form of an article, and his answer is worth noting as an example of what a prominent preacher thinks is an effective demolition of the sceptical position.

This sad young man, it appears, wants facts, and Mr. Rattenbury reminds him that science is a "theory about facts"—a rather peculiar way of putting it, but it may pass. But so, it is argued, is God a theory, and "there are great facts explained by God as truly as any that are explained by evolution," while "the Christian theory of God explains more facts than any other theory yet propounded."

I do not know what is meant by science being a theory; science is a method, not a theory at all. But when we are told there are facts explained by God, one naturally asks, where are they? The uselessness of God as a hypothesis is clearly shown by the fact that every branch of positive knowledge has had to be cleansed of the idea of God before any progress could be made. Every one of the sciences is, each in its respective department, an ignoring—if not a negation—of the belief in Deity. A man simply cannot pursue a scientific study and allow the belief—or as Mr. Rattenbury calls it, the theory—of God to play an active part. He may, when he ceases to pursue his scientific labors, talk more or less vaguely about God; he may assert that he is studying the works of God; he may support this with the unscientific use of the whole vocabulary of religion; but while he is at work, God is pushed into the background. As a scientist, he ignores the being and activity of God as thoroughly as does the most pronounced Atheist. His use of God is confined to his unscientific moments, to satisfy his less rationalised emotions, to tickle the ears of the man in the street, or to please those of the man in the pulpit.

Now I invite Mr. Rattenbury to consider why this should be the case. In the search for the causes and conditions of all that happens, science ignores no likely possibility. The work of the man of science is one long round of experimentation. Theories of every conceivable kind are propounded, examined, and discussed. No theory and no experiment likely to yield the slightest result is ignored. Yet no scientific man in the world dare put before an audience of fellow workers the "theory of God" as explaining anything; scientific text-books ignore his existence, and in no laboratory in the world is it held that disbelief in God disqualifies a man in the smallest degree as a scientific investigator.

Why is this so? Is it not because "God" does not and cannot explain anything? The man who believes in a God knows no more about nature—other things equal—than the man who does not, and it often hinders him knowing as much. When the religious man has said "God does this," or "This is the work of God," he has said his say, his bolt is shot, and no one knows anything more about the subject than they did before the information was vouchsafed. Far from it explaining more facts, it does not explain any. It is a word indicating that we have reached the limits of our knowledge, a phrase used to conceal our impotence; it is, as Spinoza rightly called it, the asylum of the ignorant.

Mr. Rattenbury has one fact—at least he only cites one—in proof of his statement that the "theory of God" explains more facts than any other. This is conversion; and probably his being in the conversion business explains his thinking it of overwhelming importance. I call conversion a fact because I am not concerned to deny that people are conscious of some change in themselves, and that they attribute this change to God, or Christ, or the "Holy Spirit." As I have often pointed out, Free-thinkers do not deny the facts of religion; they merely explain them. And they are able to do this because they do not believe in them. The only man

who does understand religion is the one who does not believe in it. The man who believes it never understands it. It is like believing and understanding the performance of a clever conjuror.

People, says Mr. Rattenbury, are converted, "they are revolutionised." And he asks, "Why not take the Christian theory.....the view that those who have undergone the experience themselves take?" Well, but why should we take the Christian view? Or, to put the same question in another form, why should we accept a particular person's statement as absolute authority as to the cause of his feelings and dispositions? If a man says "I used to take a different view of life to what I now take, and feel towards certain things and certain people different to what I now feel," with certain reservations, he is an authority, so far. But when he goes further, and says what are the causes of this change, he is on very debatable ground. Another person is as likely to be in the right as he. We should not accept the average man as an absolute authority as to the cause of his physical states; why, then, should we accept his statements as final concerning the cause of his mental conditions?—really a much more difficult thing to understand.

Mr. Rattenbury says that apart from the Christian theory the change would not occur. The childishness of it! If Mr. Rattenbury means that the man who believes he can only be changed by the "power of Christ" would be unchanged were he convinced that no such influence would be exerted in his case, the statement may be true enough—although, I repeat, childish. But if he means that people are not changed for the better apart from the belief in Christ, then the reply is that the statement is simply untrue. People's character and conduct are being continually modified for better or worse by the influence of men and women, and quite apart from any "theory of God." I imagine that nearly all of us can count in our experience cases of men or women who have been induced by various human influences to alter their conduct for the better. The only distinction is that in these cases they are not dragged before the public, and held up by the professional evangelist as evidence of his triumphs, much as a Red Indian displays a line of scalps.

The sceptic will cheerfully admit that many people of a highly emotional nature, brought under the influence of a professional evangelist, or exposed to the contagion of a revival meeting, may receive a stimulus that will produce some change in conduct of a more or less permanent character. But this phenomenon is not confined to revivalism. How many people attend meetings on Socialism, or on a political subject, and are led to devote themselves to work which does at least lift them out of the narrow round of personal interests? The same kind of influence may cause others to devote themselves with equal intensity to the propaganda of Freethought. I do imagine that Mr. Rattenbury will claim that it is the power of Christ which causes people to devote themselves to the dissemination of Atheism. Nor can he well hold that the power of Christ is responsible for the other cases I have named. The truth is, that "conversion," when it is not pathological, is an extremely emotional instance of a phenomenon that is always taking place wherever men and women meet together. And it is Christian fanaticism, not unmingled with Christian cunning, that connects a phenomenon really of some sociological importance into a meaningless religious spectacle. C. COHEN.

The Absurdity of the Church's Claim.

THE emphatic phrase in the Churches and religious journals just now is, "Christ is risen," or "Our risen and ascended Lord." All the results of Criticism and the study of Comparative Religion are heroically ignored, and refuge is taken in pietistic ejaculations and dogmatic assertions. Some ineffably foolish utterances fell from the lips of preachers on Easter

Sunday, and one pities the people who are still sufficiently credulous to receive them as if they were eternal truths. When one reverend gentleman oracularly declares that there is absolutely no doubt about the resurrection of Jesus, and another, that it has never been disputed, one is tempted to conclude that, after all, there is no truth in the old saying that the world moves. Is not Dr. Clifford aware that the very nation from which Jesus sprang has never believed in his resurrection? The Jews have consistently declined to accept the Four Gospels as historical documents and worship Jesus as their risen Lord. Mr. Dinsdale Young may entertain no doubt about the Resurrection; but thousands of his compatriots, and not a few professing Christians, firmly believe that it never occurred. This popular Wesleyan minister belongs to the strictest sect of orthodox believers, to whom the Bible is an infallible book and the empty tomb a verifiable fact; but when he avers that "it would be difficult to find in history any event more amply and widely proved" than the alleged rising of Jesus, he simply presents us with an instance of the absolute unreasonableness of the faith he so confidently holds. It is not too much to say that the history of Christianity itself furnishes a most ample proof that the Christian faith is utterly false.

In Romans i. 4 we read that Jesus "was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." That is to say, his Divinity was proved by his resurrection, and by nothing else without it. To surrender the resurrection is, therefore, synonymous with renouncing Christianity, as Paul so clearly points out in his memorable resurrection-chapter. That was the view held by all New Testament writers, and it has been the view cherished by the orthodox Church in all ages. Forty years ago the late Canon Liddon spoke thus:—

"A denial, let us mark it well, of the literal Resurrection of the Human Body of Jesus involves nothing less than an absolute and total rejection of Christianity. All orthodox Churches, all the great heresies, even Socinianism, have believed in the Resurrection of Jesus. The literal Resurrection of Jesus was the cardinal fact upon which the earliest preachers of Christianity based their appeal to the Jewish people. St. Paul, writing to a Gentile Church, expressly makes Christianity answer with its life for the literal truth of the Resurrection." (*Our Lord's Divinity*, p. 233.)

According to the New Testament and the teaching of the orthodox Church in all ages, then, it follows that, if Jesus was raised from the dead, he is thereby declared to be the Son of God, a Divine Being, clothed with the attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. Now, his resurrection, having established his proper Deity, exalts his death and makes it effectual as an atonement for the sins of the whole world. The Savior of the world, thus raised from the dead, possesses all power and authority in heaven and on earth; and since he is as loving as he is powerful, his sole object is to save the world from all its sins and make it holy and happy. Has he accomplished that glorious, redemptive work? Preaching at St. Paul's, London, on the occasion of the one thousand nine hundred and tenth anniversary of his alleged resurrection, the Bishop of London is reported to have spoken thus:—

"There was much to depress a man morally in London life. It was not merely the shocking things which were done by those who should be the loving children of God, not only the callous betrayal of innocent blood—he had known two terrible cases lately—but the steady, relentless pressure of the worldly world, which was so trying. Men and women in what was called society were very much afraid of taking a decided stand for Christianity, and the young men and young women got dragged down to the level of the people who happened to surround them. It was often a sad question to ask what happened in after life to the confirmation candidates in the West-end of London, or to the boys confirmed in our public schools. How far had they stood up in after life against the influence of their world?"

Now, those words of the Bishop, if they mean anything at all, are a confession either that Christ

never left his tomb or that, if he did, he must have been sleeping soundly ever since. But inasmuch as a Divine Being can neither slumber nor sleep, we are shut up to the only other conclusion, that the resurrection story is a pure myth. A London such as its Bishop depicts, an un-Christianised Christendom, keeping the peace merely by means of its armies and navies and police-forces, a whole world lying "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity" in this year of grace,—this demonstrates, so far as such a fact can be demonstrated, that no Omnipotent World-Savior ever rose triumphant out of Joseph's tomb.

Mr. Young said "it would be difficult to find in history any event more amply and widely proved" than the resurrection of the Son of God on the third day. The same thing has been said millions of times before; but the reverend gentleman must admit that a dogmatic assertion like that possesses no evidential value whatever, and can carry conviction to no thoughtful person. He must also admit that reports of a resurrection recorded in four or more documents are no proof that such an event actually transpired, and that the continued existence of an institution called the Church, said to have such an event as its foundation-stone, cannot be adduced as evidence of its objective reality. Had there been a risen Lord, it is absolutely certain that there would have been no Church such as history delineates. The truth is that the Church itself is the most irrefutable argument against the resurrection. Fancy saying of a Divine Being, in relation to such an institution, that—

"From heaven he came and sought her
To be his holy Bride;
With his own blood he bought her
And for her life he died."

Surely not even Mr. Young, knowing her history, would point to the Church and say, "She is the all-conclusive, supreme evidence that our dear Redeemer shattered the bonds of death and became the Prince of Life." Why, if he existed, his first act would be to disown her and forbid her the use of his name as a label. Nay, he would abolish her, and claim the whole world as his promised inheritance by setting all things right in it without delay.

Now, when the Church is asked to explain why the glowing prophecies of the New Testament concerning the glorious triumph and reign of Christ on earth have not been fulfilled, she begins at once to flounder in a continent of contradictions and absurdities. She says: "He might have done the work without me, but he has graciously chosen me as his instrument, and as I am at best but an imperfect and inadequate organ, the saving efficacy of his love is commensurate with my capacity for expressing it." She boasts of the unlimited power and irresistible love of her Lord, and yet represents him as hopelessly imprisoned within, and absurdly restricted in his activity by, herself. It is a case of the mountain bringing forth a mouse. God loves Cardiff, for example, with an infinite, eternal, and irresistible love, and would have won it to himself and to individual and civic righteousness of conduct ages ago had it not been that he had covenanted with his Church to operate on the population only through her instrumentality. The result is that Cardiff is still, to a very large extent, an unconverted place. Numerous special attempts have been made to enable the Lord to save it. Christ has always had many ambassadors in the town, and they have been working with all their might to win it, but to very little avail. Every now and then some minister extraordinary, a sort of spiritual plenipotentiary, has been invited to lead the Church in a grand assault on the town. Each of them arrived when the Church in Cardiff was supposed to be exceptionally full of the Holy Ghost, and after she had besought the Lord for weeks to bare his arm and display his power through her. Now it was the Rev. John McNeill, now Dr. Torrey, now Gipsy Smith, and now Evan Roberts who served as the Lord's mouthpiece-in-chief, and there was a great

noise, a nerve-shattering excitement, a deafening blare of trumpets, and when the results were declared it was said, "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes." Well, those special instruments of heaven's saving grace have all come and gone, and some of them more than once; and yet Cardiff is not saved, not yet won, for the blessed Savior. But the Church of Cardiff is determined to give the Spirit at least one more chance, and two Americans—Dr. Chapman and Mr. Charles Alexander—have just been engaged to conduct a six weeks' mission in the town.

Is it not beyond controversy that the Church's claim would be an insufferable insult to the risen Savior if he existed, and is, from every point of view, the most ludicrously illogical and false claim ever put forth? To impartial students it is as plain as a pikestaff that the success or failure of a Church is wholly dependent on the ability or the stupidity of those who have the management of it in charge. If the minister, for example, is deficient in eloquence and other magnetic qualities, the society languishes and dies; but if he possesses brilliant gifts, and knows how to use them, it flourishes like a green bay-tree, and becomes a power in the community. Its achievements, even at its highest and best, are such as can be satisfactorily accounted for without any reference to supernatural agency. No preacher has ever accomplished anything that transcended human capacity. He who contends that he delivers messages entrusted to him by a Supreme Being is merely making a fool of himself—as great a fool as the man who has the audacity to assert in the twentieth century that the resurrection of Jesus has never been disputed. There never was a time when it was not disputed, and the signs of the times point to the advent of a day when not one believer in it can be found.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Narratives in Genesis.

THE EXPLOITS OF JUDAH.

THE composite Bible history of Joseph (Gen. xxxvii. to l.) is interrupted by a Yahvistic narrative relating to some of the doings of Judah, the reputed fourth son of the mythical Jacob (Gen. xxxviii.). The unconventional writer of this chapter says: "And it came to pass at that time that Judah went down from his brethren.....and saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua; and he took her, etc." This lady in due course presented him with three sons—Er, Onan, and Shelah. When the eldest of these sons had reached manhood "Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord slew him." Judah, who was extremely zealous for the carrying out of the laws of Moses, then gave Tamar to his second son Onan, in compliance with the command afterwards delivered to the Israelites in Deuteronomy (xxv. 5):—

"If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no son, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall..... take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her."

How Judah came to have such an accurate knowledge of the laws of Moses—which were not given until several centuries after his time—is one of those things that must for ever remain shrouded in mystery. It is quite certain, however, that he did know them; for he uses the identical words employed in the passage in Deuteronomy. Possibly, the fact that the pious Yahvist writer was acquainted with the laws in that book may throw some light upon the matter.

Returning to the sacred narrative, Judah's son Onan appears to have known nothing of the Mosaic legislation, and so, though compelled to receive Tamar as a wife, he did not perform the duty indi-

cated. This was displeasing to "the Lord," who thereupon "slew him also"—the god no doubt considering that if Onan did not know that such a regulation would one day be made, he ought to have asked his father, who did know. Thus perished Judah's second son for lack of foreknowledge. From this account we learn that in the eyes of the god Yahveh an offence committed against the laws of Moses, even if done in ignorance of those laws, was more heinous than the murder of all the men and boys of a whole city (Gen. xxxiv. 25).

After the death of his second son, Judah said to his daughter-in-law: "Remain a widow in thy father's house till Shelah my son be grown up." With this half promise Tamar had to be satisfied, and waited patiently for her third husband. But when "in process of time" Judah's daughter-in-law perceived that "Shelah was grown up, and she was not given unto him to wife," she laid aside her widow's weeds, "covered herself with her veil and wrapped herself," after the manner of religious prostitutes amongst the Israelites and Canaanites prior to the Exile, "and sat in the gate of Enaim." Here what she had planned to bring about happened. Her father-in-law, Judah, who was working in the neighborhood, saw her, and, mistaking her for what she appeared to be—a harlot connected with some local fane—he had intercourse with her, with the result that in due time the neglected Tamar gave birth to twins, Perez and Zerah.

When it was told Judah that his daughter-in-law was "with child by whoredom," that pious patriarch was filled with righteous indignation, and, in his zeal for the laws of Moses, declared that she should be punished in accordance with the law laid down in Leviticus xxi. 9. "Bring her forth," he commanded, "and let her be burnt." When, however, he learned that he was the author of her disgrace, he was constrained to confess that she had been more righteous than he; for he had not carried out the command given to the Israelites by Moses to give her his third son Shelah for a husband.

Speaking of the prostitution practised in the worship of the gods and goddesses of ancient Canaan, Professor Sayce says:—

"We find two divinities only in Canaan who can be called goddesses in the true sense of the word. These are: Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Northern Canaanites, and Asherah, the goddess of the Southern Canaanites.....The religious duty of the people of Canaan consisted in winning the favor of the gods or deprecating their resentment; and this could only be effected by sacrifice and offering, and the strict performance of the ritual.....Hence the prostitution which disfigured the worship of the goddesses of Canaan, as well as of the sun-god Baal himself. Eunuchs, and worse than eunuchs, served in the temples; the foulest acts were performed in the name of religion, and the unmarried maidens were required to sacrifice their honor to the gods. It was all performed in cold blood, as a religious duty, not as a gratification of the passions."

The foregoing statements apply to the Israelites (prior to the Exile) as well as to the so-called "Canaanites." Ashtoreth was the Ishtar of the Assyrians, the goddess of love and war; Asherah was the goddess of birth and growth, and was symbolised by an upright cone of wood or stone called an Asherah. The "unmarried maidens" and the "worse than eunuchs" that served in the Jewish places of worship and sacrifice—known respectively by the names *kedeshah* and *kadesh*—are both referred to in Deuteronomy xxiii. 17, 18. The passage reads:—

"There shall be no harlot [*kedeshah*] of the daughters of Israel, neither shall there be a sodomite [*kadesh*] of the sons of Israel. Thou shalt not bring the hire of a harlot or the wages of a dog into the house of the Lord thy God," etc.

These horrible practices are forbidden, it is true; but it should be remembered that the Book of Deuteronomy was unknown until the eighteenth year of the reign of king Josiah (B.C. 621). The writer of the book desired to make many reforms in connection with the temple service, and amongst

others to abolish the two customs named, to effect which object he thought it no sin to prohibit them in the name of "the Lord." Moreover, good king Josiah, after hearing the passage read, "brought the Asherah from the house of the Lord.....and burned it at the brook Kedron.....And he brake down the tents of the sodomites that were in the house of the Lord, where the women wove hangings for the Asherah" (2 Kings xxiii. 6, 7). These women, there can be no doubt, were in the temple for another purpose, and merely filled up their time, when not in request, in making hangings to drape the wooden symbol of their goddess.

There cannot be the smallest doubt that during the periods of Jewish history in which we find it stated that the people served one or the other of the goddesses named, the religious prostitution which formed part of the service of those deities was practised. These periods will be seen by the following:—

Judg. ii. 13.—The Israelites "served Baal and the Ashtaroeth," etc.

Judg. iii. 7.—The Israelites "served the Baalim and the Asheroth," etc.

Judg. vi. 28.—"the altar of Baal was broken down, and the Asherah was cut down that was upon it."

Judg. viii. 33.—The Israelites "went a whoring after the Baalim," etc.

Judg. x. 6.—The Israelites "served the Baalim and the Ashtaroeth," etc.

1 Sam. vii. 4.—The Israelites "did put away the Baalim and the Ashtaroeth," etc.

1 Kings xi. 5 and 33.—"Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians," etc.

1 Kings xvi. 33.—"And Ahab made the Asherah," etc.

2 Kings xiii. 6.—"There remained the Asherah also in Samaria."

2 Kings xvii. 10.—The kings of Israel "set up pillars and Asherim upon every high hill and under every green tree."

2 Kings xxi. 7.—Manasseh king of Judah "set the graven image of Asherah, which he had made, in the house of the Lord."

These passages take us from the earliest period of the Judges (B.C. 1450) to the eighteenth year of Josiah (B.C. 621), the latter date being only thirty-three years prior to the Exile.

To the foregoing we may add the following ambiguous passages:—

Exod. xxxviii. 8.—"the serving women which served at the door of the Tabernacle."

1 Sam. ii. 22.—"the women that did service at the door of the Tabernacle."

Ezek. viii. 14.—At "the gate of the house of the Lord..... behold, there sat the women weeping for Tammuz" (the Syrian Adonis).

When it is borne in mind that in the laws and regulations relating to the Tabernacle and Temple women had no place, the nature of "the service" referred to in the foregoing passages can have but one interpretation. Again, the prophet Hosea, speaking in the name of "the Lord" (prior to the reign of Josiah), says to his countrymen (iv. 13-14):—

"Your daughters commit whoredom, and your daughters-in-law commit adultery.....The people themselves go apart with whores, and they sacrifice with the harlots" (*kedeshahs*).

The Hebrew word for the ordinary harlot was *zonah*; that for the temple harlot *kedeshah*, the latter signifying "one consecrated." It thus appears beyond the smallest possibility of doubt that during nearly the whole of the Old Testament times "the unmarried maidens were required to sacrifice their honor to the gods," and did so. Moreover, the story in Genesis sheds further light upon the subject—not, of course, with respect to the supposed days of Judah, but to the prostitution in the time of the Yahvist writer. To personate a "kedeshah" Tamar "covered herself with a veil and wrapped herself," and then "sat at Enaim by the wayside." Judah mistook her for a *kedeshah* "because she had covered her face," which during his conversation with her he did not seek to uncover. It would seem, then, that the unmarried damsels when performing their religious duty kept their faces covered, so that their identity might be concealed—a custom which made

it possible for Tamar to deceive her father-in-law, as narrated in the Bible fiction. And here the question arises as to what was done with all the illegitimate children begotten in this way. For answer, I think, we have but to turn to the command relating to the sacrifice of the first-born in the Book of the Covenant (Exod. xxii. 29). The child begotten in the service of one of the gods was the first-born, and as such was devoted to the god, and made to "pass through the fire." Prostitution in the name of religion and the sacrifice of the first-born to the gods appear to have gone together: when the first fell into disuse, the second ceased to be practised.

ABRACADABRA.

Acid Drops.

Mr. George Grossmith is a pleasant enough entertainer, and we are glad to know he has been fairly successful in life. But we are unable to understand how he imagines that nature has endowed him with any sort of right to be insolent to a man like Ingersoll. We gather from a newspaper notice of a little autobiographical book that Mr. Grossmith has written, that he once stayed at the same hotel with Ingersoll "the famous Atheist lecturer" in America. Irving happened to be also staying at the same hotel, and Ingersoll began what Mr. Grossmith calls "chipping" the great English actor about his pronunciation, which everybody knows was open to a good deal of criticism, as far as his stage voice was concerned, though his voice off the stage was a very different matter. Mr. Grossmith appears to have thought that it was his special business to take care of Irving, or to "take down" the "famous Atheist lecturer." So he said to Ingersoll:—

"You may be right—but you are not infallible. You said just now it's twelve o'clock (with the 'r' left out). You also said that you had received a shark (with the long 'a'). I suppose you mean 'clock' and 'shock.' Now, will you allow me to say Mr. Ingersoll, that I don't look upon Americans as fools. The result is that Irving's theatre was crammed to suffocation, my little hall was crowded, and I hear that you have played to a nearly empty house. 'No,' I muttered, 'the Americans are not fools.'"

"My exit from the room," says Mr. Grossmith, "was polite but effective." Was it? His whole behavior, if he correctly reports it, was typical of the worst style of the Englishman abroad. He doesn't appear to have had even a glimpse of the mental and moral size of the man he was talking to. On that point Americans are pretty well agreed, whether they accept or reject Ingersoll's opinions. They would all regard Mr. Grossmith as very small fry in comparison with "Pagan Bob," who, by the way, did not "play" and was not an "entertainer," but an apostle of ideas. And they would all smile at the reference to Ingersoll's "nearly empty house." It is well known that he could fill the largest halls or theatres wherever he went. Indeed, the baser sort of Christians made the fact a reproach to him, by declaring that all he lectured for was the "big receipts." Just as if he couldn't have made far more in politics, or even by sticking to the law. He had the pick of fat legal cases wherever he liked, and when he cared to stand on the Republican platform during the presidential elections, as he did when a principle he valued was at stake—and gratuitously, for he was not a hireling patriot—he was easily first in the oratory and acclaimed by the greatest crowd of listeners. Ingersoll, in short, was the biggest one-man institution in America. Mr. Grossmith is—well, simply Mr. Grossmith.

Self-Denial Week has brought the Salvation Army less than it did last year. But £69,000 is still a big sum, and cute old William Booth bursts forth in the following fashion to the men and women over whom he wields autocratic authority:—

"Comrades and friends, I send you my blessing. Once more you have satisfied me that you are made of the right stuff. Especially do I feel this about our comrades in Wales, who, in spite of a dark and anxious cloud hanging over tens of thousands of homes, are only a few hundred pounds below last year's splendid offering."

What a veteran "swanker" William Booth is! He pretends that the Salvationists have contributed that £69,000 themselves, whereas they have begged the bulk of it from other people. The money was collected at large from the British public. Systematic house to house visitation was made by Booth's mendicants. They called at our own house for a donation. And many of the visiting collectors were Salvation Army officers, who are, of course, paid for their work. Surely it is a very odd form of Self-Denial.

Amateur philosophers, like the late Samuel Laing and the late Marquis of Queensberry, were so far taken in by William Booth that, although they were Agnostics, they sent him cheques for his grand imposture known as the "Darkest England" scheme. Real philosophers, who were also Agnostics, like Huxley and Spencer, were not deceived. Huxley wrote a hostile criticism of the Salvation Army, which he called Corybantic Christianity, and especially of the "Social" wing. Spencer classed it amongst the agencies that were leading to what he called the "rebarbarisation" of modern society. After referring to the military displays of the State Army as "exercising the combative feelings," Spencer said that—"Perpetual excitements of the destructive passions which, in the *War Cry* and in the hymns of General Booth's followers, have made battle and blood and fire familiar, and under the guise of fighting against evil that thrust into the background the gentler emotions, have done the like." There is more in this observation than most people would imagine.

The Salvation Army defenders against Mr. Manson in the *Aberdeen Evening Gazette* get worse and worse. One of them—anonymous, of course!—is a perfect Yahoo. He says that the Army officials don't "dispute matters with braying asses or fools." He calls Mr. W. P. Adamson, a Freethinking correspondent, a Cynical Agnostic, and then defines a Cynic as one who has adopted "All the Modern Forms of Depravity." "I have written that with capitals," he adds, "so that you may ponder over it." We are rather surprised at the editor's allowing such controversial ordure to appear. Perhaps it was not meant as an act of kindness to the writer; still, a line ought to be drawn somewhere in public discussions.

The dear *Daily News* wouldn't give two lines to a Free-thought meeting, however large or important, but it gave half a column the other day to a silly, insignificant British-Hebrew Church, which is alleged to have been started by Joseph of Arimathea among Hebrew exiles at Glastonbury. We congratulate our pious contemporary on its deep interest in freak religions.

The British-Hebrews have one true note about them. They expect "the establishment of a Messianic kingdom on earth in which the Jewish race will be predominant"—if the Scotch don't get in front of them.

By the way, the *Daily News* sent a special correspondent to report the Mount Etna eruption. This gentleman, whoever he is, was much impressed by the awful spectacle. But it did not prompt him to pious reflections. Rather the contrary. "Never and nowhere better than now and here," he wrote, "can a man feel how much he is at the mercy of brute matter." It is a wonder that the editor did not blue-pencil that impious sentence.

Lord Hugh Cecil must be a welcome figure in the House of Commons—for the sake of variety. In his speech on the House of Lords he went into pious raptures over that God-appointed old institution—which, like Lord Hugh Cecil himself, is fit for exhibition in an archaeological museum.

We have always said that religion is inevitably behind date, because it is a consecration of the past, with all its errors and vices. We are happy to see our view supported, however unconsciously, by the Rev. J. Scott Lidget, who has just declared that the object of the Social Service Union is to "bring the social and philanthropic methods of the Church up to date." This move, of course, is not inspired by the Holy Ghost, but by the progress of Sociology.

Nonconformists support what they call "Simple Bible Teaching." They want State funds to be used for this form of religious teaching, but for no other. It is *their* form of religious instruction, and if it isn't good enough for Catholics, Anglicans, Jews, and even Freethinkers, it ought to be. Yet when State funds are to be used for other religious work than that approved by themselves (*that's* all right, of course), the Nonconformists are capable of howling like hungry wolves. There is actually a Committee of Nonconformists in the House of Commons, and a deputation from that body (consisting of Sir George White, Mr. Hay Morgan, Mr. H. J. Wilson, and the Rev. Silvester Horne) recently waited on the Prime Minister to protest against the Legislative Council of Lagos being allowed to build a church at a cost of £5,000 in connection with the Church of England, and to pay a chaplain a yearly salary. Let the church be built and consecrated, but don't pay a chaplain, and let it be used by all religious denominations. What they object to is not State aid to religion, but State aid which Nonconformists don't share. Their motto is "Fair division of the spoils."

The religious question is coming to the front again in a new form in Ireland. Mr. William O'Brien is pitching into Mr. Redmond for standing in the way of Home Rule for Ireland by maintaining the old spirit of hatred between Catholic and Protestant. Speaking at Cork, which he represents in Parliament, on Thursday evening, March 31, Mr. O'Brien is reported to have uttered the following sentiments:—

"They (the O'Brienites) believed that the easy and only way in their lifetime towards self-government was that they should gradually and patiently go every reasonable length to overcome the last remaining apprehensions as to how their fellow-countrymen would fare under a native Irish Government. The moment they convinced the Protestant minority that their position in Irish government would be one of honor and power and not one of toleration all their difficulties with England would be at an end as well.

So far from doing anything to smooth away the evil passions and rancor which separated them from their Protestant fellow-countrymen, their opponents' idea was to accentuate and embitter differences by shouting 'Orange dogs!' 'Black-blooded Cromwellians!' and by threatening to put them down with a strong hand; by receiving every man of the stamp of Lord Castletown or Lord Dunraven or Lord Rossmore who came over to them with suspicion, insult, and injustice.

But, worse than that, they turned the Irish Parliamentary party and the whole national movement into the mere puppets of a detestable sectarian secret society, whose avowed object was to set up a system of Catholic Orangeism even more inexcusable than its Protestant forerunner."

This is a striking novelty in Irish politics, and we are delighted to see it. We have always said—not so much from a political as from our own special point of view—that Home Rule would not mean Rome Rule, but quite the contrary. Every little bog-trotting Irish priest is now able to pose as a "pathriot," and he will always be able to do it while Catholic and Nationalist are practically convertible terms. He will lose that advantage directly Ireland gets Home Rule. This is so obvious that every Freethinker should see it "in once." The Catholic priests see it clearly enough. What they want is not Home Rule, but a perpetual agitation in favor of Home Rule.

The death of Canon Drew recalls the late Mr. Gladstone's waste of his fortune in constructing what he regarded as a dam against the deluge of unbelief. Canon Drew was the warden of St. Deiniol's Hostel and Library, which Mr. Gladstone founded at a cost of £40,000, the nation providing £10,000 for the building, and the Gladstone family another £10,000 for a students' residence. Young men go there to study Mr. Gladstone's fossil theology. The G. O. M. was convinced that the future of the human race depended on what he called "the great question of belief," and he got together a multitude of books dealing with it. Most of them will be as dead as doornails in another ten years.

That Christianity is dying is becoming more apparent every day. We read in *Light* that the losses of the Protestant Church in Germany "are persistent and severe: at the average rate of three hundred a day in Berlin alone, says one recorder." "During the past three years," we are told, "seventeen thousand working people have left the Church for good." *Light* regretfully admits that "similar desertions" are constantly taking place in this country. Zeal for foreign missions is rapidly becoming a thing of the past, and all the Societies are weeping bitterly over the necessity of curtailing their operations abroad in consequence of the lamentably diminished contributions of the Churches at home. The truth is that knowledge is superseding faith, speedily in some countries, tardily in others, yet surely in all.

The *Guardian*, in giving its annual statement of the proportion of communicants to population, says that the results are "thoroughly unsatisfactory." "As the population goes up the percentage of communicants goes down." All the Churches are in the same position, Nonconformist and Established alike. One Nonconformist paper, in dealing with the decline in church attendance, questions the wisdom of making figures public. The assumption is that a knowledge of the decline encourages other members to fall away. There may be some truth in this, but no concealment of the decay of the Churches can arrest the movement. It simply fosters a kind of Dutch courage by shutting its eyes to the dangers surrounding it.

Canon Scott Holland, in a recent sermon, remarked on the "terrible power of religion to smother the dawning conscience," and declared that it confounds man's conscience "by obliterating the distinction between good and evil." Surprise at these sentiments from one in Canon Scott Holland's position will be diminished by learning that he

was referring to non-Christian religions. Yet the statements are absolutely true of all religions. There is simply no exception. Every religion distorts the moral sense by setting up artificial standards of judgment and by erecting unnecessary barriers between people. With Christianity we see the effects of this in the treatment of Catholics by Protestants, of Protestants by Catholics, and the treatment of unbelievers by both. In these cases the normal laws of moral intercourse break down utterly. Lying becomes a permissible practice, a sane judgment an impossibility. Non-religious life provides numerous checks that serve to regulate and educate man's feelings and intelligence. Religion has no such check; it harks back to a more primitive condition of things, and appeals to a more primitive order of emotions. Hence it is that religion always, and necessarily, lags behind the best secular thought and feeling of any generation!

Some people do not believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Many attempts have been, and are being made, to convince them of its truth, but with the only apparent result that the would-be converters often becomes the converted. To the rescue comes our irrepensible Bishop of London, and he provides an argument that is quite characteristic. "How did Sunday come if there was no resurrection of Jesus Christ?" he asks. Now there is a poser to put before the sceptic. The fact that Christians have kept Sunday as a holy day proves, to the Bishop, that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. It is conclusive. And, presumably, the fact that people kept Sunday as a holy day long before Christianity was heard of is proof that they knew the resurrection was going to happen.

The Bishop of London drops marks of ignorance about him wherever he goes. Lately he spoke at a meeting of the Smithfield Mission and referred to the Emperor Julian, who tried to stamp Christianity out, and who yet had to exclaim when dying, "O Galilean, thou hast conquered!" That a Bishop, at this time of day, should repeat that legend as historical truth, is perfectly scandalous. And one would think from "tried to stamp out Christianity" that Julian was a persecutor who imprisoned, tortured, and murdered the Christians, whereas he did nothing of the kind, but allowed them full freedom of worship.

The good thing—some might say the bad thing; it depends upon the point of view—about the Bishop of London is that *his* Christianity is usually in evidence. In another sermon from that wherein the above sentence appears, he regretted that the belief in the Devil was dying out. He had been told that in a recent play, when the Evil One appeared on the stage, the audience greeted him with laughter. This, we agree, is most disrespectful, not to say unthankful, behavior, and we appreciate the good Bishop's indignation. The Bishop is under no doubts on this point. He says, "I am an out-and-out believer in the Devil's existence," and adds that nothing suits the Devil better than that people should forget his existence. We salute so robust a belief in so decadent an age. And we agree with the Bishop when he says that the Bible teaching is based upon the actual existence of the Devil. There is no more reason for reducing the Devil to a symbol than there is for treating the Deity in the same fashion. And certainly, so far as the history of Christianity is concerned, the former has been the more serviceable of the two. The charm of the Christian heaven consisted chiefly in the fact that there was a Christian hell to keep out of; and between God and the Devil it was only the latter that made the former attractive. And when one was given up, a great many saw little reason for retaining the other. Brimstone and treacle may be a healthy mixture, but leave out the brimstone and the medicinal value of the remaining ingredient sinks to zero.

The Bishop of Ripon tells a story of a young man who declined to be confirmed because, as a Christian, he must not tell a lie. The scruple reflects credit on the young man in question, but it is a consideration that has certainly not played a very strong part in Christian history. And if all the Christians who do tell lies were to leave the Churches, how many would there be left?

St. Paul tackled the dangerous question of women's hair. He was very severe on those who wore it short. Evidently he was a brave man. And a brave man, too, is the curé of the church of Sacy le Grand, a fashionable village in the Oise Department of France. He has meddled with the ladies' hats, which, just now, is worse than touching their hair. At the service on Easter Sunday, the old priest was "alarmed at the size of the ladies' hats, which prevented the people at the bottom of the church from seeing anything of the ceremony at the altar." So he plainly told them

after the sermon, a few days later, that the church was not an exhibition of fashionable attire, and that they would have to come to church in smaller hats or bareheaded. Of course, the ladies decided not to obey the curé's order, and have sent a protest to the Archbishop of Beauvais. Poor Catholic Church! It has fared badly in its fight with the men of France. Will it now go to pieces altogether in fighting the ladies? After weathering so many storms, is it going to be wrecked over the question of feminine headgear?

Mr. Foote, after doing twelve months for the artificial crime of "blasphemy" in 1883-1884, called our English prison system "an organised imbecility." But nobody took any notice of him. He was only a wicked Freethinker. After a lapse of more than a quarter of a century all sorts and conditions of "advanced" men and women are taking the same view. It is now being set forth in a popular play, and it is powerfully presented in the new number of the *Hibbert Journal* in an article entitled "A World of the Dead." Mr. Foote's great "wickedness" consisted in his being a pioneer.

The Rev. Mr. Belden is laboring under a complete delusion. In "An Appeal to Working Men of all Classes," delivered at Banbury, he says that "religion alone can guarantee freedom"; but the most notorious fact in history is that religion has been the sworn enemy of liberty. Religion has never tolerated anything but itself; and as soon as it broke up into sects, these instantly began to persecute one another. They are doing so to-day as vigorously and bitterly as ever. Religion and freedom have always been, and are now, as far apart as the poles.

Mr. Belden endeavors to lead working men astray on another point. He assures them that "religion alone can ensure love." History gives the direct lie to this statement also. Surely, cruel persecution is not an expression of love. How do Christians love their enemies? By vulgarly slandering them behind their backs, by maliciously flinging the filthiest mud at them, by deliberately lying about their motives and their objects, by wickedly inventing and insidiously circulating false reports concerning their past, in order to discredit their present, conduct. And yet Mr. Belden asserts that Christ constrains his follower to say, "How beautiful my brother is!" We happen to know, however, that the phrase "How beautiful my brother is," is a quotation from a writer who is by no means a Christian.

"A man may call himself unbeliever," says "J. B.," of the *Christian World*, "until he is black in the face. He is simply proclaiming his own absurdity. He begins by believing and ends with it." The chief fault we have to find with this sentiment is that it is addressed to Freethinkers, as though they need the instruction. He should, as a matter of fact, instruct his fellow-Christians on this point. Freethinkers have always pointed out that belief and unbelief are not contradictory things, but two aspects of the same thing. Every belief implies disbelief in its opposite, and *vice versa*. The man who is a believer in Christianity is an unbeliever in other religions, just as a man who disbelieves in a flat earth proclaims his belief that its shape is of some other description. Freethought criticism has been largely based on this truth. Thus belief in the miraculous is, we have always insisted, disbelief in invariable causation, and unbelief in the necessity of a supernatural sanction for morals is only the reverse side of a profound belief in the sanity and health of normal human nature. The question really at issue is always what are special beliefs and disbeliefs, a question to which Christians rarely address themselves. They prefer demonstrating the uselessness of unbelief, and then assuming that they have demonstrated the value of a special belief in Christian doctrines.

"J. B." is a constant example of this question-begging and word-befogging practice. Science, he says, is based on faith just as much as is theology. People who do not befool themselves with words are at no loss to distinguish between the faith that encourages a scientific worker to pursue his investigations and the faith of which so much is made by the religious. The one is a product of experience, and simply expresses the belief that the future will, in substance, resemble the past. The other is a faith that is incapable of verification, and to which experience is always more or less in opposition. When a scientific thinker says he has faith in certain formulæ, or when a man says he has faith in the future, he does no more than express his belief that the forces, causes, conditions, or methods that have been active and productive of good in the past will continue to operate in the future. When the Christian uses the word "faith" he means little more than mere credulity, and that never has and never will be productive of real benefit to anyone. "J. B.'s" faith in particular would seem to lie in the ability

of mere words to do duty for ideas, and in all probability his particular audience justifies him in this respect.

John D. Rockefeller, that multi-millionaire and good Christian, has for years been buying up property round his private estate in "Sleepy Hollow." He has thus been able to destroy hundreds of dwellings. What becomes of the dwellers does not trouble him. His estate now extends five miles in every direction. If he lived long enough—this man of lovely nobility of soul, according to the Rev. Parasite Aked—he would probably live alone on this globe, except for his funkeys—who might then settle his hash and start on their own account.

The Tsar has sworn to respect and maintain the liberties of Finland. He is now destroying them. Let us give the pious Autocrat of Holy Russia his proper names. He is a crowned perjurer and assassin. Perhaps it would have been enough to call him a Christian monarch. "All power is of God," the New Testament says. Yes, even the Tsar's.

Rev. Archibald Brown, the minister of Spurgeon's Tabernacle, says that "death is only a tunnel." How does he know that? "A short rattle through the tunnel, and I come out on the Italian side of the Alps, the sunny side of the Alps," he exclaims. Yes, we have been through the Alpien tunnel and seen the sunny side, and we know many others who have done the same. But has Mr. Brown ever been through the tunnel he calls death and seen the other side, or did he ever meet anyone who had done so, or is he merely romancing?

We understood that Jesus did all his miracles himself, but we seem to have been mistaken. We saw a volume in a theological bookseller's window the other day labelled "The Miracles of Jesus: by Various Authors." It was a syndicate then, after all.

Mr. J. Ramsey Macdonald, addressing a Socialist meeting at Queen's Hall recently, referred quite superfluously to Jesus Christ as "Our Master." Who gave him the right to say "Our Master"? Not the Socialists, we fancy. We advise Mr. Macdonald to leave that sort of thing to Mr. Campbell. It is the latter's speciality,—we might say his trade.

"The Search for the Real Jesus" is a heading in the *New Theology* weekly. Why not search for the real Bluebeard or the real Jack the Giant Killer? The quest would be just as promising—and just as useful.

They have been praying for Mr. Campbell's health at the City Temple. If he had died, it would have meant nothing to the efficacy of prayer. As he is getting better, the City Temple prayers are answered.

Rev. Dr. Powell, vicar of Bridgewater, has a simple explanation of the distaste religious people have for new ideas. He says that they came with a sense of shock, just as the learning of Nature's truths came as a shock to a child. The analogy does not strike us as happy. We have never known, nor ever heard of, children to whom the "learning of Nature's truths" came as a shock. On the contrary, children are intensely interested in acquiring information—as most adults know to their discomfort. Curiosity and interest are strongest with a healthy child, and they are equally strong with the healthy adult mind. In religion, new ideas produce a sense of shock, because here people are taught to regard them as dangerous, and are brought up to believe that any weakening of already acquired beliefs is an indication of moral or spiritual laxity. Hence the cramping of the mind by religious instruction, and the essentially unhealthy temper produced thereby.

Canon Scott-Holland informs his "beloved" that Paganism is still astir, that "it is within us, and within our civilisation." What an eloquent testimony to the triumph of Christ in Christendom. After nigh two millenniums of Christianity, one of Christ's own ambassadors has to admit that its success has been of a very doubtful character.

And yet, though thus admitting the practical failure of Christianity at home, the Canon urges his hearers to do their utmost to send it to Heathen lands. He also states that there are 138,000 university students "praying that the men and women chosen of God may, by God's mercy, be thrust out from these universities to answer the call for laborers in the wide fields abroad." Great are the miracles performed by these 138,000 university students. For one thing, they "hang the earth by the golden chain of prayer about the feet of God." Poor old earth, on what a slender, deceptive chain thy life depends!

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, April 10, Shoreditch Town Hall; at 7.30, "Christ and the Democracy."

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—April 10, Glasgow; 11, Falkirk.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND: 1910.—Previously acknowledged, £191 8s. Received since:—E. Kirton, 5s.; E. Adams, 10s.; Capt. G. B. Taylor, £2; H. Wyllie, £1; James and Mrs. Neate, £1; J. W., 10s. 6d.; A. E. Maddock, £2.

R. T. RUSHWORTH.—Your misfortunes seem to have been all due to Christianity and Christians. Glad you are so "pleased with the *Freethinker*."

LEABROOKS HUMANITARIAN SOCIETY writes: "We hope you will do well with the Easter Fund this year. We believe there are enough Freethinkers to place you above petty financial worries if they would only put themselves to the trouble of writing to you and sending what they can afford."

F. SHAW tells us that "Undoubtedly the *Freethinker* is the first paper in the country. Since I commenced to read it I have lost all taste for light reading, and look forward to Thursday morning each week as eagerly as some working men look forward to pay-day."

R. WALLIS.—Passed over to Miss Vance.

CHEETHAM HILL GIRL.—Our compliments and best wishes to you, whoever you are. We are always delighted to hear of, or from, Freethinkers of your sex. We make the surest headway in winning over women. The clergy know this as well as we do. Their Churches are mainly built on female ignorance and thoughtlessness. Thinking women, as wives and mothers, and even as daughters and sisters, would tumble all the Churches down sooner than we could do it. Ours is the march and fight through the desert; theirs is the taking possession of the Promised Land.

W. J. M.—Glad to hear from a recent convert won over by our friend Mr. W. Mann. It is a pity that all Freethinkers don't act as missionaries.

SIDNEY CLOWES.—You say the 3,000 shillings should "be easily realised," and we hope the rest of our readers agree with you, individually as well as collectively. But they mustn't think it too easy, and each leave the rest to do the contributing.

CAPT. G. B. TAYLOR, a stalwart "saint," having just arrived from "the other side of the world," hastens to wish us a happy new year and to forward his annual subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund. "I promised £1 a year," he says, "but I am enclosing £2, in the hope that others will go and do likewise. The amount ought to be £500 instead of £300. I fear it is a case of indifference with a good many Freethinkers, who feel safe themselves and let the devil take others; or, as we sometimes say on board ship, Haul the ladder up, Jack, I'm on board."

W. P. ADAMSON.—We have referred to the matter. Such an insolent ruffian is unworthy to clean Mr. Manson's boots. To answer such an adversary were worse than fighting with beasts at Ephesus.

E. ADAMS.—A woman's contribution is doubly welcome, for reasons which we have often given, and which we are sure you understand.

E. KIRTON.—You will see that we have turned it definitely into Shilling Month. We note your hope that "the rank and file will hurry up and do what they can."

K. C. C.—Keeping pretty well, thanks; but a bit tired.

R. YATES.—Glad you find this journal "a treat." We shall have to write at length on the State Church; a brief answer in this column is not enough.

ARTHUR BARTRAM.—Very pleased to hear from one we "named" fourteen years ago, and glad you are following in your father's footsteps.

F. W. WALSH.—Your "heart's warmest wishes go with it." Ours are always with you.

F. W. WHITEHOUSE.—You are good enough to say that luck to us is luck to the cause. We may add that luck to the cause is also luck to us.

J. D.—Glad you found the two lectures you heard at St. James's Hall a greater treat than you had anticipated. When that Freethought millionaire comes along we shall have a big hall every Sunday night, and have it filled. We note that you came from Gainsborough, which should be an eye-opener to some Londoners.

N.—Subscribers' names are safe enough with us.

P. BENTLEY.—There is a further reason. So few are ready to do the work that we and our colleagues are doing; what is more, so few are able to do it. That may sound vain; but it isn't; it is obvious.

R. CARLESS.—Have no fear. Freethought will go on all right.

C. WOODWARD.—It is one of the most famous Bible conundrums, and we were never good at them. The Christians say it means that Abraham foresaw the coming of Christ.

R. CLARKE.—Yes, we recollect. Do what you can for Freethought in your own way. Those who cannot subscribe as they wish can give themselves instead of money by doing the missionary work that lies in their power.

N. FINNEY.—Thanks for good wishes.

JOSEPH WAINWRIGHT.—A brave letter. No man can do impossibilities. Thanks.

JOSEPH BRYCE.—Mr. Foote is arranging to lecture at Newcastle shortly, perhaps early in May. He is none the worse for his visit to Glasgow, though the long journey is tiresome. He has to leave home at 9.30 in the morning to reach Glasgow at 10.30 at night—and he doesn't travel like General Booth, but third class, like the Scotchman, because there is no fourth. Thanks for a sight of your friend's letter.

JAMES NEATE.—Thanks for the list, which we will look through by next week.

W. A. YATES.—The "Agnostic" who believes in the miracles of Jesus, and attributes all civilisation to Christianity, ought to be ticketed—in a museum. You might tell him so. Perhaps he'll give himself up.

H. ORGAN.—Will consider the suggestion. Glad you were "delighted" with the Stevenson article.

A. DANIELSON.—Will notice it next week.

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 Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.

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.

Shilling Month.

I AM turning the "Easter Egg" fund into a new "Shilling Month," and I propose to keep it open until the end of April. This will give everyone, even the greatest laggards, an opportunity of subscribing.

We are a long way off the 3,000 shillings yet. But I said, and I repeat, that this amount could be raised easily if all who can afford to would only take the trouble to subscribe.

There seems already to be some misconception as to the object of this fund. I therefore state again that one-half of the total amount realised will be paid over by me to the National Secular Society, which is always more or less in need of money for its work. The other half will be used by me in advertising and pushing the circulation of the *Freethinker* generally.

G. W. FOOTE.

THIRD LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.

(The Figures mean the number of Shillings.)

R. E. D., 2; R. Wallis, 2; Leabrooks Humanitarian Society, 4; Cheetham Hill Girl, 2; J. C., 2; T. C. Riglin, 1; Libra, 1; R. T. Rushworth, 1; Rank-and-File, 2; S. Dobson, 5; Sidney Clowes, 1½; W. J. Molweiz, 1; Joseph Bryce, 2½; H. Walsh, 5; George Payne, 60; B. Siger, 1½; S. S. (Leeds), 5; E. Kirton, 2; E. Adams, 5; Y. and F., 5; S. Holmes, 5; S. H., 5; A. James, 1; P. Bentley, 1; Quarter of Century Reader, 2; N., 5; R. C. G., 2; J. D., 5½; A. Beale, 1; F. H. Whitehouse and Friend, 4; Frederic W. Walsh, 1; Arthur Bartram, 1; J. R. Bartram, 1; R. Yates, 2; Mrs. C. C., 10; K. C. C., 10; R. T. Nichols, 20; R. H. Rosetti, 2; J. M. P., 2; Blackheath, 2; N. Finney, 2; T. N. Watts, 2½; Postman, 2; Robert Clarke, 2½; Elizabeth Lechmere, 1; R. Carless, 2; R. Taylor, 2; J. H. Ridgway, 2; P. Ridgway, 1; J. Partridge, 2; H. Organ, 1; W. A. Yates, 2½; James and Mrs. Neate, 5; A. Hopkins, 2; W. Bean, 2; C. Bridger, 1; C. Potts, 1; V. Pholip, 10; H. de Backer, 8.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote opens the new course of lectures at the Shoreditch Town Hall this evening (April 10). Tickets for the reserved front seats, one shilling each, must be obtained beforehand of the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, 2 Newcastle-street, E.C. All other seats in the hall, which is a very large one, are absolutely free. Freethinkers within reasonable distance of the hall should do their utmost to fill it, first by attending themselves, secondly by bringing as many as possible of their less heterodox friends along with them, and thirdly by advertising the lectures amongst all their friends and acquaintances, either by word of mouth or by means of the printed announcements which can be obtained of Miss Vance.

Mr. Cohen delivers the second lecture of this Shoreditch Town Hall course—a fact which his East-end admirers will please note.

In spite of the holiday time, and in spite of the wretched weather, Mr. Foote had fine audiences at Glasgow on Sunday. He was told that such audiences at that time of the year, in

any weather, must be regarded as a very handsome compliment. There were a good many questions after both lectures. We hope there will be good meetings again to-day (April 10), when Mr. J. T. Lloyd delivers the last special lectures of the winter season. Mr. Lloyd lectures at Falkirk on Monday evening.

This copy of the *Freethinker* will be in the hands of many London "saints" in time to remind them of the "social" at Anderton's Hotel, on Thursday evening, April 7, at 8 o'clock.

The West Ham Branch carries on its open-air work this year outside Maryland Point Station, at the corner of Manbey Park. Meetings are held on Sunday evenings at 7. Mr. Ramsey started the ball last Sunday and Mr. Saphin is the lecturer to-day (April 10).

The National Secular Society's Annual Conference will take place on Whit-Sunday (as usual) at St. James's Hall, London. A small hall is engaged for the business sessions, morning and afternoon, and the large hall for the evening public meeting. Branches of the N. S. S. should be making preparations to be represented. Individual members are also invited to attend, and they will be entitled to speak and vote. The last day for notice of motions for the Conference Agenda to reach the Secretary's hands is Saturday, April 16. The financial year closes on the same date, so that subscriptions reaching the secretary later will not go into the 1909-10 balance-sheet.

There will be a big array of speakers on the platform at the evening meeting in connection with the Conference, and St. James's Hall ought to be crowded on this occasion. London "saints" should make a point of attending if they are not out of town, so that the meeting may be an imposing Freethought demonstration, as large as that which condemned the assassins of Ferrer. The list of speakers will include Mr. G. W. Foote (President), Mr. C. Cohen, Mr. J. T. Lloyd, Mr. A. B. Moss, Mr. F. A. Davies, and others whom we cannot yet officially announce. No such array of platform talent will be found in London that evening—or perhaps on any other. And the admission will be quite free! Of course there will be the customary collection.

"This is True, Because I Think it is so!"—II.

(Concluded from p. 221.)

AFTER declaring himself to be a sinner—professional Christians continually declare themselves to be sinners, though they would be greatly annoyed if they thought that people believed they were telling the truth—the bishop determines to "take a brief survey of all the religions he ever heard of," in order that he might choose and adopt that one "wherein he may be sure that his sins will be pardoned and his soul made happy—wherein he may please God, and God may bless him."

And a *very brief survey* it is; *widely different* from the "diligent and impartial inquiry" which, in the first instance, he promised to make. To simplify his task, he reduces the number of religions to four; for, says he, "though there be as many kinds of religions as nations, they are all included in the Paganish, the Mahomedan, the Jewish, and the Christian religions."

To the consideration of the first-named, the Paganish, he devotes two short paragraphs; and the conclusion at which he instantly arrives is that it is "a very strange and absurd sort of religion." Had he made "diligent and impartial inquiry" he would have learned that the dogmas of Christianity are founded upon fables which were invented by the semi-barbarians who inhabited the earth ages before the birth of Abraham, who was the founder of the Jewish nation. He would have learned that the antediluvian Egyptians—for the Noachian deluge did not reach as far as the Isthmus of Suez—believed in a hereafter, in the resurrection of the dead, and future rewards and punishments. He would have learned that the ancient Greek philosophers taught that the ghosts of the dead bore an exact resemblance to their earthly bodies; that the blessed and the damned are separated by an impassable river, or deep gulf,

across which they can speak to one another; and that those who are wicked on earth are burned in a river of fire. He would have learned also that Pagans in all parts of the world believed in his pet theory that the soul is an entity entirely distinct from, and independent of, the corporeal body it inhabits, and that it would not only survive the death of the latter, but that before dissolution it could leave and return to its body as often as it pleased. But, then, we must not forget that the bishop's first article of belief is—"This is true, because I think it is so!"

The inquiry which the bishop makes into the Mohammedan religion extends to no less than four paragraphs—that is, double the space he gives to Paganism. He "confesses" that, in the Alcoran, he "finds many things agreeable to right reason, as that there is but one God"; but he also finds therein many absurd things, such as "that Solomon should discourse with a bird." Further, he says that there are in it many contradictions; but above all, that it contradicts the New Testament. Says he: "The Alcoran says, in the chapter on women, 'God hath no son'; the Scripture (in Matthew iii. 17) that God said of Jesus, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" For these reasons he takes this religion "to be very false and frivolous."

Now, fancy a believer in the Bible denouncing the Alcoran because it speaks of a "talking bird," and because it contains many contradictions! Why, the Bible, with its "talking serpent" and its "talking donkey," caps the Alcoran with its "talking bird." And as for contradictions, the Bible is full of them. There is a volume of them, published by the Freethought Publishing Co., at 1 Stationers' Hall-court, London, and this book does not contain the whole of them. I will call attention to but one, at the very commencement of the Bible. In the first chapter of Genesis, verses 26 and 27, we read that God did not create Adam and Eve until after he had created everything else, and that he created them at the same time; but, according to the second chapter, verses 18 to 22, Adam was created before the beasts of the fields and the fowls of the air, whilst Eve was created after them, and not from the dust of the ground, but from a rib that was taken from Adam's side.

The Jewish religion is treated with considerable respect by the bishop, for the simple reason that if the Old Testament be not true—if it be not a veritable record of well-attested prophetic statements, and of accomplished events—the New Testament is a mere tale and Christianity itself a myth. The concluding parts of his essay are, therefore, devoted to the proving that Christianity is a supplement to Judaism, that it is of divine origin, and that it is the only true religion—the only religion he "dares trust his soul to." In support of this view, he enumerates nearly all the texts of the Old Testament which are represented to be prophetic of Christ, marshalling them in juxtaposition to the texts in the New Testament which are said to prove the fulfilment of these alleged prophecies.

I do not propose to follow the bishop step by step in this part of his dissertation, because to do so would be a work of supererogation. A careful consideration of the most vital of these so-called prophecies will demonstrate the amount of credence which is to be attached to the whole of them.

Says the bishop: "The law saith Jesus was to be born of the seed of Abram (Gen. xxii. 18) and David (2 Sam. vii. 17). The Gospel saith Jesus was the son of David, the son of Abraham (Matt. i. 1)." Even if this were so, there would be nothing remarkable in such a fact, because at the Christian era there must have been scores of Jews who could have claimed descent from the same ancestors. But Matthew contradicts himself; for he traces the pedigree of Joseph the "husband of Mary" up to Abraham, but asserts that the Holy Ghost, and not Joseph, was the father of Christ. The law, therefore, could only have been fulfilled by Matthew showing that the Holy Ghost, and not Joseph, had descended from Abraham and David.

Says the bishop: "The law says that Christ was to be born at Bethlehem Ephratah (Micah v. 2); the Gospel, that this Jesus was born there (Matt. ii. 1; Luke ii. 4, 5)." As a matter of fact, this statement rests solely upon the authority of Matthew, for the very simple reason that the first two chapters of Luke (except the first four verses of the first chapter) are interpolations—that is, *forgeries*.

Luke wrote not only the Gospel that bears his name, but also the Acts of the Apostles. Both his works are dedicated to Theophilus; and he commences his Acts by stating, in brief but pregnant terms, what he had written in his Gospel. Says he: "The former treatise I have made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day in which he was taken up" (Acts i. 1, 2). In these words Luke tells us that his Gospel contains a complete history of the public ministry of Christ from its commencement to its ending, and he utterly ignores the contents of the first two chapters; they are, therefore, *forgeries*. And the introduction to his Gospel—that is, the first four verses of the first chapter—bears out this view; for in it he says that he had "taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which had been delivered unto them by those who, from the beginning, were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word" (Luke i. 2). Now, the "eye-witnesses and ministers of the word" could have been none other than the apostles; and, as they were strangers to Christ until he had commenced his public ministry, the Gospel written by Luke could, and can, only refer to his public ministry. The statement, therefore, that the prophecy of Micah was fulfilled in the person of Jesus rests only upon the authority of Matthew.

But in what respect is it a fulfilment? Micah, like Isaiah and Hosea, who were his contemporaries, expected a "ruler in Israel" who should be a powerful potentate, not a mere spiritual myth—a barbarian conqueror like unto Joshua and David, not a feeble god-man, who abjured earth and all its pleasures, and spoke only of a kingdom of heaven and all its airy delights. This "ruler in Israel" was to "waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof," and was to "deliver the Jews from the Assyrian yoke" (Micah v. 6). What similarity is there between the character of this "ruler" and that of Jesus? None whatever! Jesus was never a "ruler in Israel," nor did he deliver the Jews from the Assyrian yoke; in his days, and long afterwards, both Assyria and Judæa were subject to the Roman Government. Jesus, therefore, was not the "ruler" to whom Micah refers; and, if ever this so-called prophecy was fulfilled, it was not fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ.

Says the bishop: "The law says that Christ was to be born of a virgin (Isaiah vii. 14); the Gospel, that Mary, a virgin, brought forth this Jesus (Matthew i. 18; Luke i. 31, 35)." Here remember what I have already said respecting the first two chapters of Luke.

But the law does not say that "Christ was to be born of a virgin." The words of the text are: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." There is nothing about Christ here.

These words, however, are only a part, and a small part, of the prophecy which is detailed at length in the seventh and eighth chapters of Isaiah. The prophecy had special reference to the kings of Judah, Syria, and Israel. The former was threatened with destruction by the two latter, and consequently the king of Judah was very much frightened. Thereupon Isaiah went to him, and, in the name of the Lord, assured him that he had nothing to fear, for the Lord would protect him from his enemies, the kings of Syria and Israel. And, to prove that he (Isaiah) was telling the truth, he said unto the king: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah vii. 14).

This language is plain enough; no one can doubt its meaning; but what about the reality? Was the

king of Judah protected by the Lord from the kings of Syria and Israel? On this point not a word is said by Isaiah. Why? Perhaps he did not know, or perhaps the Lord had deceived him as he deceived other prophets (Ezekiel xiv. 9). Anyhow, he is silent, absolutely silent. But, if Isaiah did not know, the historian of the Chronicles did; for, in the twenty-eighth chapter of the second book, we read that the Lord delivered the king of Judah into the hands of his enemies, the kings of Syria and Israel, who smote his valiant men with great slaughter, and carried great multitudes of his people into captivity.

In this instance, then, Isaiah was a false prophet. Why did not the bishop mention this fact? For, of course, being a bishop, he ought to have known it. The answer is simple enough. It is because, as the prophecy was falsified in its most important particular, he well knew that all else appertaining to it must be false also.

The crucial point is as to whether the woman who bore Maher-shalal-hash-baz (why did the Lord alter the name? the prophet having previously declared that it should be Immanuel) was, or was not, at the time of his birth, *virgo intacta*. Undoubtedly she was not, and for the following reasons. Greek scholars are unanimously of opinion that the noun *almah* should be translated "a young woman," and not "virgin." So translated, the whole passage becomes quite plain. The birth of a son was predicted as a sign that certain national events were about to take place; and this child, we are expressly told, was to be the son of Isaiah, by his wife. Were it not so, why was the mother spoken of as "the prophetess"? (Isaiah viii. 3). And why was it said that the child should cry, "My father, and my mother"? (Isaiah viii. 4). The statement is that, as soon as the prophecy had been uttered, Isaiah "went unto the prophetess" (Isaiah viii. 3); for what purpose there can be no doubt, because we are told that he took with him "faithful witnesses to record" the time (Isaiah viii. 2), so that if she conceived and bore a son—it might, you know, have been a daughter—as had been promised by the Lord, they might be certain that the child was the son referred to in the prophecy. This prophecy, then, is *valueless as regards a supernatural birth*; whilst it refers to the son of "the prophetess" only, and not to the son of Mary.

As to the birth of Jesus being miraculous, there is not a tittle of evidence to support it; and evidence to prove the supernatural must be of an extraordinary character—precise, unimpeachable, and irresistible. Where is such evidence? The statement of Matthew is no evidence at all, for he speaks only from hearsay; he simply repeats what he has heard. How comes it that this wondrous fact, if fact it be, was unknown to the other evangelists and the apostles? For that they were ignorant of the miraculous birth of Jesus is proved by their silence respecting it. Had they known of, and believed in, Matthew's statement, they would not have failed to promulgate it as evidence of the highest value that Jesus was the expected Messiah. The only person who could know was Mary herself, and she always asserted that the father of Jesus was Joseph, and not the Holy Ghost (Luke ii. 48). I conclude, therefore, being a "reasonable creature," that this so-called prophecy is a tale, and nothing more.

I now part company with the bishop. To consider the other less-important of the so-called prophecies would be a waste of time. The essay is a most pretentious one, but it is simply fallacious. The one thing which it proves beyond all doubt is that its author was an unconscionable egotist, the key-note of the production being his assertion—"This is true, because I think it is so!"

J. W. DE CAUX.

It is clear that in normal death, or the death of decay, or the death of debility, the sentient state is the farthest possible from that which accompanies vigorous life, and that sensations and emotions all gradually decrease in intensity before they finally cease. Thus the dread of dying which most people feel is unwarranted.—Herbert Spencer.

The Greatest of All Fools.

[Rev. C. W. Blodgett, a prominent Methodist minister of Cincinnati, delivered a sermon on "Fools." Of course he put the Atheist in. "The greatest fool," he declared, "is the man who says there is no God." The sermon was reported in the *Commercial Tribune*, and was widely read. Dr. Wilson, a Cincinnati Freethinker, whom we had the pleasure of meeting at the Rome Congress, wrote a reply to the Methodist minister, and the *Observer* printed it for the benefit of its myriads of readers. Such liberality on the part of a newspaper would be impossible in England. We reproduce Dr. Wilson's article for English readers.—EDITOR, *Freethinker*.]

THE statement of Rev. C. W. Blodgett, printed in Monday's issue of the *Commercial Tribune*, says "the greatest fool is the man who says there is no God," is remarkable in light of the fact that the greatest Atheists are the greatest scientific minds and the lesser Atheists are all men and women of learning and education or of keen inquiry and observation.

It is certainly just as foolish for the Christian to say there is a God as it is for the Atheist to say there is not, when both alike know absolutely nothing of any God.

It is even more foolish for the Christian to say there is a God, for he, assuming the positive position, it is up to him to prove it, which he cannot do.

The strangest of all things about God is this: It is not till men try to prove him that they begin to doubt him.

Rev. Blodgett says, "If nature does not show there is a God, then nothing does. Certainly; for nature is all there is.

But within the whole of nature's stupendous range, where is this Personal Deity? Point him out. Make him clear to our comprehensions that the overgroping, doubting mind may cease to question and be satisfied. "Who, by searching, can find out God?"

Nature shows nothing but itself, and the forces and phenomena within itself. Some of these forces are so great that they utterly confound the mind of man. Idealists and dreamers have given a personality to the Infinite Incomprehensible Power and called it God. So far as we now know, this Supreme Force is most probably a corollation of the forces now known and unknown to us, into a force still more remote, that may never be known to us.

All nations alike have tried to give a personality to this unknowable and mysterious force. Many have caricatured it with hideous idols having a human resemblance. The Christian has pictured it as a long-whiskered and aged Jewish patriarch, perched on a cloud, with a great hook on his knees, which is hardly less grotesque than some of the heathen conceptions.

In contradiction to this assertion of Rev. Blodgett, I will quote the words of John Wesley, the founder of the church in which Rev. Blodgett is a conspicuous teacher. Wesley said: "It does not appear that man, naturally, has any more idea of a God than the beasts of the field; he has no knowledge of God at all; he is by nature an atheist."

After thus admitting that man by nature is an atheist, Wesley illogically declares that God can be known and seen through "the eye of faith." We all know that most anyone can see through faith or imagination whatever we want to see. But man cannot see the unseeable or know the unknowable.

Man only sees a force he cannot comprehend, and calls it God.

Some wise men say Mars is inhabited; others say not. Neither know, is that there is an Infinite Power pervading the universe, that seems to control it—at times through order, and at times through disorder. This awful power is continually wrecking worlds, and creating new ones. It is both constructive and destructive. Gloriously it builds up and just as mercilessly tears down. In its relation to man it is both just and unjust, both cruel and kind. Whatever this power may be, it has absolutely no more regard for the safety of human beings than for the meanest reptile that crawls the earth. Whatever intellect man has, he has acquired through his bitter struggle for existence.

Whatever progress he has made has been due to self-preservation and the demands of appetite and other human necessities.

If there be a living, personal Deity, "whose mercies endureth forever," where is he in times of such catastrophes as those of San Francisco, St. Pierre, and Messina? Where is he in the earthquake, the tempest, the pestilence, and the conflagration?

It is unfortunate that religious teaching is almost wholly based upon sentiment, prejudice, emotion, and superstition. But for some good purpose, not always apparent, nature hath decreed that reason shall be the property of only the few. The most ignorant plantation negro may be a firm believer in a personal God. Where people are most ignorant, there belief and the religious instinct are the strongest. For a believer to become an atheist he must first be a person of

superior conception and perception—he must be able to unlearn the false teachings indoctrinated into his helpless youth; he must doubt and reason; he must be of a keen, inquiring mind; he must be honest and sincere; impartially inform himself and observe all sides of a question. How, then, can he be the "greatest fool"? Is he a fool just because he demands the demonstrated fact instead of sentiment and assertion?

I am going to say here what I have never heard spoken before, and I am bold in saying it. Atheism, in my opinion, is the greatest blessing that ever fell on humankind. It is the greatest blessing for this reason. The atheist is a man who wants to know the truth, no matter where it leads him—therefore he leads all men.

The Christian is a man who is content with the philosophy of two thousand years ago. His many churches and creeds are but wayside inns of thought, where he may stop, register and rest, and think no more. He is not particularly interested in the truth, which lies far beyond his limited vision.

Belief is the natural child of ignorance and superstition. Atheism is the natural child of science and progress. It is the natural trend of all learning and civilisation. Observe whatever civilisation you may, and you will find its Humboldts and Goethes highest among its immortals. Atheism is the very summit of inquiry. It is the high peak which the ambitious mind of man at last has scaled, and from which he faces the eternal unknown and dares to question and defy it. From some far, lowly sanctuary, a feeble voice may upward cry, "Thou fool!" but he hears or heeds it not.

Atheism, doubting, ever demanding evidence, leads man, questioning, to the very brink of the infinite. It is noble in its sacrifice. Patiently it endures the abuses and contumelies of the unthinking, superstitious world. It is peaceful, loving, and kind. It does not engage in war and massacre and inquisitions for opinion's sake. Certainly Herbert Spencer was no fool, and his pure life commends itself to all the world.

Show me an Atheist and I will not only show you a brainy man, but almost invariably an honest, just, kind, and good man—in nearly every instance a man actively interested in the progress and uplifting of the human race.

There was a time, and not so long ago, when Atheism was not permitted to exist and all was lovingly Christian. In that dark time the world was filled with superstition, ignorance, butchery, blood, and tears. To-day Atheism is the handmaid of science, and, deny as you may, these two are the true tests and measures of all civilisation.

The intelligent rulers of Japan, now the most progressive nation in the world, are all Atheists. They are certainly not fools. A nation without Atheists, Agnostics, and Rationalists is a nation without science, philosophy, and progress.

France to-day is ruled by a handful of Atheists and a few other men of liberal ideas. Certainly, the great Christian majority of the French people do not regard them as fools. Why do they support these Atheists instead of the priestly candidates? Simply because the people themselves are ceasing to be fools—because they know that the Atheist stands for knowledge, progress, free speech, free men, and free women.

Were Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, and Haeckel fools? Are the great majority of the medical fraternity and the members of scientific bodies fools? Is wisdom and philosophy to be found only in revivals and ecclesiastical councils?

It is easy to say, "Thou fool!" but no man is ever prepared to apply that name to the Atheist until he rises above the Atheist in intelligence and information.

The Rev. Mr. Blodgett is one among millions of good-meaning and well-intentioned clergymen more distinguished for their dogmatism than their thought. There is no greater folly than that of attempting to answer the Atheist by heaping opprobrium upon him or by calling him ugly names. The Atheist is a human being, of flesh and blood and feeling. He is nearly always Christian born, and the Christian Church is responsible for him. When the clergy, lacking knowledge, fail to supply him with the evidences he demands why should he be called a great fool?

The cry of "fool" will never rid the world of its Darwins, Spencers, and Haeckels, nor of the multitudes who learn at their feet. The still, small voice of the clergy will never be able to drown the thunders of thought.

What? Will the world stop to hear a cricket's chirp when eagles are screaming in the air?

Nothing can be more absurd than the idea that we can do something to please or displease an infinite being. If our thoughts and actions can lessen or increase the happiness of God, then to that extent God is the slave and victim of man.—*Ingersoll*.

The Martyrs.

THE Romish Church counts innumerable martyrs and reveres them highly. And even persons of culture, with critical instincts, who do not accept all the *acta legendorum* for current coin, are generally impressed with the idea that in the first centuries of Christianity much innocent blood was shed by the adherents of the ancient religion of the State. This idea contains two errors. Neither was the number of victims so great as is generally believed, nor were they sacrificed exclusively to religious intolerance.

The Munich historian, Von Pohlmann, has rendered a decided service to truth in the section of the Ullstein Universal History (now in the press) dealing with Imperial Rome and its decline and fall, of which he is the author, by demonstrating the falsity of these ideas and, so to say, by nailing them to the block. From the very first, Christianity assumed a hostile attitude to the State organisation as such, and combated it by fair means and foul. Naturally, the conflict raged sharpest over the question of the official religion of the State.

When the Roman State required of its subjects the recognition of Cæsar worship, or rather respect to the images of the Cæsar, we must remember that it never intended thereby to impose a belief in the truth of the State religion or any sort of positive religious confession of faith. It simply required a purely ceremonial and external respect for the imperial images as the symbols of the omnipotence of the State. Consequently for it, Cæsar worship meant nothing more than deference to the majesty of the State, and the emperor in this conception was not regarded from the personal point of view, but merely as the representative of a "divine" institution. Consequently, the State saw in the stubborn rejection of this "cultus" not so much a sacrilege as an act of high treason; and Christians themselves, as for example Tertullian, have been forced to admit that the Christians would most probably have been let alone altogether if they had limited their opposition to the gods of Olympus and effected a compromise with the Cæsar-cultus.

Consequently, the Cæsar-cultus was not, by a long way, nearly so dangerous to the cause of religious freedom as the religious policy of the later Christian Cæsars and their priestly successors in their Roman domination. The latter carried the ancient adoration of earthly power to extremes in a very different fashion, and, on the strength of their "divine" legitimation and of a "divine" right to demand absolute submission, claimed a power over conscience, compared to which the Cæsar worship appears perfectly harmless, a power—to quote the words of a modern popish ukase—"not only over the wills but also over the reason of mankind." It cannot be maintained that the struggle of the Christians, from their point of view and in its essence, was a struggle for freedom of conscience and religion as contrasted with the amalgamation of politics and religion. Quite the reverse. They would have acclaimed the Cæsars if the powers of the State had been placed at their disposal for the eradication of the disbelievers! Compared with the principle of the emasculation of the spiritual and religious personality of mankind as the Church applied it in its hour of victory, the standpoint of the heathen State must be considered a far more liberal one. And so far as Pagan society is concerned, for cultivated minds the State religion had long been nothing more than a formality. Their inner life was already sufficiently developed for them to regard genuine religion as a matter of free choice and individual idiosyncrasy. The Christian apologists appeal themselves to this liberalism. Thus, for example, Tertullian, who proclaims the highly heretical dictum that to impose religion is irreligious (*non religionis est cogere religionem*)—a dictum which certainly sounds oddly enough in the mouth of this fanatic, and which involuntarily reminds one of the expression of a modern clerical: "So long as we are in a minority we demand tolerance on the ground of *your* principles: as soon as we get a majority we shall refuse it *you* on the ground of *ours*."

If the Pagan State had acted upon this principle, it would have been impossible for Christian congregationalism and Christian worship to have spread over the whole Empire in two centuries with so little disturbance, as was indeed the case, thanks precisely to the practically unlimited tolerance on the part of the State.

Even compulsory Cæsar worship was by no means so rigorously imposed as might have been expected. Where political opposition seemed to be insignificant and venerable, national traditions called for exemption, as in the case of the Jews—the State generally renounced the right of applying it—and even against the Christians, whose propaganda threatened the very foundations of the State religion, it only proceeded tentatively and from time to time. Consequently, when the acts of the saints—*i.e.*, of the martyrs, talk of a persecution which filled the first three centuries

with blood and murder, this is mainly the creation of a phantasy which positively wallowed in the invention of ever fresh martyrs and crazy miraculous stories and falsified tradition in honor of the Church and its champion in a truly monstrous fashion; falsification which, in Lactantius's pamphlet on the decline of Christian persecution, reacted upon the history of the Cæsars themselves. Indeed, in the third century, Origen, a father of the Church, has said, in so many words, that up till then the Christians who had died for their belief might easily be counted. And even if this opinion be judged too optimistic, certain it is that the persecutions of the Christians by the Pagan Emperors, so far as the quantity of the victims and the quality of the tortures is concerned, are nothing whatever in comparison with those of the Christian Church and its extermination of heretics.

In strong contrast to the Christian Church, which bade parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters betray and denounce one another as a religious duty, Trajan, in his celebrated instructions to the Mayor of Bithynia, Pliny the younger, laid down the rule that the Christians were not to be "hunted up" by the authorities, and anonymous denunciations against them were not to be accepted; and, for that matter in general, the authorities were anything but inclined to comply with anti-Christian petitions from over loyal County Councils or to accept, without due caution, the excited popular clamor against presumably Christian crimes. If a few isolated Governments as those of Marcus Aurelius, Septimus Severus, and Maximinus the Thracian, acted with more severity, the fact possesses only a transient significance. Not until the middle of the third century did two general and severe persecutions take place—under Decius and Valerian; but they only lasted a year, and were more than counterbalanced by a long period of peace (259-303) in which persecution almost entirely ceased, and the Church could almost be said to have taken its place unabashed as a recognised religious community.

—Translated from the "Neueste Münchener Nachrichten."

W. W. S.

RELIGIOUS KINDNESS TO ANIMALS.

As the details of the Jewish method of slaughter may be unknown to many readers, I shall take the liberty of giving a short description of the operation as I have witnessed it myself.

As soon as the animal has been brought into the slaughtering chamber it is thrown to the ground either by attaching a rope or chain to the legs and then suddenly hauling on it, or by twisting the head upwards and sideways by means of an appliance attached to the horns and passing under the jaw, in such a way that the animal loses its balance and falls to the ground, in doing which it not infrequently injures itself so that there is loss of blood or fracture of horn or rib. The animal is then rendered powerless by having its feet bound together, or the tail drawn through the hind legs forward and upwards, while one of the slaughtermen places his foot on the animal's stomach and prevents its attempting to offer resistance. The head is then forced down so that it rests on the horns, and the nose is pressed against the floor. This can only be done by the exertion of great force on the part of the slaughtermen, with corresponding resistance, involving terror and suffering, on that of the animal. The Jewish official who performs the act of slaughter then passes his hand over the animal's tightly-drawn throat, and mutters the so-called "Schechita" prayer. He then cuts the animal's throat right through to the vertebra, drawing the knife to and fro in so doing. The blood which spurts from the severed arteries is scattered like rain by the breath which escapes from the lungs, and as the breath is drawn in it enters the gullet and lungs with a loud rattling noise. The gaping wound yawns wide, the animal opens and closes its eyes, rolling them to and fro, and opens and shuts its mouth as though gasping for breath. If the flow of blood from the arteries in the neck ceases, one of the slaughtermen—not the Jewish official—draws them out, cuts away part of them with the surrounding tissues, and throws the severed portion away. And while all this is going on the animal is alive and conscious of pain and terror.—*Humane Review*.

Obituary.

THE grim reaper gathered into his barn, on the 22nd ult., another member of the Old Guard, in the person of Thomas W. Gore (aged 67), formerly secretary of the Leeds Secular Society. He was an unobtrusive soldier of Freethought of the old Republican school throughout his life, and he devoured the contents of the *Freethinker* weekly, from its inception until he lay on his death-bed, diligently perusing, when he could, the varied columns of the latest issue. He wished to be cremated, and to have the simple secular valedictory address pronounced by a comrade over his ashes; but his ardent desires were, I regret to say, utterly disregarded.

G. WEIR.

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.

INDOOR.

SHOREDITCH TOWN HALL: 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Christ and the Democracy."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15, W. J. Ramsey, "Salvation."

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Highbury Corner): 12 (noon), Walter Bradford and Sidney Cook. Finsbury Park: 3.30, R. H. Rosetti, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford): 7, E. C. Saphin, "Civilised in Spite of Christianity."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): J. T. Lloyd, 12 (noon), "Spiritualism and Freethought"; 6.30, "What Substitute for Christianity?"

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, J. Hammond, "The Birth and Growth of Religion."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, George Mason, "Wanted, a Freethought Revival."

NOTTINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Cobden Hall, Peachey-street): 7.30, Seely Whitby, a Lecture.

THE MARTYRDOM OF HYPATIA.

An Address delivered at Chicago by

M. M. MANGASARIAN.

Will be forwarded, post free, for

THREE HALFPENCE.

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

BUSINESS CARDS.

Short advertisements are inserted under this heading at the rate of 2s. per half inch and 3s. 6d. per inch. No advertisement under this heading can be less than 2s. or extend beyond one inch. Special terms for several continuous insertions.

FREETHOUGHT BADGES.—The new N. S. S. Badge Design is the French Freethinkers' emblem—a single Panay flower. Button shape, with strong pin. Has been the means of many pleasant introductions. Price, single, 2d., postage 1d.; three or more post free. Reduction to Branches.—N. S. S. SECRETARY, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

HARRY BOULTER, the Freethinker's Tailor, 108 City-road (opposite Old-st. Tube Station). Suits from 37/6; Ladies' Costumes from 45/-. Catholics, Churchmen, Jews, and Non-conformists support their own. Go thou and do likewise.

MEMBER OF N. S. S. of 25 years' standing seeks light employment in any capacity. Timekeeper, reading, copying. Thirty years reference from last employer.—J. HOCKIN, 30 Eresby-road, Kilburn, N.W.

SAMPLES FREE! I will make you a New Suit to measure for nothing if you can persuade 8 of your friends to give me an order for a Suit each.—**J. W. GOTT, 28 Church-bank, Bradford.**

Did Jesus Christ of the Four Gospels Ever Live? and 2/6 worth of other lively Freethought Literature, post free, for 18 penny stamps.—**A. DYSON, 696 Bolton-road, Bradford.**

HUNDREDS of odd Suit lengths to be cleared at extremely low prices. All new goods; fashionable colors and designs. Patterns free.—**H. M. WILSON, 22 Northside-terrace, Bradford.**

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT By G. W. FOOTE.

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

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

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

A LIBERAL OFFER NOTHING LIKE IT.

Greatest Popular Family Reference Book and Sexology—Almost Given Away. A Million sold at 3 and 4 dollars—Now Try it Yourself.

Insure Your Life—You Die to Win; Buy this Book, You Learn to Live.



Ignorance kills—knowledge saves—be wise in time. Men weaken, sicken, die—not knowing how to live. "Habits that enslave" wreck thousands—young and old. Fathers fail, mothers are "bed-ridden," babies die. Family feuds, marital miseries, divorces—even murders—All can be avoided by self-knowledge, self-control.

You can discount heaven—dodge hell—here and now, by reading and applying the wisdom of this one book of 1,200 pages, 400 illustrations, 80 lithographs on 18 anatomical color plates, and over 250 prescriptions.

OF COURSE YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT EVERYONE OUGHT TO KNOW.

THE YOUNG—How to choose the best to marry.
THE MARRIED—How to be happy in marriage.
THE FOND PARENT—How to have prize babies.
THE MOTHER—How to have them without pain.
THE CHILDLESS—How to be fruitful and multiply.
THE CURIOUS—How they "grewed" from germ-cell.
THE HEALTHY—How to enjoy life and keep well.
THE INVALID—How to brace up and keep well.

Whatever you'd ask a doctor you find herein, or (if not, Dr. F. will answer your inquiry FREE, any me).

Dr. Foote's books have been the popular instructors of the masses in America for fifty years (often re-written, enlarged, and always kept up-to-date). For twenty years they have sold largely (from London) to all countries where English is spoken, and everywhere highly praised. Last editions are best, largest, and most for the price. You may save the price by not buying, and you may lose your life (or your wife or child) by not knowing some of the vitally important truths it tells.

Most Grateful Testimonials From Everywhere.

Gudivoda, India: "It is a store of medical knowledge in plainest language, and every reader of English would be benefited by it."—W. L. N.

Triplicane, India: "I have gone through the book many times, and not only benefited myself but many friends also."—G. W. T.

Panderma, Turkey: "I can avow frankly there is rarely to be found such an interesting book as yours."—K. H. (Chemist).
Calgary, Can.: "The information therein has changed my whole idea of life—to be nobler and happier."—D. N. M.
Laverton, W. Aust.: "I consider it worth ten times the price. I have benefited much by it."—R. M.

Somewhat Abridged Editions (800 pp. each) can be had in German, Swedish, Finnish, or Spanish.

Price **EIGHT SHILLINGS** by Mail to any Address.

ORDER OF THE PIONEER PRESS,
2 NEWCASTLE STREET, LONDON, E.C.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President: G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary: MISS E. M. VANCE, 2 Newcastle-st., London, E.C.

Principles and Objects.

SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalise morality; to promote peace; to dignify labor; to extend material well-being; and to realise the self-government of the people.

Membership.

Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

"I desire to join the National Secular Society, and I pledge myself, if admitted as a member, to co-operate in promoting its objects."

Name.....

Address.....

Occupation

Dated this..... day of..... 190.....

This Declaration should be transmitted to the Secretary with a subscription.

P.S.—Beyond a minimum of Two Shillings per year, every member is left to fix his own subscription according to his means and interest in the cause.

Immediate Practical Objects.

The Legitimation of Bequests to Secular or other Free-thought Societies, for the maintenance and propagation of heterodox opinions on matters of religion, on the same conditions as apply to Christian or Theistic churches or organisations.

The Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, in order that Religion may be canvassed as freely as other subjects, without fear of fine or imprisonment.

The Disestablishment and Disendowment of the State Churches in England, Scotland, and Wales.

The Abolition of all Religious Teaching and Bible Reading in Schools, or other educational establishments supported by the State.

The Opening of all endowed educational institutions to the children and youth of all classes alike.

The Abrogation of all laws interfering with the free use of Sunday for the purpose of culture and recreation; and the Sunday opening of State and Municipal Museums, Libraries, and Art Galleries.

A Reform of the Marriage Laws, especially to secure equal justice for husband and wife, and a reasonable liberty and facility of divorce.

The Equalisation of the legal status of men and women, so that all rights may be independent of sexual distinctions.

The Protection of children from all forms of violence, and from the greed of those who would make a profit out of their premature labor.

The Abolition of all hereditary distinctions and privileges, fostering a spirit antagonistic to justice and human brotherhood.

The Improvement by all just and wise means of the conditions of daily life for the masses of the people, especially in towns and cities, where insanitary and incommodious dwellings, and the want of open spaces, cause physical weakness and disease, and the deterioration of family life.

The Promotion of the right and duty of Labor to organise itself for its moral and economical advancement, and of its claim to legal protection in such combinations.

The Substitution of the idea of Reform for that of Punishment in the treatment of criminals, so that gaols may no longer be places of brutalisation, or even of mere detention, but places of physical, intellectual, and moral elevation for those who are afflicted with anti-social tendencies.

An Extension of the moral law to animals, so as to secure them humane treatment and legal protection against cruelty.

The Promotion of Peace between nations, and the substitution of Arbitration for War in the settlement of international disputes

America's Freethought Newspaper.

THE TRUTH SEEKER.

FOUNDED BY D. M. BENNETT, 1873.

CONTINUED BY E. M. MACDONALD, 1883-1909.

G. E. MACDONALD EDITOR.
L. K. WASHBURN EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTOR.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

Single subscription in advance	\$3.00
Two new subscribers	5.00
One subscription two years in advance	5.00

To all foreign countries, except Mexico, 50 cents per annum extra
Subscriptions for any length of time under a year, at the rate of 25 cents per month, may be begun at any time.

Freethinkers everywhere are invited to send for specimen copies, which are free.

THE TRUTH SEEKER COMPANY,
Publishers, Dealers in Freethought Books,
62 VESSEY STREET, NEW YORK, U.S.A.

TRUE MORALITY:

Or, The Theory and Practice of Neo-Malthusianism

IS, 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.

PAMPHLETS by C. COHEN.

Foreign Missions, their Dangers and Delusions 3d.
Full of facts and figures.

An Outline of Evolutionary Ethics ... 6d.
Principles of ethics, based on the doctrine of Evolution.

Socialism, Atheism, and Christianity.. 1d.

Christianity and Social Ethics ... 1d.

Pain and Providence 1d.

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

DEFENCE OF FREE SPEECH

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

Being a Three Hours' Address to the Jury before the Lord Chief Justice of England, in answer to an Indictment for Blasphemy, on April 24, 1883.

With Special Preface and many Footnotes.

Price FOURPENCE. Post free FIVEPENCE.

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

SUNDAY EVENING FREETHOUGHT LECTURES

(Under the auspices of the Secular Society, Ltd.)

AT

SHOREDITCH TOWN HALL.

APRIL 10.—Mr. G. W. FOOTE: "Christ and the Democracy."

APRIL 17.—Mr. C. COHEN: "What the World Owes to Unbelief."

Doors Open at 7.

Chair taken at 7.30.

Reserved Seat Tickets, 1s.

Free Admission to all other Seats.

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—MISS E. M. VANCE.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Society's solicitors are Messrs. Harper and Battcock, 25 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.

Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

The most intimate thing ever written about Bradlaugh. Mr. Foote's personal recollections of the great "Iconoclast" during many exciting years, with a page on his attitude in the presence of death, and an account of his last appearance as President of the National Secular Society.

PUBLISHED AT SIXPENCE REDUCED TO TWOPENCE.

(Postage Halfpenny.)

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