

# THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXX.—No. 30

SUNDAY, JULY 24, 1910

PRICE TWOPENCE

*The excuse for God is that he does not exist.*—BEYLE.

## Tried in the Fire.

My mind often reverts to a most pathetic spectacle. I see a young man lying helpless, and even speechless, on a bed in a public institution. He has been lying there for several years. For fourteen years altogether he has been in that sad condition. The body takes up little room, being much wasted; the life seems all concentrated in the head, and looks out from the bright dark eyes. The face is that of one to whom pain is a close familiar. On the brow, and around the eyes, are traces of heavy sleepless hours, of frequent gusts and occasional tornadoes of anguish. Yet the wistful expression of the whole countenance is strangely mingled with a certain sweet cheerfulness. Silent records are there of constant thanks for the services of others, without which, alas, he could not so much as exist; records also of deliberate patience, and of disinterested thoughts and feelings which have lifted the possessor's mind above his bed of suffering, and furnished an antidote to the poison of the slow intolerable hours. There are books in the room; good books, the work of poets and thinkers; a caged canary, full of life and movement, looks knowingly at the patient from the foot of the bed; there is a pleasant fire burning in the grate; the general tidiness of the place bespeaks the attention of feminine hands; the open window lets in plenty of fresh air from the outer world, which is warmed and illuminated by a late-winter sunshine. Outside all is gay and genial; inside one of life's tragedies is on its way, whether long or short, to its fifth act. A tragedy, I say, because tragedy is not physical but psychical; and what gives this case its significance is the reasoned fortitude which triumphs over a most cruel fate.

This sorely afflicted young man I saw for the first time, and the last as yet, when I last visited Birmingham to lecture in the Town Hall. He had written to me several times (always in pencil) as a reader and admirer of the *Freethinker*; his great regret was that he would never be able to hear me lecture, but he would so much like to see me, if so busy a man could only spare the time to call. How could one resist such an appeal? On the Monday morning after my Sunday's work at Birmingham, I travelled over to Leamington. One's nervous energy is not at the flood on Monday mornings after Sunday's lectures, and I had to brace myself up for a painful experience; for I am one of the worst persons in the world to bear the sight of the sufferings of others, and have always counted myself extremely fortunate in there having been so little of it in my own household. Yet I was so glad that I went to face what to me was an ordeal, when I entered the stricken man's room and saw the indescribably happy look that lighted up his face. I was to him something more than a person; I was a symbol,—I stood for the principles he held, the cause he loved, the fight in which he himself could take no part, but which he fervently hoped would, in the not too distant future, be victorious.

Frederic W. Walsh—for that is the young man's name—is an ardent Freethinker. And there are

those who tell him that his frightful calamity is either a punishment or a warning from God. What will not people say who believe in everlasting hell? But it is reassuring to know that the poor patient is treated with the utmost kindness by those who have him in their care. He speaks of this with beautiful gratitude. He thinks so much of his nurse, he cannot sufficiently praise the matron,—who, by the way, is a Christian, and also a lady. One is delighted to meet with the human sympathy that lies deeper than the roots of all creeds and the bases of all divisions.

It was in March, 1896, that Frederic Walsh's trouble began. He was caught up in some defective machinery, and came down on his back across bars of steel. He regained consciousness in hospital, where he remained seven months, being discharged and taken home early in November. Helpless then as now, paralysed more or less all over, able to move his head as well as hear, but not able to speak, he laid in one room while his father died of pneumonia in the next. He knew what was going on, he heard his father's heavy breathing but could not speak a word to him. Afterwards he fell among strangers. He could only apprise them of his wants by looks and motions of the head when they were near anything he required. Often, of course, he could not make them understand. He was shut out from nearly all communication with the world. He could not even learn to speak, like persons who were born deaf, for his inability was physical, owing to the paralysis. One day, however, light flashed into the darkness. A pencil happened to lie near him; he turned and picked it up with his mouth, and began to make lines on the margin of a newspaper. Suddenly he made a letter, and gradually realised that the barrier of silence was broken. He might now converse with those around him. It was indeed a happy day! Months elapsed before he could write properly. Now he writes beautifully. With his mouth! The writing is singularly small and singularly clear. Some I have shown it to say it is like copperplate. He has also done some pretty drawings, but the doctor has forbidden him to do any more, as the strain on the back of the neck is too great, and brings on headaches as well as other disturbances.

One does not wish to go too far into the purely physical details of Frederic Walsh's calamity. Readers of ordinary knowledge, and a little imagination, may easily realise them. Suffice it to say that he lies on his back, night and day, week after week, year after year; unable to move any part of him except his head. During our interview—in which, of course, I spoke, and he wrote his replies or questions in the way stated—he referred to my insomnia, and said how much he sympathised with me. I guessed how it would be with himself. He never has any sleep at all except under the influence of drugs. One is administered nightly. The result can hardly be called sleep—it is four hours' unconsciousness, which gives no real sense of refreshment. There is no drowsiness beforehand, and he wakes with a snap. These are phenomena which all sufferers from insomnia will understand.

Nervous maladies, especially those connected with the spine, are more or less obscure. Every now and then the even tenor of Frederic Walsh's calamity is broken by acute pains that sweep through his whole

system and make him dead to the world. Some months ago he was unconscious for a week.

I do not write these things out of morbidness, nor for the sake of providing my readers with sensation. My object is worthier than that. It is to show the power of Freethought to comfort, to console, to sustain, to elevate, in the midst of extraordinary affliction.

Having a taste for reading, and unlimited opportunity, Frederic Walsh has read a great deal. He knew no Freethinkers until after he became one himself. He fought his own battle and won his own victory. He felt determined to arrive, if possible, at definite conclusions with respect to the problems of life. He knew good and noble people (his own words) whose faith was firm and simple, but their assurance could not satisfy him. He read hundreds of books in seeking what he desired. Mansel, Newman, Keble, Pusey, Liddon, Robertson, Lecky, Renan, Strauss, Gibbon, Hume, Comte, Spencer, Haeckel, Darwin, Huxley, and others. No wonder that when he looks back he is surprised at his own industry and persistence. But he did the work thoroughly, and once for all; and the result was that he became an Atheist by personal conviction, founded on ample study and long reflection.

According to such preachers as Talmage and Torrey, and others who use more refined and less offensive language, Atheism should have driven Frederic Walsh to suicide. But upon him, at any rate, it had the opposite effect. In one of his letters he refers to his "joy in attaining to intellectual freedom." "The old sign-posts of 'No Thoroughfare' are down," he continues, "and I can read history, science, poetry, the drama, and all kinds of literature, with a deep and increasing interest, as marking the milestones on the path of man's progress. You can see how Atheism has so wonderfully widened my interests and deepened my sympathies with all noble endeavor."

The reader must understand that these sentences from Frederic Walsh's pencil were not written for any kind of publication. It is I that am violating their privacy. And I only venture to do so for the sake of something more important than his feelings or mine.

When I had that conversation with him in his room at Leamington, I asked him, at one painful stage of his revelations, whether he did not sometimes long for "the popped sleep the end of all." He shook his head gently, a soft smile rippled over his features, and he replied (with his pencil) that he was too much interested in the work of others, in the battle that was going on outside for light, justice, and freedom. Strange as it may seem, he, even he, not only accepts the inevitable, but believes that the most helpless may do some good in the world; and perhaps he is more accurate in this belief than your robustious reformers of the world may imagine. "I think," he says in one of his letters—"I think we can all do a little to brighten life for others; and, after all, what man can ask or reasonably hope for more? 'Hope not too much, and fear thou not at all' is the substance of my philosophy." In another letter he says that Atheism has lightened

"the heavy and the weary weight  
Of all this unintelligible world."

"And so," he adds, "my life is in a measure filled with sweetness and light."

The baser sort of Christians will sneer at this true story. The better sort of Christians, we hope, will give it their careful attention. It may show Atheism to them in a new light.

During my own recent illness I often thought of that patient, pathetic, and withal so curiously cheerful figure at Leamington. When I felt it was "something too much of this," as Hamlet says, the thought of that figure rebuked my impatience. "What is my trial to his?" I asked myself, and I laughed at my own folly. And so he was right, after all. Every one can do a little to make life brighter for others.

G. W. FOOTE.

## Reform and Reformers.

NOTHING seems so easy, at first sight, as reform. To the reformer the necessity for improvement is so plain, the reasons in its favor so obvious, the objections against the existing condition of affairs so clear, it seems that no more is needed than to proclaim the message and to chronicle the success. Unfortunately, expectations of this kind are seldom realised. Opinions that seem without justification either in reason or utility show a most unexpected tenacity of life, and even from many who admit their unjustifiable character they receive a larger or smaller measure of support. In addition to this there is the common experience that the removal of one abuse, or the rejection of an outworn belief, often merely makes room for others of a like nature. This feature accompanies efforts at reform in all directions—in politics, in morals, in religion, in sociology. And it offers small occasion for surprise that in some cases even the reformer is inclined to surrender the task as hopeless.

Were man a mere logical machine whose actions were in strict accord with conclusions drawn from accepted premises, the course of affairs would be different, and the quantity and quality of reform a strictly calculable quantity. Not being a logic machine, but an organism governed by impulses that in number and complexity defy exact calculation, the accomplishment of reform is always more or less a matter of speculation. We may sow the seed, but will the harvest ripen? Or if it will, at what date? To neither of these questions can any clear answer be given. Over and over again, with the extension of the franchise, with the passing of an Education Act, or with a fresh development of knowledge, reformers have felt themselves within sight of the millennium, to find that the wheel has only moved a cog when they expected it to turn full circle. Even this is something for which to be thankful. Happy is the reformer who can congratulate himself on the fact that, while he may never see his work brought to fruition, at least it has had the effect of strengthening those tendencies that are in the right direction.

One important truth in this connection is that while man's actions are directed by his reason they are governed by his sentiments. And all education, while it affects the reason directly, affects the feelings indirectly. An uneducated thief will steal in the primitive fashion of laying hands forcibly on that which arouses his cupidity. Teach him to read and write, and he may become a forger. Place him on the stock market, and he may promote a fraudulent company. We have not changed the man; we have merely turned his natural tendencies into new channels. Education may offer him new opportunities, experience will show him the danger of certain courses; but, other things equal, he remains the same. So in matters of reform. As experience will teach a thief to avoid certain ways of stealing without it making him less of a thief, so reason directed against a particular belief may compel its rejection. But just as education may leave a person dishonest or cowardly, honest or courageous, so the rejection of specific beliefs does not necessarily involve a change in the type of mind of which the belief is the expression. We may be only making room for other beliefs of substantially the same character.

Common experience illustrates this in a thousand different directions. If a man is a toady, and a monarchy and aristocracy are in fashion, he will toady to them; if a plutocracy, to that; and if neither of these are available, he will be found playing toady to someone in his immediate circle of acquaintances. So, also, in religion. Disabuse certain minds of their belief in Roman Catholic doctrines, and they will straightway embrace equally unreasonable Protestant doctrines. And the latter may, because they have been accepted in the name of reform, prove greater obstacles to development than

the first set. Ignoring the fact that the essential irrationality is not in the form in which the belief in God is expressed, but in the belief itself, we see people in all directions priding themselves on being emancipated and advanced because their superstition has merely broken out in a new direction. As though there were any material difference whether a belief is expressed in Choctaw or French, in the simple formula of the savage or the more mystifying terminology of the metaphysical theologian. It is the type of mind that is of importance; the form in which it expresses itself is a pure accident, and is of comparative unimportance.

An example of the persistence of this essentially irrational type of mind, which prides itself on being free from superstition, is provided in the case of the Rev. T. Rhondda Williams, in a recent article in the *Christian World*. Mr. Williams is dealing with the question of reform, and quite properly he points out that reformers are not those who hold their beliefs easily or cheaply, and that one who held old beliefs cheaply will be unlikely to set a greater value upon new ones. But with the essential irrationality that is characteristic of the religious mind, he lays down the law that the only people who can reform religion are those who believe in it. That is, his reform consists in a mere difference in the way religious belief is expressed, leaving the belief itself fundamentally intact. Now, to me it seems of little consequence, if a man believes in Deity, whether he believes in one or more, whether his God approximates to that of a hard cast Presbyterian or to that of a New Theologian. The difference is one of degree, at most, and while it may be interesting to allocate to different people the various quantities of absurdity manifested by them, it is not a supremely important occupation. The vital thing is, that the work for reform should rest upon an essentially sound foundation. Then only can we be at all sure of safe and orderly progress. I am not at all convinced that the world gained by the creation and establishment of Protestantism; in fact, I incline to the contrary view. Nor am I convinced that liberal theologians contribute anything important to the march of progress. Both Protestantism and the New Theology, I believe, merely make superstition more tolerable to a certain number of people, leaving the real work of emancipation to be done by those who believe in neither.

I quite agree with Mr. Williams that the reformer, to be of value, must be a man of strong beliefs. Men do not risk discomfort and disfavor unless they believe strongly; but Mr. Williams shows his own limitations in treating disbelief in religion as purely negative, and belief in it as purely positive. The truth is, that in intellectual matters negative and positive are not opposite and mutually exclusive terms, but complementary expressions. Every negation of a religious doctrine has been based upon a positive expression of knowledge. It was the knowledge of the composite nature of the Bible that gave the foundation for a denial of its trustworthiness and generally accepted authorship. The negation of natural miracles was based upon the affirmation of natural law; the negation of the idea of God upon a knowledge of its inherently unreasonable character and of its historic development. And on the other hand, every religious doctrine is a negation of some fact or principle in natural science, or of some portion of accessible knowledge. When, therefore, Mr. Williams remarks that Bradlaugh's criticism was all negative, with the result that "Bradlaughism to-day is not a factor to be reckoned with," the reply is that Bradlaugh's negation was the expression of a greater knowledge of religion than ninety-nine clergymen out of a hundred bring to their work. Whether "Bradlaughism"—if by that is meant an attack on religion—is a factor to be reckoned with to-day or not is a matter of opinion. Mr. Williams own case would seem to show that there is still need for the work.

For, as I have said, we have in Mr. Williams an illustration of the futility of assuming that when we

have annihilated a specific belief we have eradicated the type of mind that held it. One might safely challenge anyone to show in what respect Mr. Williams' "advanced" religious opinions are essentially more scientific than those of his more orthodox brethren. His outlook on life remains substantially what it was. And it is this that constitutes one of the greatest obstacles to the realisation of the reformer's ideal. In a sense, the loss of definite religious beliefs by a religious type of mind aggravates the obstruction. For one at least knows where such a person stands. But, minus these beliefs, we let loose in the political and social world a species of intelligence that is apt to work greater harm than in its native sphere. It may well be questioned whether the conception of a country having a divinely appointed destiny to do this or that in relation to other nations—which is nothing more than the religious idea transported into the political world—is not one of the most dangerous delusions under which a people may labor.

Above all, it is too often overlooked that with the disintegration of formal religious beliefs, there is left behind a vague, unformed, superstitious mind that forms the happy hunting ground of charlatans and reactionists of all descriptions. Such an intelligence is easily led astray on false issues, and quickly captured by mere phrases. Examples of this kind are too numerous to require detailed mention. It is enough to note that the reformer's best efforts are sometimes reduced to failure by the existence of this type of mind. It may be inevitable that such a state of things should be, but to bear in mind the fact of their existence, saves one from pessimism by forbidding one to expect too much. Evolution is naturally a slow process, and if we can feel assured that its course is in the right direction, we have an incentive to renewed effort and a reward for past labor.

C. COHEN.

### Apologies for God.

THERE is an unanswerable argument against Theism, in all its forms, which, if ably and wisely utilised at the present time, would undoubtedly prove of immense service to the cause of Freethought. The curious thing about this argument is that it is of a distinctly Theistic origin. It has been forged, ready to our hand, by the champions of the Lord. Quite unconsciously, no doubt, they have presented us with a fatal weapon against themselves. They have given their God away by their clumsy method of defending him; being either ignorant or forgetful of the fact that a God who needs to be defended is not worth defending. And this is the argument, the argument that has never yet been fairly met, and the argument which is, in its very nature, irrefutable: *To apologise for God is virtually to admit his non-existence.* The wonder is that theologians never see this, or, at least, are able to act as if they did not. That they have so acted in all ages is beyond dispute. Their one business in life has always been to explain, defend, and make excuses for, what they are pleased to call the interferences and the non-interferences of God with the affairs of the world.

It is the general belief among Christians that the Bible is God's supreme speech to the world. What countless volumes have been issued in explanation and defence of that position, and how amazingly ingenious have been many of the theories invented to meet objections raised by conscientious infidels! We find that to-day Bible-schools are springing up on every hand, the object of which is to interpret and justify God's speech. Every now and then ministers and rich laymen retire to some quiet spot, and devote a week or a fortnight to the delivery of lectures and sermons and addresses of an apologetic and expository character. This is God's speech; but it is so ambiguous, so self-contradictory, so inconsistent with well-established facts, that it requires a whole army of officials to expound, harmonise, and

straighten it out; and so impossible is this task that scarcely any two of these officials agree on a single point. This proves that, whatever the Bible is, it is not God's speech.

Now, whenever we read the Bible, nothing impresses us more than the fact that its writers are for ever endeavoring to justify the ways of God with men. We often have occasion to mention that the Israelites were never wholly loyal to Jehovah, but it is equally certain that, judging by appearances, Jehovah was never wholly loyal to them. He was frequently against them in times of war, and occasionally he absented himself from their great assemblies. Like Homer's Achilles, he would withdraw into his tent and sulk for weeks and months. His servants maintained, however, that his conduct was invariably diplomatic. He opposed his people in war to punish them for their sins; he hid his face to make them realise how essential his presence was; and whenever he was with them and on their side, it was alone for their good. He was never vindictive, revengeful, and cruel, though his *acts* seemed to be so when superficially interpreted, and when the motive behind them was unperceived. Sometimes the people accepted such apologies, but sometimes they revolted. Occasionally they saw through them, and expressed their resentment by persecuting the prophets.

It is absolutely undeniable that the existence of evil is completely irreconcilable with any doctrine of an omnipotent and all-good God. Of this the theologians are fully aware, though they never openly admit it. Some of them go the length of advocating the indispensableness of evil in the Divine economy. Without it, they argue, the glorious purposes of heaven would have been incapable of fulfilment; and, therefore, they do not hesitate to declare that evil was not only foreseen, but foreordained, by the Divine Being. Others teach that God only *permitted* evil to enter, and that now, in his infinite goodness, he is *overruling* it for good. All acknowledge that its existence is an insoluble mystery, and yet all try to exonerate God from all blame in the matter. But common sense tells us that whether God decreed, or whether he only permitted evil, he alone is responsible for it, and that if it deserves punishment it is upon him only it should fall. But that an omnipotent and all-good Deity either decreed or permitted evil is unthinkable; and as the existence of evil is incontrovertible, it follows that the existence of God is, both logically and ethically, unthinkable. No apology for evil in a universe made and governed by a perfect Being would for a moment be permissible.

There is still another apology for God in respect to the existence of evil. A few modern divines aver that evil entered the world in *defiance* of God's will. This implies that a perfect Being succeeded in creating a finite being who was yet more powerful and stronger of will than himself, which is too ridiculous to dwell upon; and the only excuse for this passing reference to it is the opportunity it affords to observe that such an apology for God deals him a mortal blow in the face.

Now, the theological scheme of redemption through the blood of Christ is based on the assumption that God either decreed or permitted the advent of evil, or had his plans thwarted by its introduction. In any case, whether we take evil in its ethical or in its theological connotation, God in Christ is said to have provided an infallible means of complete deliverance from it. Why or how the death on Calvary effects such a deliverance, or wherein exactly the salvation consists, no heart can conceive and no tongue can tell. The theological interpretations of both are innumerable, and as contradictory and mutually destructive. The theories of the atonement and of the plan of salvation, however, do not now concern us. The fact we call upon the theologians to face is the entirely indisputable one that the plan of salvation, whatever it is thought to be, has somehow miscarried. Indeed, it has been the most notorious failure in history. This must be acknowledged to be true by every honest person that keeps his eyes open;

and in certain moods the divines do admit and bewail it. But the question is how to explain it, while believing in a God of omnipotent love. In certain moods, even evangelical ministers complain that England is still a heathen country, and the same complaint was recently made against Scotland and Wales; and what is clearly meant is that these three countries, though nominally Christian, are still largely dominated by the powers of evil, which Christ came to break. Why are they still undestroyed? Nigh two thousand years have come and gone since Christ, by "his meritorious Cross and Passion," is said to have become the Savior of the world, and still the world is "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." What is the explanation offered by the ambassadors of the risen and glorified Redeemer?

Two apologies are advanced, both of which logically lead to Atheism. The first is that God in Christ is woefully handicapped by his disastrous resolution to work only through the Church. This apology degrades the Deity to the level of man, which is equivalent to denying his existence. To think of the Infinite, Almighty, and Eternal Being as "cabin'd, cribbed, confined" within such an institution as the Church is to be guilty of high treason against human intelligence. It is the very last refuge of theological despair, and a virtual confession of defeat. Preachers descant, with glowing zeal, on the completeness of Christ's power to save to the uttermost even the very worst, pretending to rely on him alone, and to glory in the merits of his Cross and Person; but when confronted with his incredible non-success in his voluntarily chosen mission, they resort to the base subterfuge that in the exercise of his unlimited power he is restricted to the limits of the capacity of weak and fallible men and women whom he has chosen to be his instruments, and through whom alone he has seen fit, in his sovereign grace, to reveal himself. "Why he has thus honored us," his humble devotees declare, "we cannot say; but such is his gracious will, and our hearts are aglow with gratitude." But thus to limit the unlimited is to annihilate it. Thus to account for the impotence of the Cross is to demonstrate its wholly mythical character.

The other apology offered flatly contradicts the first. It consists in the declaration, which is Biblical, that salvation is conditioned upon faith. The Gospel is indeed the power of God unto salvation, it is proudly announced, but only "to everyone that believeth," and every man has the power to refuse to believe. It is the freedom of the human will, not any lack of power and love in God, that accounts for the present condition of mankind. If men only willed to believe, to fall into the Divine arms, they would be transformed into God's image in the twinkling of an eye. It is unbelief that damns the world here and hereafter. God's Spirit is wrestling with us every moment, pleading with us to accept the finished work and be saved; but we are strong enough to quench this Spirit, to resist all his loving appeals, and go to hell for our pains. Such is the apology for God's failure to make us his own beloved people, and merely to state it is to expose its hollowness. Its only virtue is that it provides comfortable livings for thousands of men, many of whom would otherwise starve; and as long as superstition endures, it will be a dignified profession to act as wrestlers on God's behalf, to beseech men "on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God." Many years ago, a clergyman was officiating in a small country church, and the subject of his sermon was "Christ's Ambassadors." "Ambassadors who represent earthly monarchs," he said, "are surrounded by much pomp and splendor, and great is the dignity they enjoy. We ministers of the Gospel know little of worldly glory, but our dignity is the greatest imaginable, because we represent the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and the words we speak are words he himself puts into our mouths." The poor peasants who heard that statement were overawed, and in their hearts paid as much reverence to the man in the pulpit as if he had descended to his throne out of

heaven. And yet there were several in that rustic congregation who, while regarding the preacher as God's messenger, made no surrender of themselves to the Divine power supposed to be actively present.

Christian Theism is thus discredited by arguments elaborated in its defence. God denies his own existence by his non-resistance to the humiliating limitations put upon him by his alleged servants. Mr. Campbell said the other day that the Eternal Spirit had compelled him to preach from a certain grim text. The question comes naturally, if the Eternal Spirit compelled Mr. Campbell to preach a specific sermon, which meant so little to those concerned, why does he not compel men everywhere to accept the salvation procured at such cost by Christ, which is believed by many to be of infinite and eternal importance? The fact that the Eternal Spirit does not lovingly compel all to be saved through faith in Christ proves conclusively that he did not force the minister of the City Temple to deliver that particular sermon. In other words, it furnishes the strongest possible evidence that Christianity, like every other supernatural religion, is utterly false, and that the sooner it perishes, root and branch, the better it will be for the children of men.

J. T. LLOYD.

### The Last of the Hell-Fire Preachers.

"Of all the dull, stagnant, unedifying entourage, that of middle-class Dissent seems to me the stupidest."—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

THE publication, in a cheap edition, of a selection of Spurgeon's sermons, with an introduction by Sir W. Robertson Nicoll, is interesting. It serves to show the enormous difference in public opinion in the few years since the death of a man who was in his day a potent force in the religious world, and who probably addressed the largest congregation in the world. To win and keep such a position Spurgeon must have had peculiar claims to attention. He was narrow, bigoted, ignorant, but it was precisely because breadth, tolerance, and learning would have been objectionable to his following. The central fact in his career, the corner-stone of his fortunes, was that his utterances reflected the thick ideas of the lower middle-class. He was plain John Blunt, saying a thing straight out, and occasionally Jack Pudding, reckless in raising a laugh. The very names of his books show this—*The Cheque Book on the Bank of Faith*, *A Double Knock at the Door of the Young*, *The Spare Half-Hour*, and *The Salt Cellars*, all in the good illiterate tradition of early Victorian Nonconformity.

Spurgeon was a most copious writer. He published a sermon a week, without a break, for two generations. His *Treasury of David* consisted of seven volumes containing over two thousand pages, and he also edited a magazine, *The Sword and Trowel*. Out of all this mass Sir W. Robertson Nicoll has got together a handful of sermons which should give the *coup de grâce* to any suspicion that Spurgeon's writings are literature.

These sermons show that of the higher and deeper elements of the English language he had no suspicion. Not for him were the rolling harmonies of Jeremy Taylor, the subtle cadences of Milton, the chastened utterances of Newman. He could not even echo Baxter or Bunyan. His language was simply the speech of the middle class, purged of its slang.

To him, the magic of bygone things, the necromancy of learning, and art and literature, save as it may have touched the narrow circle of his Baptist creed, were repellent. Like a fanatical Mohammedan, he would have destroyed all literature but the sacred volume. He was the most perfect example of the Philistine, whom Matthew Arnold loved to banter, and who excited the polite derision of all cultured foreigners. Spurgeon's ideas were as shallow as a saucer. He had the true priestly temperament, with its personal importance, itsunction, its liking for the rack. He had, moreover,

one of those deplorable natures which never know the careless joys of a springtime. At sixteen, when other boys are at school, he preached with much acceptance to large congregations.

Not only was he intolerant, but he was infallible. A thing was right because he wanted to do it. He was a smoker and a teetotaler, therefore he defended tobacco; but alcohol moved him to furies of derision. In early life he shouted against the iniquity of Sunday travelling. In middle age he risked his immortal soul by driving to church like any episcopal sinner. Tartuffe could not have done more. Spurgeon's verbal knowledge of the Bible was nearly perfect; but he treated the volume as if it were a newspaper. Hence his success with half-educated tradesmen and their wives, and his enormous limitations. Spurgeon was the last preacher of any eminence who taught the fiendish dogma of eternal torment. Although his theology abounded in darkness, as of blackest night, his utterances were callous. Like others before him, he expressed the usual hypocritical sorrow for the sinner, but contemplated the everlasting torture and damnation of the bulk of the human race with singular and touching equanimity. For, in truth, he was obsessed with the dogmas of his creed. He had no patience with scepticism, no interest in any point of view but his own. He never tried to understand the meaning of Freethought. He had no time, he pathetically exclaimed, "to play tomfool with Socinians, Rationalists, and suchlike people."

Spurgeon could neither have grown nor thrived outside the British Isles. His personality is the oddest blend imaginable, for it includes a good deal of Stiggins and a touch of Pecksniff, and a suggestion of Calvin, with an arrogant want of breadth of mind impossible to parallel outside English Nonconformity. At the close of his life he was more notorious than famous. He worked for notoriety as others work for fame. He was a type of the Nonconformists it was his pride to believe he represented.

He was as incapable of understanding the past and as blind to the future as the stupidest of his congregation who cut cheese with a wire for a living. The pity of it was that he firmly believed the imperfect, one-sided theology which he expounded sufficient for everything. The folly of it all! No one can rely on the justice of a man who fashions and worships an unjust god, nor on his humanity when he incorporates fiendish motives in his most sacred dogmas, nor on his intellectuality whilst he derides reason as a test of truth. Because he was considered a light in Philistia, Spurgeon thought himself the heir and successor of the apostles. He was, in reality, the last preacher with any pretensions to eminence who taught the brutal, Biblical dogma of eternal damnation. For which, as often as we think of it, we are devoutly thankful.

MIMNERMUS.

A future life has no single argument to support it, and the non-existence of life after death is in consonance with the whole range of human knowledge.—*Metchnikoff*, "The Nature of Man."

The assumption of a specific vital force in every form is not wholly superfluous, but inadmissible.—*Verwoorn*, "General Physiology," p. 46.

The Hull stipendiary magistrate is upset about nothing. He had a man before him called Arthur Carter, a Hull lighterman, charged with stealing twenty shillings from his sister-in-law. It transpired that he had had no education, held no religious beliefs, and had never heard of God or the Bible. A witness against him, a girl of eleven, had also never heard of God or the Bible; and, strange as it may seem, the magistrate declined to accept her evidence, so that the charge had to be dismissed. The magistrate could hardly understand persons having never heard of God and never seen the Bible; he said it was "astounding and most deplorable." But why? Most of the people brought before him know all about God and the Bible. Yet they are there!

## Acid Drops.

One of the pastimes of the "good Christians" is looking after other people's morals. It is a form of virtue—if you must call it so—which is as easy as it is exciting. We see that a "Public Morals" Conference has been sitting at Caxton Hall under the auspices of the National Social Purity Crusade, and that a very large proportion of the leading lights are reverend gentlemen. Now we venture to suggest, not jocularly, but in all seriousness, that the men of God would do well to leave this subject alone. The nastiest offenders, judging by the Police-court reports, are too frequently members of Christian bodies. *John Bull's* exposure of a Brighton brute who assaulted a child, last week, stated that the man was "a light of the local Bethel." We ourselves happened to be in court the other day when a wretched creature was being tried on a charge of indecent exposure. The evidence was overwhelming, and the fellow had been playing his filthy game for a long time. But a lot of witnesses to character came forward, including a parson, all of them declaring that they couldn't possibly believe him to be guilty of the alleged offence. He was found guilty and sentenced to imprisonment in spite of them; even in spite of the parson's statement that the defendant had been engaged in the Sunday-school and was a member of the Men's Bible Class.

The Bishop of Winchester, in his letter to this "Public Morals" Conference, expressed a hope for "Christian co-operation in the endeavor to discover and grapple with the principal causes of the moral corruption that infects our modern civilisation." The phrase "Christian co-operation" implies that Christians are the only people who can do anything for morality. We tell the Bishop, on the contrary, that Christians are the very people who promote the moral corruption which he deplors. We do not say that they do it knowingly. What we say is that Christianity, being still professed but no longer believed, is nothing but a huge organised hypocrisy; that it saps the national veracity and sincerity; that it wields no moral influence whatever, but stands in the way of a real and progressive moral education of children in schools and adults in places of religious assembly.

The danger of dealing with "public morals" in the peremptory ways that piously good people so much affect was shown in the speech of Mr. John Murray, the well-known publisher. He told the Conference that immoral books should be suppressed as well as immoral periodicals. By immoral books he meant the writings of Karl Marx, Henry George, and Nietzsche. Such books taught what was injurious to human morals. There you are! That is what this sort of thing always comes to. Intolerant people argue that *their* morality is the whole morality and nothing but morality; that their opinions are the opinions which are necessary to their morality; and that all other opinions are therefore inimical to morality, and to be suppressed accordingly. Mr. John Murray really claims that all opinions contrary to his own ought to be put down by the police. Is it possible to conceive a more extravagant egotism?

Mr. John Murray is the publisher of the copyright Byron, in which is now included the fourteen stanzas that he wrote of the seventeenth Canto of *Don Juan*. Everybody knows how the sixteenth Canto ended. Don Juan put out his hand in the dark for the ghost and found a woman:—

"In full, voluptuous, but not o'ergrown bulk,  
The phantom of her frolic Grace—Fitz-Fulke."

Now this last verse of the fragmentary seventeenth Canto describes Juan and her frolic Grace at the breakfast-table the next morning, both bearing traces of a sleepless if agreeable night. Our readers know how Byron *would* paint such a picture. And the publisher is Mr. John Murray, who actually wants to suppress the sober Karl Marx, the positively pious Henry George, and the thoroughly decorous Nietzsche. It is astonishing. One might almost fancy that Mr. John Murray is a super-subtle humorist.

We are not humorous, but perfectly serious, in advising all these gentlemen—and especially the *reverend* gentlemen—to start the purification of literature with *the Bible*. The "holy" volume is put into the hands of boys and girls in day-schools as well as in Sunday-schools, although it contains things to shock a bawd and make a prostitute blush. And the people who insist on the most gratuitous and unspeakable filth being forced upon the attention of children are the very people who clamor for a fresh law against "immoral" publications. Satan rebuking Sin was nothing to this.

Cobbett's old "Vice Society"—his cruel abbreviation of the Society for the Suppression of Vice—carried on and paid for most of the "blasphemy" prosecutions against Eaton, Williams, Carlile, Watson, and Hetherington. We may depend on it that the "Public Morals" people would soon be doing the same thing.

It is a great pity that ministers of religion are able to sit on public bodies like the London County Council. Rev. J. Scott Lidgett, Nonconformist and Paritan, who is a member of that body, moved the following resolution:—

"That, in the opinion of the Council, the public exhibition, at places of entertainment in London, of pictures representing the recent prize fight in the United States of America is undesirable; and that the proprietors of London music-halls and other places licensed by the Council for cinematograph performances be so informed."

With the insolence of his kind, Mr. Lidgett informed the Council that he had received letters sympathising with his motion from the Bishop of London, the Bishop of Southwark, and the Rev. Silvester Horne, M.P. A self-respecting Council would have told this clerical member that these gentlemen belonged to his own profession, and naturally took the same view that he did; and that, as they were not members of the Council, they were no more than any other three citizens of London. But, instead of doing this, the Council accepted his motion by a majority of 45 to 29. We are glad to note that the Rev. Stewart D. Headlam voted against it. But he is a very exceptional parson.

Mr. Lidgett pretended that he had no objection to exhibitions of scientific boxing. Well, if Johnson did not give a great exhibition of scientific boxing in his fight with Jeffries, what *did* he do? Mr. Lidgett got nearer the truth when he said that "the fight stirred up the animosities of great multitudes of people because it so chanced that the premier pugilist of the world had a dark skin." Yes, but it is the whites who display all the animosity. The blacks have no particular cause for dissatisfaction. Their representative won. It was the representative of the whites—deliberately put forward as their representative—who lost. And the assertion that the fight pictures would stir up racial hatred simply means that the whites cannot stand a licking in a fair fight. This is the real animus of the crusade against the pictures, and it is utterly disgraceful; in fact, it almost makes one wish one were a black.

The London County Council has no legal power to stop the exhibition of the pictures of the Johnson and Jeffries encounter. Their resolution is simply a threat—and Mr. Lidgett knows it. Well, we say that this is doubly disgraceful. It is mean, underhand, and contemptible. The threat, put into plain language, comes to this: "If you public caterers act contrary to our wishes, we shall find very good means to deprive you of your licenses, and ruin you." If the resolution doesn't mean that it means nothing at all. And it is a Christian minister who takes the lead in this dirty business.

The New Theology weekly, commenting on the Johnson-Jeffries fight, and the interest taken in it by the newspapers of the whole English-speaking world, says that "it shows that we are, after all, not far removed from the brute." Perhaps so; but, in that case, what was our Creator doing when he made us? And what has Christianity been doing for nearly two thousand years to leave us so brutal at the finish?

There was an old lady who gave it as her opinion that Adam's job of naming the animals in the Garden of Eden would not be a very difficult one, because anybody who saw a pig would know at once that it was a pig, and what else could anyone call a cow but a cow? We do not know if this person was any relative of the Rev. Dr. Hastings, of Edinburgh, but we are reminded of her by his remarking that man is conscious of a presence in the universe which he "instinctively addresses as 'O God.'" We venture humbly to present Dr. Hastings with additional proofs of his thesis, which he is at liberty to use, with or without acknowledgment. Often in the streets, when one person treads on another's favorite corn, we hear the instinctive cry, "Oh Christ!" Sometimes it is "Jesus Christ!" but the difference in phrasing makes no essential difference to the argument. When men read of a disaster involving loss of life, we often hear the instinctive cry, "Good God!" and the adjective is duly emphasised. Dr. Hastings' own experience will supply numerous illustrations to the same end; and we are always pleased to suggest lines of inquiry to earnest seekers after truth.

In that characteristically dishonest and Christian-Evidence-mongering production, *The Religious Beliefs of Scientists*, noticed in last week's *Freethinker*, there is one rather illuminating calculation, the significance of which was, we expect, quite unnoticed by the compiler. Professor Gladstone is reported as saying that he has known of 41 Presidents of the British Association. Of the opinions of 17 he was not certain, but some were unbelievers. He did know the opinions of 24, and 20 of them were Christians and 4 Freethinkers. Allowing for the same proportion in the United Kingdom, we get between seven and eight millions of Freethinkers for the whole country—a result curiously analogous to the last census returns in France. Certainly we never dreamed of claiming more than that number of people who were aware of their own disbelief in the Christian religion. Probably Christians may face these figures in a thank-God-it-is-no-worse kind of a spirit. And as we have said, if the intelligence of the editor could have risen to the point of seeing the full significance of Gladstone's statement, it would have remained unrecorded.

People called Shakespeare ought to change their names and call themselves something else. There is a Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, who is something or other in the "Free Churches" organisation. This gentleman had an article on "Religion in America" in last week's *Christian World*. One sentence struck us as probably true. "It did not appear to me," Mr. Shakespeare wrote, "that the best brains of America were being given to the ministerial office." Does he mean that they are in England? Is there a preacher in any Church in England who has written a book that can be called literature?

Mr. Shakespeare, who by the way has just returned from America, says that among the Baptist ministers the rule is to dress like laymen, and he never in his life "saw so varied an extent of blue, red, and green ties in a ministers' meeting." He attributes to this freedom in dress the loss of much of the influence of the clergy. He may be quite correct in his surmise. The priest is essentially one who is believed to be different from ordinary mortals, and one way of indicating this difference has always been, from savage times onward, a distinction in dress. Remove these outward marks, and in a modern society the priest is dependent upon personal qualities for ascendancy. In our times, certainly, these are not sufficiently striking to overawe laymen. As a class, there is no other educated section of the community that show a lower average intelligence than the clergy, and as for character—well, we will be charitable, and say that the character of the average parson is certainly not superior to that of the average layman.

Absurdity reached its highest point—even in religion—the other day when 20,000 children, at the Alexandra Palace, "unanimously and solemnly protested against any alteration in the King's Declaration without a direct mandate from the people." The idea of 20,000 children, brought to the Palace for a holiday, and having this resolution read to them to vote, beats anything we ever heard of for downright idiocy. And the same people will protest, on their own account, that they are the only ones who may be safely trusted with the education of the rising generation. And other people are fools enough to believe them.

Rev. D. S. Hunt, of Tunbridge Wells, is disturbed over the running of Sunday motor omnibuses in that eminently respectable town. Apparently the rev. gentleman has been trying to get the 'buses stopped, and failed. We judge this to be the case from his asking the people to pray to God to stop them "in some way," and he expresses the conviction that what cannot be done in any other way could be done by God. We like the manner in which Mr. Hunt gives God *carte blanche* in the matter. He is to stop them in "some way." Any way will do so long as it is effective. Perhaps a few "providentially" arranged accidents would meet the case.

That shining light of the Church, the Rev. A. J. Waldron, has discovered that it is a "heroic thing to be a Christian." His own heroism was demonstrated by leaving one Church for another, and managing to get a nice comfortable job in his new spiritual sphere. Mr. Waldron's reason for regarding it as a heroic thing to be a Christian is that a Christian cannot cheat his employer or sweat his workpeople. Well, all we can say is that many succeed in combining Christianity with both things. But what a conception of heroism! A hero is one who resists the temptation to sweat one class or rob another. Again we say, what a conception of heroism! And what a lofty Christian the Vicar of Brixton must be!

Rev. T. Rhondda Williams propounds the convenient theory that all the best criticism of the Bible has been done by its friends. "A great deal that Bradlaugh said about the Bible," he admits, "was perfectly true; but his criticism was all negative, and the result is that Bradlaughism to-day is not a factor to be reckoned with." Isn't it, though? Under another name, it is being preached by the Rev. R. J. Campbell, T. Rhondda Williams, & Co. Bradlaugh's truth has been borrowed by the new representatives of the old faith he attacked. He has converted *them*, and *they* say he has failed. If he could only see the comedy how Bradlaugh would smile!

Canon Willink, the vicar of Yarmouth, has given orders that women without hats or bonnets are not on any account to be allowed to enter the parish church. They must "remember what is due to God's house." But this only the language of the caretaker. It is gross presumption on his part to talk as if the house were his own.

"How imperfect," exclaims the Rev. R. P. Roseveare, "is the ordinary Deptford man's conception of the Christ-life!" The reverend gentleman might say the same of the ordinary clergyman. Christ taught "Blessed be ye poor" and "Woe unto you rich," and the ordinary clergyman is willing to take all the risks of the opposite attitude.

According to the *Daily News* and the *Star*, the bombarding of Cabinet Ministers with Suffragette letters is going on very actively again. Some of the ladies have old-fashioned ideas of "God with us." They see the divine hand in all misfortunes that overtake their opponents. It appears that "a Minister, who not long ago sustained the loss of his favorite daughter, was informed that the Almighty was to be thanked for inflicting upon him this unhappy bereavement." Many good Christians think like that, though few dare to say it nowadays, but a lady who is at once pious and excited will say anything.

Mrs. Pankhurst conveyed the idea, some time ago, that God was with what she called the Woman's Movement. We hope God is not responsible for the Bill which the women suffragists of all schools have just agreed upon, and which has just passed its second reading. Under that Bill, if it became law, half the prostitutes would have votes, while the wives and mothers had none. If any Deity sanctioned this it must be the one who was so friendly with Madame Rahab.

Jesus Christ preached Hell and didn't copyright his sermon. Rev. R. J. Campbell's sermon on Hell is "Copyrighted in the United Kingdom and in the United States of America." He wants all the money it will bring, anyhow. We have read it in the *New Theology* weekly, and it is mere sentimental moonshine. Every word of Jesus Christ's on the subject is twisted into a far-fetched meaning. But the principal point of the sermon is this. Mr. Campbell says that a hell of eternal torment is to him unthinkable. He could not possibly believe it. Yet he admits that "Christianity has taught it." Perhaps he will honestly—yes, *honestly*—try to explain what was the use of Christianity to the world if it could go wrong for nearly nineteen hundred years on such a central and vital point? Why did Jesus Christ come in the first century, and talk so that he was completely misunderstood until Mr. Campbell came to explain him in the twentieth century? These questions demand a reply.

Mr. Justice Robertson, Vice-Chancellor of the Punjab University, is now in this country, and appears on public platforms as a bolster-up of the Christian religion. Speaking in London a few days ago, he is reported to have expressed himself thus: "It is pure twaddle to talk about the Hindu or Mohammedan religion as in any sort of way, for purely moral and ethical progress, on a level with Christianity." It is no concern of ours which religion is the best, because we know that they are all bad. But Mr. Justice Robertson ought to remember that Hindus and Mohammedans regard it as "pure twaddle" to talk about Christianity as being in any sort of way on a level with their religions. The representatives of every religion are special pleaders, professional holders of briefs, and of necessity talk an enormous lot of twaddle. We are firmly convinced, however, that if there were to be a world-competition in twaddle talking, the Christians would easily win the prize. They are the biggest boasters on earth; and they are always at it.

We see that the Rev. J. F. T. Hollowes, addressing a Carr's-lane Chapel meeting at Birmingham, said that "there

was one of the Hindu sacred books that no Englishman would dare to translate because it was so vile that he would be proceeded against by the Governmental authorities for publishing a thoroughly bad book." Doesn't this reverend gentleman see that the translators of his Bible have taken full license to render the "vile" parts into plain English; not always as plain as the original, it is true, for if they translated some passages quite literally the Bible would have to be kept under lock and key by the head of every household. If the blue and purple portions of the Authorised Version were printed by anyone but the licensees, the printers would certainly be sent to prison for obscenity. A man in America suffered a heavy sentence for writing by no means the worst Bible text on a postcard. And the same thing would happen here.

Mr. William Watson, the poet, suggested that the Liverpool Cathedral project should be dropped until the city's destitution, vice, and misery had been dealt with. All the good Church people cried "Shame!" at the blasphemous suggestion. The clergy did not pause in their industrious collection of cash. They have got some big bags lately. Lord Derby has given £5,000, and Mr. Arthur Earle, a Liverpool merchant, has offered to subscribe £10,000 on condition that £50,000 is raised for the completion fund by June, 1915. Raising the wind is the one great power that Christianity has left. It is the religion of the classes.

The House of Lords, in Committee on the Census Bill, inserted the inclusion of "religious profession" in the particulars embraced in the census schedule. Of course it will be eliminated when the Bill goes back to the House of Commons. Meanwhile it is to be observed that the object of the 38 Lords who voted (against 31) for this inquisitorial clause is to hinder the disestablishment of "the Church in Wales." The Bishop of St. Asaph let this be plainly seen. His lordship made the intensely foolish remark that he could prove that "the Church in Wales is in a great majority over any single Nonconformist body in Wales." Very likely! The important question is whether the Church in Wales represents the majority of the Welsh people.

An "Anglo-Indian Journalist," writing in the *Christian World*, complains that the recent Missionary Conference avoided certain aspects of missionary work. He says, the fact has to be recognised that in India, "the upper classes are now, in a large measure, gospel-hardened. If they refuse to accept Christianity it is not because they do not know or understand its message. They are familiar with the New Testament narratives and can discover inconsistencies in the story with as much skill as an Ingersoll." And of the middle classes he says, "There was a time when the appearance of a preacher in a bazaar excited curiosity and drew a crowd. But in some districts it is not easy now for a *padre*, and still less for a native evangelist, to get an audience even during a fair." He adds, that in a large part of Bengal the rate of conversion may be put down at an average of one convert per missionary per year. These comments come as a very effective rejoinder to the talk of the headway Christianity is making among the heathen.

The Bishop of Birmingham has just pronounced an eloquent eulogium upon the "Virgin Mother," a pure creation of the Catholic Church. He urged his hearers to "dwell upon her memory as the ideal of womanhood—so modest, so domestic, yet saturated with the Scriptures, and full of the Divine love and sympathy." In what historical document does his lordship find the character of the mother of Jesus so fully depicted as to justify him in pronouncing her "the ideal of womanhood"? The truth is that we know nothing about her character. Inferentially we learn that the relations between her and Jesus were somewhat strained, to say the least. It is not at all improbable that she agreed with his brothers in thinking that he was off his head. At any rate, if she was an ideal mother, Jesus was anything but an ideal son. On one occasion, he caused her inexplicable anxiety and addressed her unfilially; on another, he spoke harshly to her; on another, he refused to acknowledge her as his mother; and on another, he called her somebody else's mother.

Without knowing it, the Rev. Dr. Jowett uttered a great truth at Edinburgh the other day. "This morning," wrote John Woolman, a Quaker, in his journal, "through the descendings of heavenly dews, I am greatly comforted." Commenting on that saying, Dr. Jowett dramatically asked, "What has mental excellence got to do with that?" Exactly, and therein lies its utter condemnation. Religious experiences are the outcome of emotional disease, and emotional

disease results from a wrong use of the intellect. Religion will die as soon as intellectual excellence is brought to bear upon it. Bradlaugh was gloriously right when he said that it requires brains to make an Atheist.

Dr. Newton Marshall says that "the Cross is the last and strongest appeal of God to man's stubborn will." Then man is stronger than God and ought to occupy his throne. If such a God existed he would deserve man's most withering contempt. In other words, he would not be God.

A correspondent writes to the *British Congregationalist* asking for, "in plain English, a theory of the cross which a modern mind can accept and find a use for." What a modest request! Other people have asked for a recipe for perpetual motion, and it seems to us that one request is as likely to meet with as satisfactory an answer as the other.

Some time ago we noted, from "information received," that a movement was on foot to set up a kind of trade union among curates. Now, we see that there is to be a sort of Labor Exchange set up for the province of Canterbury, by means of which clergymen will be drafted into parishes where they are most needed, or parishes suited to their capacities. If the dignified clergy go on copying the labor world at this rate, we may soon expect to see processions of one class of clergy out on strike, with another class initiating lock-outs or importing blacklegs.

Archdeacon Robins has arrived in England from Athabasca, in the far north-west of Canada. It is a sparsely populated district of 200,000 square miles, and he superintends its spiritual affairs. One of his ideas is the building of twelve churches, so that the settlers may be properly reminded that they are not really settlers but pilgrims, and that their real home (if they only get there) is in the beautiful land above. He thinks he can induce them to build the churches themselves, but he wants to raise £600 over here for the fittings and other things. At the same time, he advises Britishers with a bit of money (tramps like J. C. and the twelve apostles are not wanted) to go over to Athabasca and add to the inhabitants of his diocese. Altogether, the reverend gentleman seems a pretty smart commercial traveller.

## The International Freethought Congress at Brussels.

AUGUST 21, 22, 23, and 24, 1910.

### Program.

*Saturday, August 20.*—Reception of the Delegates (from 7 to 9 p.m.) at the Hotel Cygne, Grand-place, No. 9.

*Sunday, August 21.*—9.30 a.m., Inauguration of the Banner of the Belgian National Freethought Federation. Great popular demonstration. Formation of procession; all the Belgian Societies will attend and unfurl their banners; many musical bands. 10.30 a.m., at the Grand-place, Commemoration of Ferrer. Laying of a Stone on the spot where the Counts Egmont and Horne perished at the hands of the Inquisition in the sixteenth century. 2.30 p.m., opening of the Congress at the Grande Salle des Fêtes de la Madelaine, rue Duquesnoy. Honorary Presidents, Anatole France and Ernest Haeckel. Music, speeches of Honorary Presidents. Speeches by M. Furnémont and a Delegate from each nationality. 6 p.m.—Grand Banquet.

*Monday, August 22.*—Congress meets from 10 a.m. to midday, and again at 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Subject of discussion: "On Liberty of Conscience and its guarantees in the different countries." 5 p.m., Reception of the Congress at the Hotel de Ville by the Burgomaster and Sheriffs and Common Council, followed by a musical and literary fête.

*Tuesday, August 23.*—9 a.m. to midday, Congress meets. 2 p.m., Visit to International Exhibition. Evening, music entertainment in one of the halls of the Exhibition.

*Wednesday, August 24.*—10 a.m., Plenary meeting at the Hotel de Ville. 2 p.m., Visit to the Rationalist Orphanage.

Every delegate will receive copy of a Guide Book containing all necessary information.

The subscription to the Congress has been fixed at 10 francs each society and 5 francs for individuals.

A card of membership gives right of entry to all the festivities organised by the Congress Committee.

WM. HEAFORD.



### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

September 4, 11, 18, 25, St. James's Hall, London.

October 2, Glasgow; 9, Manchester; 16, St. James's Hall; 23, Leicester; 30, Birmingham.

### To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND: 1910.—Previously acknowledged, £220 4s. 7d. Received since:—C. J., £2; Three Atheists, 13s.; A. J. R., £1; W. Whitworth, 2s. 6d.

E. C. CORNETT.—Thanks to all for their good wishes.

H. GUNNING.—Dickman's brother's letters are all right—from a Christian point of view. Not from *our* point of view, of course. We should call them mean, unkind, and even cruel—if we did not remember that he is actuated by what is, in many respects, the worst religion in the world. We understand your indignation.

EDWIN PURCHES.—Thanks for the reference, although we had already seen a notice of the article. We have dealt with it. Mr. Foote is in pretty good health now, and hopes to be in first-rate fettle by September.

W. G. CHRISTIE.—Sent as requested.

C. J.—You still prefer to remain unknown. Thanks this way, at any rate.

F. J.—Major John C. Harris was the real originator of the President's Honorarium Fund, which he started with a handsome cheque. He kept at us for years about it, and eventually Mr. de Caux's summer appeal was transformed into the present annual one. The dear old Major used often to say to us, "Well now, how about that Honorarium for the President? Can't it be done? Won't you let me die happy?" He was a man of the rarest good nature—never so happy as when promoting the welfare of others. He was grieved to think that his Archbishop, as he called us, hadn't even the salary of a Methodist minister.

R. J. KAY.—We have forwarded your letter to Mr. Dobell, and shall probably hear from him on the matter. Personally, we consider the circulation of James Thomson's (don't put a "p" in it, please) writings infinitely more important than troubling about the spot where his dead body was laid. That seems to us a morbid feeling resulting from the Christian practice of burying corpses, in association with the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, and destined to disappear as Cremation triumphs.

J. RIGHOUSE.—See paragraph. Thanks.

G. D.—Your letter dated July 15 arrived three days later. Somebody must have the last word in every controversy. According to journalistic etiquette, which is on the whole wise if a correspondent criticises a leading article, the writer of it replies, and there the matter ends. With regard to the suggested building fund, we venture to make two counter suggestions: first, that the small and slowly accumulating building fund of the political society you belong to is money diverted from present usefulness; second, that when you start applying it you will probably "blue" it all in twelve months.

PERRY BARR.—You omitted your name, we presume inadvertently. Your Christian friend's question is no answer to *your* question. Press him to answer you first, and answer him afterwards.

B. DAVIS.—Argument is not necessary. Mr. Cohen contrived to say the opposite of what he meant in that sentence. These slips will happen.

G. HARVEY.—Tuesday is too late for the next issue.

J. SMITH.—A silly article. It is shameful, at this time of day, for some to write, and others to read, in leading newspapers, that the so-called lower animals have "no speech." As a matter of fact, the fundamentals of human speech are of pre-human origin. What else, for instance, are interjections?

A. B. HANDLEY.—Christians are afraid to read the other side; that is one of the troubles.

A. P.—May use it next week.

W. P. ADAMSON.—A good letter, and will do good. You were lucky to get in such a paper at all.

L. BARKER.—Thanks for cutting. We are glad to see Dr. Gwynne, Bishop of Khartoum, complaining that he was told by Lord Kitchener, "Don't you talk religion to the natives; I won't have it." The soldier was wiser than the missionary.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for cuttings.

A. G. STAMFORD.—Pleased to have your interesting letter. We know what a mean and brutal tyranny religion is in the Army. The tract is quite beneath contempt. To offer a sober soldier such stuff is a disgusting insult.

C. W. STYRING.—It is a pity the newsagents who get sold out so often don't take more copies of this journal.

E. B.—Things are shaping better in Spain. Thanks.

R. CHAPMAN.—Glad to hear that three members of the South Shields Branch will attend the International Freethought Congress at Brussels.

W. STEWART.—Monday is the last day for advertisements. That is the explanation.

A. H. TABRUM.—We posted your letter, in a great hurry, to the writer of the article; not hearing from him, we made inquiries, and learnt that it never reached him. We conclude it was lost in the post. Kindly repeat.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

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.

PERSONS remitting for literature by stamps are specially requested to send *halfpenny stamps*.

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

### Sugar Plums.

London Freethinkers will please note that Sunday evening Freethought lectures will be delivered at St. James's Hall, Great Portland-street, W., during September and October. Mr. Foote will inaugurate the course as usual. Mr. Cohen and Mr. Lloyd will also lecture. Fuller details will appear in due course.

We beg to remind our readers that we are trying to raise £30 towards the expenses of the delegation from the National Secular Society to the International Freethought Congress at Brussels in August. The time is brief, and those who mean to subscribe should do so promptly. Messrs. Foote, Cohen, and Lloyd are amongst the delegates; Miss Vance makes a fourth; and Messrs. V. Roger and W. Heaford complete the six.

British "saints" who wish to go to Brussels, and put in some attendance at the Congress, should communicate at once with Miss E. M. Vance, the N.S.S. Secretary, at 2 Newcastle-street, London, E.C., who is trying to make up a party paying their own expenses. The larger the party, of course, the better terms she will be able to obtain. Every member of the party will have a ticket of admission to the Congress, with a right of speaking and voting.

The Brussels Congress will be largely occupied with Francisco Ferrer, his murder, and the memorial which is being raised to him, and the efforts that may be made to carry on his work in Spain. This ought to make certain a big rally of Freethinkers from all parts of the world, and we should like to see Great Britain well represented.

Messrs. Smith & Son are now supplying the *Freethinker*, although they do not sell it like other papers at their bookstalls. Secularists (or others) who find any difficulty in obtaining the paper should try placing an order for a regular weekly copy at the nearest Smith's railway bookstall. If they experience any difficulty *there* they should communicate direct to us. In a large number of places where Smith & Son have lost, or never had, a railway bookstall, they have shops, and an order for the paper might be left at one of these. We hope our friends will take this "tip" and act upon it at once.

"My Memories of Mark Twain," by W. H. Howells, is the leading feature of the July number of *Harper's Magazine*.

It is naturally most interesting. With regard to Mark Twain's ideas on religion, Mr. Howells says :—

"In one of our walks about Hartford, when he was in the first fine flush of his agnosticism, he declared that Christianity had done nothing to improve morals and conditions, and that the world under the highest pagan civilisation was as well off as it was under the highest Christian influences."

Mr. Howells offered him "abundant proofs that he was wrong," but none of the proofs are mentioned, and in the absence of them it is simply one man's view against another's. Mr. Howells continues :—

"Later he was more tolerant in his denials of Christianity, but just then he was feeling his freedom from it, and rejoicing in having broken what he felt to have been the shackles of belief worn so long. He greatly admired Robert Ingersoll, whom he called an angelic orator, and regarded as an evangel of a new gospel, the gospel of free thought."

Mark Twain's wife eventually ceased to be a formal Christian too, but she was grieved by his denial of immortality, and for her sake he pretended to have changed his mind on that subject, but she saw through his "heroic lie." Mr. Howells finally says :—

"To make an end of these records as to Clemens's beliefs, so far as I knew them, I should say that he never went back to anything like faith in the Christian theology, or in the notion of life after death, or in conscious divinity. .... All his expressions to me were of a courageous renunciation of any hope of living again, or elsewhere seeing those he had lost. He suffered terribly in their loss, and he was not fool enough to try ignoring his grief. He knew that for that there were but two medicines; that it would wear itself out with the years, and that meanwhile there was nothing for it but those respites in which the mourner forgets himself in slumber."

Many of our readers will doubtless turn to the article itself. Our extracts should whet their appetites.

## Elijah the Tishbite.

"How long halt ye between two opinions?"

OF all the Bible worthies, there is no one whose personality is more commanding and picturesque than that of Elijah. A study, therefore, of this worthy cannot but be profitable. Be it remembered, also, that if the Bible be true, Elijah is no mere phantom, but veritable flesh and blood, and that the statements respecting him are not fairy legends, but actual facts.

Elijah rushes into view as a comet does. He is a strange and wonderful being, forbidding in his aspect and ferocious as a tiger. He is called Elias in the New Testament, and is supposed to have been a native of Thisbe or Tishbe, in Galilee; hence he is denominated a Tishbite. According to the Bible chronology, he filled the rôle of a prophet for fourteen years—from 910 to 896 B.C. How old he was when he commenced his public career we know not.

His first sentence strikes upon our ears like a thunder-clap, for his words are those of woe and desolation. Said he to Ahab, King of Israel, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word" (1 Kings xvii. 1).

It is only reasonable to suppose that the prophet uttered this imperious threat by the command of his God; for otherwise he would be as great a *farceur* as was Bombastes Furioso. But why was the threat uttered? The reason given is because Ahab, the King of Israel, "took to wife Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, King of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal and worshiped him" (1 Kings xvi. 31).

The Lord God of the Jews was always a jealous, revengeful, unjust, and merciless God, visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children, and punishing the innocent instead of the guilty; and here we have full proof of his being so. What was meant by preventing the falling of the dew and rain, emblems of the mercy which

"is twice blessed;

Which blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

It meant starvation and lingering death to tens of thousands of innocent persons; it meant that Famine and Pestilence, those gaunt and blear-eyed sister

hags, should stalk through the land, bringing woes unutterable—not upon the king and his courtiers, not upon the rich and powerful, but upon the poor and needy, upon those who were least able to bear so terrible an infliction. What an illustration is this of the "mysterious ways" of him whose "tender mercies are over all his works" (Psalm cxlv. 9).

Yet the commentator, Morris, says :—

"Surely no man will affirm that the Supreme Ruler of the world might not, after much long suffering and forbearance, justly punish a people for their sins; or pretend that it was evil in a prophet to foretell the impending judgment, that it might be prevented by their repentance."

How the Supreme Ruler of the world,—with whom a "thousand years are as one day" (2 Peter iii. 8)—could have had "much long suffering and forbearance," doth not appear; especially as the punishment awarded was not for the sins of the people, but for Ahab's sin. Further, had it been for the sins of the people, no time was given them for repentance. Still further, how was it possible that "their repentance" could have prevented the execution of that ruin which the Supreme Ruler, being an unchangeable being, had already determined to bring upon them?

But, though he was careless of the lives of the innocent and the young, he was particularly watchful over his prophet, for he spake thus to him: "Get thee hence, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith; thou shalt drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee" (1 Kings xvii. 3, 4). And all this, we are told, came to pass. Where this brook was no one has ever been able to say; but this is not to be wondered at, seeing that God had determined to hide Elijah from Ahab—that is, from all people who might have told Ahab where he was—for a long period; according to Jesus Christ, Elijah was not seen by Ahab "for three years and six months" (Luke iv. 25), during which time the drought continued.

As to the prophet having been fed by ravens, which "brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening" (1 Kings xvii. 6), great doubts are entertained by commentators. The word "orebim," which is translated in the text "ravens," is believed by some to mean "merchants" or "Arabs." The general opinion appears to be that these *orebim* were the inhabitants of a town named Orbo, that was situated not far from Scythopolis, on the border of Arabia. Eusebius confirms this view, and says definitely that, during the drought, "the inhabitants of this town supplied Elijah with food." One objection to this interpretation of the text is that the prophet was directed to this place in order to conceal himself from those who would seek to kill him; but the answer to it is that there might be some good persons resident in the place who, in obedience to divine command, supplied his necessities and kept his residence a profound secret.

To what extreme shifts are commentators put when they leave the eyrie of faith for the table-land of fact and reason! One thing is certain; that, according to Scripture, "the brook Cherith is before Jordan" (1 Kings xvii. 5), and that Jordan is a very long way from the borders of Arabia. Dr. Milligan thinks the story is "highly poetic and figurative." Josephus, on the other hand, holds that the prophet was fed by ravens; and Grotius argues for the literal truthfulness of the text by saying that the raven is distinguished for its rapacity; that God could readily change its nature to meet the special circumstances of the case; and, finally, that, according to St. Jerome, the same circumstances which happened to Elijah happened also to Peter the hermit.

But we are not far advanced in Wonderland—it is a long way yet to the domain of Common Sense. The brook was soon dried up, and Elijah was likely to perish for want of water. To my mind, this is unaccountable. When the Israelites thirsted in the desert, Moses readily supplied them by simply striking a rock, which forthwith emitted a stream of water. Surely Elijah could do what Moses had

already done! If there were no rock there to strike, he might have bored in the ground an artesian well with his stick, and so supplied not only himself with water, but also the animals which abounded there. But he did not. It was not so ordained. And perhaps he had got tired of his daily rations of bread and meat, and wanted a change of diet.

Be that as it may, he was ordered by his God to go to Zarephath—or, as it is called in the New Testament, Sarepta—a small Phœnician town situated between Tyre and Sidon. He did so, and there he met a widow who had been commanded by God to sustain him, though in what way the command was given does not appear. She was gathering sticks at the time, in order that she might "dress the little meal she had remaining for herself and her son, and that then they might eat it and die" (1 Kings xvii. 12). This simple, but pathetic, statement shows how sore the famine was in the land, and the utter wretchedness to which its poorer inhabitants had been reduced. Elijah, however, told her to "fear not"; for, said he, "thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruise of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth" (1 Kings xvii. 14).

Now, there is one most important lesson to be learned from this simple episode. It teaches that hospitality is one of the many virtues that belong to Humanity; that the appeal of wretchedness, mute or otherwise, to the heart of man—no matter what his religion may be, no matter whether he has any religion at all—invariably meets with a prompt and kindly response. Kind words and hospitable deeds are not the attributes of religion, but of our common humanity. This is a truth which has been borne witness to in all ages and in all lands. It was borne witness to by the poor negress who succored Mango Park when he was at Death's door in the wilds of Africa; for she, an ignorant heathen, knew nothing of heaven, nor of the bribes which Christianity offers to "miserable sinners" in order to induce them to become "saints." And it was borne witness to by the poor widow who succored Elijah. Says Sterne, the commentator:—

"She had been brought up in gross idolatry and ignorance of the God of Israel; or, if she had heard of his name, which is all that seems probable, she had been taught to disbelieve the mighty wonders of his hand, and she was still less likely to believe his prophet. It appears, therefore, that she must have been wrought on by an unmixed principle of humanity. She looked upon him almost as a fellow-partner in the same affliction with herself; she considered that he had come a weary pilgrimage, in a sultry climate, through an exhausted country, where neither bread nor water were to be had but by acts of liberality. Therefore, her heart was touched with pity; she turned in silence, and went and did according as he had said."

"And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruise of oil fail" (v. 16). This is the Bible statement, but is it true? We know that such a thing has never occurred in modern times; that, according to natural laws, it is not possible for it ever to have occurred. If it be true, therefore, it must have been a supernatural occurrence; and the proof of such an occurrence must be so clear and convincing as to leave not the shadow of a doubt upon the inquirer's mind. Is there such evidence? There is not. Is there any evidence at all of such an extraordinary circumstance? There is not—not a tittle. To believe, therefore, that this statement is true is purely a question of faith.

Before the drought ceased another wonderful circumstance occurred. The woman's son died, and she upbraided Elijah as though he had been the cause of her bereavement. To pacify her, he carried the child into his own room, and laid it upon the bed. Then he stretched himself upon it three times, calling in the meantime upon the Lord; and we read that "the child's soul came into him again" (v. 21). Here is evidence of the belief that the soul is simply the life of the body.

Now, that commentators believe this to have been a veritable miracle there is no doubt. Speaking of

this miracle, and of the similar one performed by Elisha, Scheuchzer writes as follows:—

"Certainly no one can think that these children were only chilled with cold, or in a swoon, so that the prophets, by stretching themselves upon them, only warmed them, and thus restored them to health. They were perfectly dead, as appears from the event; for 'the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.' Besides, how would recovering from a swoon, or warmth restored, merit that the Scripture should make express mention of it, and place these amongst the miracles performed by the prophets? When the soul is once separated from the body, it is useless for a living body to stretch itself, lie down, and place its hands on those of the dead. All the powers of nature can do nothing in this case, because it requires an overcoming of that very law of nature which unites the body to the soul—a law which cannot be reversed but by God alone, the author of it. If the Hebrew word signified an immaterial and immortal soul, one might deduce from this story a proof of the soul's immortality; but that word in various places of Scripture, and perhaps in the present, signifies the 'life' or 'breath.'"

Here, then, is another opportunity for the exercise of pure faith.

Now, the drought lasted more than three years; and, according to Josephus, it was universal—that is, it affected the whole earth. That it was severe we may conclude from Ahab's command to his servant Obadiah: "Go ye into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks; peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive" (1 Kings xviii. 5). Assuming that these statements are true, what then? Why, the earth would have been all but depopulated. If water and grass were as scarce as is here represented, animal life must have been almost extinct. Such a visitation, to meet which no Joseph had stored up provisions, must have been worse than the famine which before-time had prevailed in Egypt and the countries adjoining. Again I say, here is another opportunity for the exercise of pure faith.

J. W. DE CAUX.

(To be concluded.)

### "If Christ Came to the Relieving Officer."

THIS is the attractive headline of an amusing skit in a recent number of the *Labour Leader*:—

"Mr. C. A. Glyde, a member of the Bradford City Council, and a Poor Law Guardian, continues his attack on Poor Law administration in a further statement he has issued. He says:—

'I will picture Jesus as a white-haired, worn-out carpenter, wending His way, tattered, weather-beaten, and weary, a homeless wanderer, to the relief station. The poor law officer, well fed and clothed, cross-questions Him:

"Name?" "The Son of Man." "Trade?" "Carpenter." "How long out of work?" "For years had spent His time denouncing injustice, healing the sick, addressing unemployed meetings, and feeding the unemployed."

After hearing Christ's story, the Relieving Officer writes in his book, "impostor by profession," and, after inquiries, would report to the Guardians, "I find this man, Christ, was once a carpenter, but joined the unemployed and went from town to town spouting. He has been very violent. He has been known to enter a place of divine worship when it has been full of respectable citizens, stock jobbers, master woolcombers, brewers, rackrenters, sweaters, lawyers, politicians, etc., and whip them all out. Even the professional Christians, the parsons, priests, and the paid choir were publicly whipped, and He denounced the place as a den of thieves. He has fed 5,000 unemployed without soliciting the aid of the Charity Organisation Society or the Guardians, and has fed them indiscriminately, without making inquiries whether they had been thrifty, sober, or industrious."

Mr. Glyde goes on to suggest that Jesus, being a man who had 'neglected his opportunities,' was considered not a fit subject for outdoor relief, and was offered the 'house.'

Mr. Glyde's intention is good enough. The parson has, for generations, been the presiding spirit of the

Boards of Guardians. Jesus would stand a poor chance if ever he had the bad luck to be destitute. Mr. Glyde spoils his case, however, by assuming the possibility of a preacher, possessing "the gift of the gab," becoming poor enough to seek the Relieving Officer's aid. The picture of Christ posing, in his old age, as a "worn-out carpenter," is too funny for words. He characteristically refuses to give a straight answer to the civil request for his name. He is guilty of lying when he describes his trade. Less comprehensible still is the Relieving Officer's official report: "I find this man, Christ, was once a carpenter." There is no proof that Jesus was ever guilty of work of any kind. A sarcastic reference in the Gospel by Mark (was his other name Twain?) tells us that, "in his own country," he "could do no mighty work." Jesus himself laughingly remarked to his disciples, "I have done *one work* and ye all marvel" (John vii. 21). It was, indeed, enough to make a cat marvel. The only occasion on which Christ claimed to work, in any regular sense of the term, was after telling someone else to do something; he explained his unwonted energy by saying: "My father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John v. 17). A dark and dubious phrase which can be understood only by prayer and fasting.

The carpenter's shop, round which tons of sermons, reams of platitudes, and yards of spoilt canvas have woven a web of myth; where do you find it in the Bible? St. Matthew (xiii. 55) makes the crowd say, "Is not this the carpenter's son" (a remark misquoted in Mark vi. 3), but this is quite as likely to have been a malicious suggestion of an enemy. The "carpenter's son" possibly recalled an old scandal which imputed Christ's origin to an intrigue between Mary and the village cabinet-maker. In any case, a carpenter's son is not always a carpenter, as we know clergymen whose parents were honest and gentlemen.

Mr. Glyde seems to think that Christ "spent his time addressing unemployed meetings." Here are a few gems of oratory culled from what are alleged to be contemporary reports: "Resist not evil." "Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile go with him twain" (no Eight Hours' Bill for Christlike workers). "Take no thought saying what shall we eat," etc. (a word here for the living-in system, and no complaints). "Let the dead bury their dead" (motto for the Amalgamated Society of Undertakers). "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given" (loud cheers from the unemployed).

Mr. Glyde's strong case against the Guardians is rather weakened by the clap-trap illustration he gives. Christ may have been a gas-bag, as some think, or a noble teacher, as others hold; but St. Luke (viii. 3) tells us distinctly that some rich woman, whom he names, "and many others, ministered unto him of their substance." He may have been wise or foolish, but his own admissions in Matthew xi. 18-19, clearly indicate that there were good grounds for the current accusation that he was a glutton and a wine-bibber. He did not repudiate or even resent the imputation, but claimed justification. Under these circumstances Mr. Glyde is ill-advised to imagine "this same Jesus" coming on to the parish. The Relieving Officer would certainly have been justified in regarding him as an impostor.

When Mr. Glyde invents a parable of this far-fetched character in order to support a perfectly proper claim on behalf of the destitute workman, he invites a reference to the child's definition: "A parable is an earthly story with no earthly meaning."

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

### The Passing of Evangelicalism.

BESIDE me lies a heap of volumes, many of them stout volumes, too. They are old friends, and I have just weeded them out from my book-shelves. A second-hand dealer offered me a sovereign for the lot. It does not seem much, but I am finished with them, and as we contemplate removal there is no use

keeping them. So I shall let them go. Yes, these old friends and I must be parted. I once firmly believed in the teaching of these books, but I started to think for myself, and then came the parting of the ways.

They are mostly books on Christian Theology, and range from the staunch Puritan, John Howe, to that popular commentator of last century, Albert Barnes. There is an edition of the Gnomes of Bengel, the father of New Testament criticism and the initiator of Millennialism amongst believers in prophecy. Even the present Bishop of Durham is represented; he is the only scholarly writer whom the ranting school of Keswickites can claim among their holiness teachers. What stories could be told about these books and their authors! What names to conjure with—Thomas Boston, Ralph Wardlaw, James Hamilton, Dr. Chalmers, Dr. Guthrie, Dr. Vaughan, Talmage, C. H. Spurgeon! All these once-popular preachers are here. And yet, when we scan again through the pages, we wonder how men could have been fascinated by such shallow word-spinning. Talmage and Spurgeon are by far the worst offenders. Chalmers had a mind which, for power, easily eclipsed all the others. To him the Scottish Church owes a great deal. He inspired the social movement, initiated great schemes, and bravely attempted the righting of wrongs. Wardlaw was a clever and voluminous divine, and his ideas were called "The New Theology" as far back as the sixties. Vaughan published a number of carefully prepared books. No student will wish to part with Vaughan's *Notes on Greek Text of Romans*.

Then there is Auberlen on *Daniel*, Soltan on *Tabernacle and Priesthood*, Arnot on *Laws of Heaven*, Moody-Stuart on *Song of Solomon*, Keith on *The Evidence of Prophecy*, Lillie on *The Epistles of Peter*. All these were staunch exponents of Evangelicalism, but they represent an Evangelicalism that is passing quickly away. What a change has come over religious thought during the last thirty years! The modern attitude in religious thought has affected almost every sect in Christendom. And where the old dogmas have not been discarded they have been modified, and often so much modified that their real meaning is almost lost.

That Evangelicalism is passing away, and being abandoned in many quarters, is very evident when we read modern apologetic literature. The old positions, which were once thought to be impregnable, have long ago been given up. The Higher Criticism, the study of Comparative Religion, the general advance in education, have all worked against the old-fashioned orthodoxy. And the theology of fifty years ago is not the theology of to-day. But to return to my pile of books. There are a number of popular volumes, amongst which are books by Adolph Saphir, Andrew Murray, and other workers, and several volumes of R.T.S. tracts. In fact there is sufficient in this pile of books to set an orthodox country minister up for life. What words of praise Spurgeon had for many of these writers in his *Lectures to My Students*. What a heyday of popularity these volumes have had. But their day is past. And though in many a chapel for generations to come these same ideas will be preached, yet the great mass of the Christian Church is to-day taking a broader and saner view of religious questions. And in another generation we shall make a proportionately greater advance.

Let us take an illustration of what we mean from one of these very books. In one of the volumes of R.T.S. tracts is a paper on "Christianity and Secularism," by the late Professor Garden Blaikie, a learned and voluminous Scottish divine. After comparing the men who have stood for orthodoxy with the men who have been champions of Secularism, the reverend professor concludes with the following story. A kind-hearted Unitarian minister in the North of Scotland once started to preach in the streets. And on one occasion he had a small audience of street urchins, loafers, and harlots—so the worthy divine tells us. The preacher was holding forth to his audience on the value of a pure and

noble life, when one of them called out: "Yer rape's nae lang enuch fur th' likes o' uz" (Your rope's not long enough for the like of us).

Professor Blaikie leaves his readers to draw their own conclusion. But the conclusion we draw is not what he intends. For we want to know how comes it, that in Scotland—the land of Presbyterianism and a "divinely-inspired" Calvinism—there should be such numbers of human wrecks, drunkards, and harlots, and such things as slums and waifs?

The newer Thought and the newer Science are spreading rapidly. The cheap reprints of great books, the propaganda of various bodies of thinkers, and the emphasis laid on Social Reform are making a marked impression on the people. Evangelicalism is hard up indeed when it depends for a very doubtful and fitful success on the mission work of Gipsy Smith, Dr. Torrey, and other peripatetic talkers. And with Paul we can say: "Old things have passed away; behold! all things have become new."

FELIX PONDERING.

### The Church Must Die.

BY GEORGE MACDONALD.

THERE are certain matters on which no compromise is possible. The middle ground favored by opportunists is not invariably a safe place on which to stand. Between opposing methods an intermediate plan may often prove satisfactory; between diametrically opposed principles it often occurs that there is no peace short of the unconditional surrender of one side or the other. If a *modus vivendi* is apparently attained in a case of this kind, the adjustment is merely temporary, a lull in the conflict during which both parties are gathering strength for its more energetic continuance. Lincoln's famous and prophetic declaration that "a nation cannot permanently endure half slave and half free" pithily expressed the utter impossibility of the reconciliation of incompatibles; and history confirmed the wisdom of his saying.

In application of this general principle, it requires no extraordinary gift of prophecy to discern that the duel between science and theology must be fought out to the death, despite temporary pauses for the taking of breath. The wiser theologians are those who avow themselves medievalists, and, taking a firm stand against the spread of knowledge, demand blind submission to authority and entire rejection of all that is involved in modern progress. They are defending a doomed cause, and must ultimately lose; but they will at least go down with colors flying and face to the foe. The would-be reconcilers, on the other hand, who hope to make terms with science and Higher Criticism, surrendering here a little and there a little, while dishonestly disavowing any change of front, deserve nothing but contempt from both parties. The absurdly far-fetched exegeses, by which the simple guesses and absurd traditions of primitive minds are made to express in a figurative or symbolic way everything which they could not possibly mean, are as worthy of disingenuous thinkers as they are futile to stay the tide of destructive criticism.

The conviction that the Church, strong as it even yet appears to be, must in the end disintegrate and perish, is not born of intolerance and bitterness. It is not the mere malicious prediction of an enemy, but the inevitable deduction from the trend of events. When the Church will die is not so important as the fact that it cannot survive the march of progress. It will die because it is incapable of adapting itself to the varying needs of social evolution. It will die because its face is set to the rear, while the movement of humanity is toward the front. It will die because, as its own supposed founder is alleged to have perceived, it is impossible to put new wine into old bottles. It will die because it is fixed and crystallised, and cannot respond to the needs of the age. It will die because its whole conception of life is static rather than dynamic. For years, and perhaps

decades, only a few clear observers will recognise its weakness. It will continue as now to hold its apparent popularity and to retain the nominal allegiance of multitudes. It will continue to enlist the lip-service of politicians and to represent the ideal of mediocre respectability. The shabby genteel and the flunkey element will adhere to it as a matter of course, and its power over subservient legislators will last for a considerable time. But all the while it will be slowly but surely dying at the heart, and tending toward the inevitable collapse. Its shell of apparent strength will cover a core of rottenness, which will sooner or later become revealed to mankind at large. The general awakening may come in ten, in twenty, in fifty or a hundred years; but come it will, marking the beginning of the end. For a few generations more the Church may linger on as a moribund and pitiable survival of a once great and prosperous institution; but the day is sure to come when it will take its place beside the religious institutions of ancient Greece and Rome as a historic instance of human delusion and credulity.

It is not necessary to deny that the Church had its part to play in history, or that it has been serviceable during certain periods of human evolution. If it had not in some way responded to certain transient demands of the race, it could never have reached the commanding position once held by it. Its main utility, however, was confined to its days of weakness. No institution known to history has shown itself so completely incapable of being trusted with power. Its structure is of such a nature that its ascendancy immediately invites control by the basest element for the most selfish purposes. The record of a thousand years should be a sufficient test to apply to any institution; and what the Church did in its possession of absolute authority during the Dark Ages is known to all, and can be evaded by no sophistry or equivocation. The suppression of knowledge, the almost inconceivable grovelling in unspeakable vice, crime, and degradation, the persecution of the enlightened, the wholesale murder of dissenters and intellectual opponents, are written on everyone of the infamous pages. Nor could one boast of relative clearness of record. Luther himself set the disgusting example of the vilest fawning on princes, applauding polygamy in one of noble blood, and urging the wholesale massacre of peasants who were so bold as to demand some of the elementary rights of humanity, refusing the right hand of fellowship to Zwingli and others who differed from him on a trifling point of doctrine, and displaying all the inclination to become a persecutor, had he only been so fortunate as to have the power lodged in his hand. Calvin's bloodstained and atrocious career is known to all, exhibiting a ferocious determination to stamp out every spark of civil and religious liberty. In England, bloody Mary was fully paralleled in the mean and vindictive spirit of persecution and tyranny by bloody Elizabeth—as overrated an egotist as may be found in history. Nor was there any end to the fearful record, until the growing spirit of the age finally taught the Church in some measure to know its place, and wrested the rule from its hands. Even to-day the murder of Ferrer has shown the spirit of the Catholic Church to remain essentially unchanged in its unscrupulous villainy.

The Church has had its opportunity—a full and magnificent one—and it proved unworthy of the trust. Therefore, the greater portion of the power has already been snatched from it, and its remaining crumbs of prestige must follow. The signs of the times are unmistakable. The Church must die that man may live.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

### Obituary.

It is with deep regret that I announce the death of Agnes Bethune on July 14, after a long and painful illness. She died as she had lived, a staunch Atheist. The sympathies of Glasgow Freethinkers are with Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Henderson in their bereavement.—WM. MITCHELL.

## 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. OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15 and 6.15, F. A. Davies, Lectures.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): Guy A. Aldred, 3.15, "Hypatia; or, The Dawn of Christian Ignorance"; 6, "Christianity and Humility."

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Highbury Corner): 12 noon, S. J. Cook and J. J. Darby. Newington Green: 12 noon, Walter Bradford, a Lecture. Clerkenwell Green: 12 noon, H. King and T. Dobson. Finsbury Park: 3.30, J. J. Darby, "Christianity and Secularism." Highbury Corner: Saturday, at 8, H. King, T. Dobson, and others.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road, Kingsland): 11.30, J. W. Marshall, "Gods: Ancient and Modern."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.30, R. H. Rosetti, "Jesus Christ, the Unknown Jew Boy."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford): 7, W. J. Ramsey, "Salvation by Faith."

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers' Hill, opposite Public Library): 11.30, R. H. Rosetti, a Lecture. The Green, Enfield: 7, Mr. Lewis, a Lecture.

WOOLWICH BRANCH N. S. S. (Beresford-square): 11.30, a Lecture.

### COUNTRY. OUTDOOR.

Huddersfield and District Branch N. S. S. (Market Cross): 8, G. T. Whitehead, a Lecture. Saturday, at 8, G. T. Whitehead, a Lecture.

## 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.

## 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.

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. New Issue. 1. *Hunting Skunks*, G. W. Foote; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll. 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 6d. per hundred, post free 7d. Special rates for larger quantities. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—N. S. S. SECRETARY, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

FREETHOUGHT BADGES.—The new N. S. S. Badge Design is the French Freethinkers' emblem—a single Pansy 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.

WANTED, two Unfurnished Rooms on ground floor, with slight attendance and one mid-day meal, for elderly lady (Freethinker) of limited income; permanency; North London preferred.—Letter with full particulars to Miss Vance, 2 Newcastle-street, E.C.

FREETHINKERS requiring Plumbing, Hot-Water, Gas-fitting, Decorations, or Alterations Done should apply to H. BALL, 1 Whymark-avenue, Wood Green. References and testimonials by local Freethinkers.

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.

## 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—no 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 "grew" 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 time)

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 incommensurable 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,  
AS I BELIEVE,

## THE BEST BOOK

ON THIS SUBJECT.

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

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

### A POPULAR EDITION IN PAPER COVERS.

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

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

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

Orders should be sent to the author,

J. R. HOLMES, EAST HANNEY, WANTAGE.

## 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

# 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, 23 Rood-lane, Fenchurch-street, London, E.C.

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

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

## THE POPULAR EDITION

*(Revised and Enlarged)*

OF

# "BIBLE ROMANCES"

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

With a Portrait of the Author

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

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

SIXPENCE—NET

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

## 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.